



MINUTES

ROMA BOARD MEETING

Friday, February 16, 2024
9:00 AM – 1:30 PM

VIRTUAL MEETING

PRESENT:

Chair Robin Jones, Mayor, Village of Westport (AMO Rural Caucus)

Zone and AMO Rural Caucus Representatives:

Jamie McGrail, Councillor, Municipality of Chatham-Kent (Zone 1)
Steve McCabe, Councillor, Township of Wellington North (Zone 2)
Christina Early, Councillor, Town of Caledon (Zone 4)
Pam Sayne, Councillor, Township of Minden Hills (Zone 5)
Jennifer Murphy, Councillor, County of Renfrew (Zone 6)
Carma Williams, Deputy Mayor, Township of North Glengarry (Zone 7)
Christa Lowry, 1st Vice Chair, Mayor, Municipality of Mississippi Mills (Zone 8)
Mark Wilson, Councillor, City of Temiskaming Shores (Zone 9)
Janet Hager, Councillor, Municipality of Red Lake (Zone 10)
Peter Emon, Reeve, Town of Renfrew (AMO Rural Caucus)
Rainey Weisler, Deputy Mayor, Municipality of Bayham (AMO Rural Caucus)
Sandra Datars Bere, 2nd Vice Chair, City Manager, City of St. Thomas (AMO Rural Caucus)

Staff:

Afshin Majidi, Executive Treasurer, AMO
Petra Wolfbeiss, Director, Membership Centre, AMO
Lindsay Jones, Director of Policy and Government Relations, AMO
Karen Nesbitt, Senior Manager, Policy, AMO
Alicia Neufeld, Senior Manager, Policy, AMO
Spencer Sandor, Policy Advisor, AMO
Farah Tayabali, Vice-President, Redbrick
Megan Abraham, Consultant, Redbrick
Lora Tigno, Administrative Assistant, Membership Centre, AMO

Guests:

Judy Dezell, Director Enterprise Centre, Business Partnerships & LAS

Early Departures:

Rainey Weisler, Deputy Mayor, Municipality of Bayham (AMO Rural Caucus)

Regrets:

Paul Latam, Councillor, Town of Grand Valley (AMO Rural Caucus)
Dave Beres, Deputy Mayor, Township of Tillsonburg (Zone 3)

1. Chair's Welcome and Introductions – ROMA Chair, Robin Jones

Chair Jones welcomed Board members and staff to the meeting.

2. Declaration

Request members to declare:

- Pecuniary interest – none declared
- Early departure – identified above
- Regrets – identified above

3. Cross-province check-in - Robin Jones, Chair/All (*Verbal*)

Board members provided updates on local matters. Some matters identified included:

- Wastewater infrastructure and legacy dumps in rural areas
- Conference success
- AMO's social and economic prosperity advocacy
- Considerations of bringing back the cost of license plate renewals.
- Increased media interest and coverage following ROMA 2024 Conference
- Recent hospital closures in Durham Region, including the suspension of overnight services at Chesley hospital due to shortages.
- Affordability crisis across Ontario

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

4. Approval of Friday, February 16, 2024, Meeting Agenda (*Pages 1-3*)

Motion:

"That the Board approve the agenda for Friday, February 16, 2024."

Moved: Carma Williams

Seconded: Jamie McGrail

CARRIED

5. Approval of Friday December 8, 2023, ROMA Meeting Minutes (*Pages 4-12*)

Motion

"That the Board approve the minutes from the December 8, 2023, meeting".

Moved: Christa Lowry

Seconded: Christina Early

CARRIED

6. Executive-Treasurer – Afshin Majidi, Executive Treasurer

- a. ROMA Conference Interim Results (*Verbal*)
- b. Expense Reimbursement (*Verbal*)

Afshin Majidi gave a verbal update on the ROMA Conference interim results, highlighting that budget targets were surpassed. The actual conference statements will be shared at the next meeting. A full board debrief was suggested in lieu of the next meeting's cross-province check-in.

Afshin also reviewed the ROMA *Expense Reimbursement Policy*, highlighting that payments for reimbursements are processed within two weeks time. Afshin also reviewed a number of approaches to addressing expenses to ensure ability to meet travel obligations related to Board business.

Motion

“That the ROMA Board receive the ROMA Conference interim results and expense reimbursement update as information.”

Moved: Pam Sayne
Seconded: Jamie McGrail

CARRIED

TIMED ITEMS

7. 10:00 AM – 10:30 AM - LAS and ONE Investment Updates – Judy Dezell, Director Enterprise Centre, Business Partnerships & LAS (*Pages 13-14*)

Judy Dezell, Director Enterprise Centre, Business Partnerships & LAS, provided an update on key activities of LAS and ONE Investment. Judy reviewed programs and initiatives aimed at helping municipalities manage costs and improve efficiency, including automated speed enforcement, energy management, and commodity market participation.

Judy also highlighted the benefits of utilizing Canoe, a purchasing cooperative for municipalities in Ontario, to leverage their collective purchasing power and acquire goods and services at competitive prices.

Motion

“That the ROMA Board receive the item as information.”

Moved: Jennifer Murphy
Seconded: Sandra Datars Bere

CARRIED

8. 10:30 AM – 11:00 AM – Good Roads Rural Road Safety Initiative Resolution – Mark Wilson, Councillor, City of Temiskaming Shores and Dave Beres, Deputy Mayor, Township of Tillsonburg (*Pages 15-20*)

On behalf of Board members Dave Beres, Mark Wilson briefed the Board on the Ontario Good Roads Association (OGRA) proposed budget submission. On behalf of the OGRA Board representative, Dave Beres, Mark was seeking ROMA endorsement for the proposed submission.

Given the number of potential governance and funding implications, the Board is seeking clarification on the proposal. The Board requested that the request from the August 2023 meeting of the Board for OGRA staff to provide a follow up on the OGRA strategy be scheduled at a future Board meeting.

Motion

“That the ROMA Board accept the report from Mark Wilson as information; and”

“That a follow-up be scheduled with the Ontario Good Roads Association Board Executive be schedules”; and

“That OGRA staff provide an update to the Board at a future meeting on their advocacy and strategy”

Moved: Pam Sayne
Seconded: Peter Emon

CARRIED

DISCUSSION ITEMS

9. Transportation challenges in Rural Ontario – Robin Jones, Chair/All (*Verbal*)

The Board discussed local initiatives and transportation challenges faced by rural Ontario.

Transportation will be considered at the Committee of the Whole meeting in April for the 2024 Board workplan that will also include education, and water and wastewater.

Motion

“That the ROMA Board receive the item as information; and”

“That transportation be considered in the ROMA Board 2024 workplan”.

Moved: Steve McCabe
Seconded: Carma Williams

CARRIED

10. Request for Financial Support - Robin Jones, Chair *(Verbal)*

- Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM) *(Letter attached) (Pages 21)*
- Ontario Small Urban Municipalities (OSUM) *(Letter attached) (Pages 22-23)*

Board members were reminded of ROMA's longstanding practice of providing financial support to NOMA and FONOM for their annual conferences. Currently, only FONOM has requested financial assistance.

Supporting both FONOM and OSUM aligns with ROMA's strategic goal of fostering collaboration in the municipal sector.

For the first time, OSUM has requested financial aid for its 2024 annual conference. OSUM aims to gain momentum and influence in the municipal sector, bridging the gap between large urban and rural areas.

ROMA aligned its contribution for OSUM with that traditionally provided to FONOM, totaling \$10,000 for 2024. In return, ROMA will be provided mainstage time at the OSUM Conference.

The board also discussed the policy that governs such requests, and it is suggested that the policy be provided for review. (Attached to the minutes)

Motion

"That the Board approve \$10,000 in financial support to the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities, for its 2024 annual conference".

Moved: Mark Wilson

Seconded: Janet Hager

CARRIED

Motion:

"That the Board approve \$10,000 in financial support to the Ontario Small Urban Municipalities, for its 2024 annual conference".

Moved: Jamie McGrail

Seconded: Sandra Datars Bere

CARRIED

11. ROMA Communications Update – Farah Tayabali, Vice President, and Megan Abraham, Consultant, Redbrick *(Supplementary Package)*

Farah Tayabali highlighted the success of the 2024 ROMA Conference, noting record attendance and extensive media coverage.

Social media engagement saw significant growth. Recommendations for future conferences include early content planning and exploring new media backdrops. Action items include capturing winter footage for

potential new videos, sharing existing conference videos online, and discussing new video plans for the 2025 conference at the next board meeting.

Motion

“That the ROMA Board receive the item as information; and”

“That Redbrick source winter footage for video vignettes”.

Moved: Steve McCabe

Seconded: Pam Sayne

CARRIED

12. ROMA 2024 Conference report – Victoria van Veen, Team Lead, Events and Training, AMO

- ROMA 2024 Delegate Evaluation (*Pages 24-91*)

Victoria van Veen presented the ROMA 2024 Conference report:

- The 2024 ROMA Conference had a record attendance with 1,900 participants.
- Evaluations reflected positive feedback on keynotes and concurrent sessions.
- The conference included 480 ministerial delegation meetings, involved 27 ministries.
- Nine hours of plenary programming with 66 speakers, 11 concurrent sessions was offered through programming.
- Sponsorship and exhibitors: 14 sponsors exceeding revenue targets, and 83 exhibitors.
- Plans for 2025 include starting planning earlier, maintaining the tradeshow floor plan, and continuing to improve communication with delegates.

Motion

“That the ROMA Board receive the item as information.”

Moved: Pam Sayne

Seconded: Christa Lowry

CARRIED

POLICY

13. Policy Update – Karen Nesbitt, Senior Manager, Policy, AMO and Spencer Sandor, Senior Advisor, Policy

- i. Energy Procurements - Spencer Sandor, Senior Advisor, Policy (*Pages 92-100*)

Spencer Sandor discussed several policy concerns related to energy projects, emphasizing the need for advocacy in areas such as land use planning, natural gas transition timelines, and municipal support. Spencer highlighted the challenge of communication between energy proponents and municipalities, calling on the IESO to clarify deadlines and emphasize the importance of municipal support. Spencer

highlighted AMO's efforts in endorsing a position for clean and sustainable energy, sending letters to the Minister of Energy and the IESO, and collaborating with partner ministries to address these concerns in the energy procurement space.

ii. Housing Update (*Supplementary Package*)

Karen Nesbitt provided a housing update. It focused on the anticipated scope of the province's next Housing Supply Action Plan and associated principles to support AMO advocacy.

iii. Rural Economic Development Strategy Consultation (*Supplementary Package*)

This item has been deferred to the next board meeting.

Motion

"That the ROMA Board receive the policy items presented items as information."

Moved: Jennifer Murphy

Seconded: Carma Williams

CARRIED

REPORTS OF AMO and ROMA COMMITTEES

14. Committee Reports

- i. Nuclear Waste Management Ontario (NWMO) Municipal Forum – Sandra Datars Bere, City Manager, City of St. Thomas

No Update

- ii. Teeny Tiny Summits – Pam Sayne, Councillor, Township of Minden Hills

Pam Sayne provided an update on the upcoming in-person Teeny Tiny Summits which are scheduled on May 28th,2024 in Grey County, and June 5th,2024 in Tweed.

Motion

"That the Board receive the update on Teeny Tiny Summit as information."

Moved: Pam Sayne

Seconded: Sandra Datars Bere

CARRIED

iii. Other

INFORMATION ITEMS

Check in whether members would like any of the items pulled for discussion.

15. Support - Chatham-Kent reducing municipal insurance cost *(Pages 101)*
16. Chatham-Kent resolution re OW rates *(Pages 102-103)*
17. 2023 Letter to Premier Ford RE Motion Declaring IPV an Epidemic Dec 13 2023 *(Pages 104-105)*
18. 2023-12-15 CFFO MPAC Assessment Cycle *(Pages 106)*
19. 2024 01 16 IPV Letter - Mayor Cleroux *(Pages 107)*
20. Callander_Resolution of Council RE Illegal Land Use *(Pages 108-109)*
21. Coleman TWP Motion 24-011 TDVAWCC - Certified True Copy *(Pages 110-111)*
22. Correspondence from the OFVGA - Stormwater fees *(Pages 112-113)*
23. Decisions on Black Ash protection and recovery under the Endangered Species Act, 2007 *(Pages 114-116)*
24. DSNO Rx Safer Supply Support Letter 310124 FINAL *(Pages 117-119)*
25. EOWC 2024 Ontario Budget Consultation (2) *(Pages 120-125)*
26. EOWC Letter - Minister Parsa - Social Assistance Benefit Rates - January 31, 2024 *(Pages 126-128)*
27. EOWC Res - Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus support for Modernizing the Energy Infrastructure Construction Approval Process - Jan 12, 2024 (1) *(Pages 129-132)*
28. John Rose Jessop_Letter of Concern December 18, 2023 *(Pages 133-135)*
29. Kingston City_New Motion 1 – ROMA *(Pages 136-137)*
30. L_Partners_re_Update_potential_merger_APH_PHSD_2024-01-18_EN *(Pages 138)*
31. Letter from the Honourable Lisa Thompson *(Pages 139)*
32. LTR - PM Premier from Chair re National Housing Accord 2023Dec1 *(Pages 140-142)*
33. MLPAO 2024 Pre-Budget Submission *(Pages 143-147)*
34. Municipality of West Perth_Res 407-23 - Support for Income Tax Act Firefighter Credit Increase *(Pages 148-150)*
35. Municipality of Chatham-Kent_2023 Letter - MTO Projects Minister Sarkaria *(Pages 151-152)*
36. Municipality of Clarington_JC-012-24 - Ontario Works Rate (2) *(Pages 153-154)*
37. Northeastern ontario Municipal association meeting report Dec 8 2023 *(Pages 155-156)*
38. Plympton-Wyoming- Support for Conmee - re. Prohibition of Criminals from Municipal Council *(Pages 157-159)*
39. RES 23-95 National Housing Accord *(Pages 160)*

- 40. Town of Nipissing_R2023-225_Library Funding Support (*Pages 161*)
- 41. Township of Carling_Resolution 23-062.6bCP Railway (*Pages 162-164*)
- 42. Township of Conmee_resolution 2023-0247 (*Pages 165-166*)
- 43. Whitewater Region_Water and Wastewater unaffordable rates (*Pages 167-168*)

OTHER BUSINESS

44. Other business brought forward by members

- The Green and Inclusive Community Buildings (GICB) program – Steve McCabe

Steve McCabe discussed challenges faced by certain member municipalities in Zone Two regarding Green Infrastructure Canada-Building (GICB) funding, which involves both federal and provincial support. Highlighted was a discrepancy in categorizing municipalities based on population size, leading to funding denials. For example, Mapleton, despite having over 10,000 people, faces obstacles due to being classified as a large urban center, impacting eligibility for green inclusive funding. Mentioned were rejection letters and the suggestion of obtaining them for further discussion. The ongoing issue revolves around municipalities not being considered "shovel ready" and the associated financial burden of approximately \$2 million for necessary engineering and planning work.

- Combining ROMA and OGRA Conferences, request from Town of Petrolia

Janet Hager mentioned receiving a resolution from the Town of Petrolia requesting the combination of Roma and OGRA Conferences. The board expressed surprise, stating that no one from Petrolia had contacted the ROMA Executives. Chair Jones recalled a previous discussion on the matter and highlighted the potential motives behind this request, suggesting it could be related to financial considerations or the desire for more enjoyable conferences.

- Cancer treatment costs and access in Ontario

Mark Wilson shared a noteworthy point from a recent CBC program on the cost of cancer in Ontario especially surrounding cancer care in rural areas. The program highlighted challenges faced by a single mother from Halliburton, emphasizing the lack of available services in local communities. The discussion touched on various aspects, including access to treatments, associated costs, and the rural perspective.

45. Agenda items for future ROMA Board meetings

- To discuss establishing ROMA's presence on Parliament Hill, aligning with FCM Rural Caucus, and meeting with ministers.

ADJOURNMENT

46. Next meeting: March 15, 2024, Location: **VIRTUAL**

47. Adjournment

Motion

"That there being no further business the Board move to adjourn."

Moved: Carma Williams
Seconded: Christa Lowry

CARRIED

Sponsorship Policy

Recognizing that there are two types of sponsorship,

- Sponsorship of an event
- Sponsorship of a study/research project

The following guidelines are applied:

- No third party which is a “for profit” organization will be sponsored
- When sponsoring a “not-for-profit” organization, ROMA may lend their logo when it is believed that there is value in the program, and the value is returned to municipal governments, e.g. reduced fees at a workshop/conference for ROMA members
- In providing monetary support for a study/research proposal, the evaluation criteria have to determine whether the study/research has a direct impact on municipal government roles and responsibilities rather than an indirect impact
- Any type of sponsorship must be applicable to rural issues
- Must be able to evaluate value for investment made
- There must be a minimum of \$100,000 kept in the reserve at all times
- Once the audit of the previous year’s finances has been completed, then a set amount per year will be determined which would be applied towards sponsorships/investments in projects
- Sponsorship does not mean membership