



MINUTES

ROMA Board Meeting

**Friday, October 17, 2025
8:30 AM – 1:30 PM**

HYBRID Meeting

PRESENT:

Chair Christa Lowry, Municipality of Mississippi Mills (Zone 8)

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)

Janet Hager, Councillor, Municipality of Red Lake (Zone 10)

Dane Nielsen, Deputy Mayor, Municipality of Grey Highlands (AMO Rural Caucus)

Nathan Townend, Deputy Warden, County of Lennox & Addington (AMO Rural Caucus)

Nicole Martin, CAO, Township of Amaranth (AMO Rural Caucus)

Tanya Vrebosch, Councillor, City of North Bay (AMO Rural Caucus)

Staff:

Petra Wolfbeiss, Director, Membership Centre, AMO

Afshin Majidi, ROMA Executive Treasurer

Alicia Neufled, Senior Manager, Policy, AMO

Daniela Spagnuolo, Policy Advisor, AMO

Michael Jacek, Senior Advisor, Policy, AMO

Dershil Shah, Senior Advisor, Policy, AMO

Adam Garcia, Manager, Executive Office, AMO

Lora Tigno, Administrative Assistant, Membership Centre, AMO

Henry Khamonde, Membership Services Administrator, AMO

Farah Tayabali, Vice President, Redbrick

Megan Abraham, Consultant, Redbrick

Regrets:

Natasha Salonen, Mayor, Township of Wilmot (AMO Rural Caucus)

Dave Beres, Deputy Mayor, Township of Tillsonburg (Zone 3)

Mark Wilson, Councillor, City of Temiskaming Shores (Zone 9)

Early Departure:

Christina Early, Councillor, Town of Caledon (Zone 4)

1. Chair's Welcome and Introductions – Christa Lowry

The Chair welcomed members and staff. Chair Lowry opened the meeting with a Land Acknowledgement.

"We recognize that our work at ROMA, and the work of our members, takes place on traditional Indigenous territories across Ontario.

Today, while this meeting includes people who have joined from across the province, we are currently assembled in Toronto, which was founded on the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishinaabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples.

We recognize and respect the history, languages, knowledge, and cultures of the First Nations, Metis, Inuit and all Indigenous peoples whose presence continues to enrich our communities".

2. Declaration

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

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

3. Approval of Friday, October 17, 2025, Meeting Agenda (*Pages 1-4*)

Members reviewed the agenda.

Motion: *"That the Board approve the agenda for Friday, October 17, 2025."*

Moved: Nathan Townend

Seconded: Dane Nielsen

Carried

4. Approval of Friday, July 18, 2025 and August 17, 2025 ROMA Meeting Minutes (*Pages 5-14*)

Members reviewed the minutes.

Motion: *"That the Board approve the minutes of Friday, July 18, 2025, and Sunday August 17, 2025."*

Moved: Steve McCabe

Seconded: Dane Nielsen

Carried

5. Executive Treasurer Report – Afshin Majidi, Executive Treasurer

i. Q2 ROMA Financial Statements (*Pages 15-21*)

Afshin Majidi reviewed the Q2 Financial Statements indicating continued strong financial standing.

Motion: *"That the June 2025 financial statements be accepted as presented."*

Moved: Jamie McGrail

Seconded: Janet Hager

Carried

ii. ROMA Conference Financial Plan (*Pages 22-28*)

Afshin presented the 2026 ROMA conference financial plan. Afshin confirmed the Chair's reception is now a budget line and a cost covered within the budget. Expenses for 2026 were increased slightly to reflect the anticipated annual increases for the venue, food, beverage, and audio-visual costs. Registration rates remain unchanged from 2025. Also included in the financial plan are the Sunday lunches which will now be part of the Zone meetups and have been a popular request by attendees.

Motion: *"That the ROMA 2026 Conference financial plan be approved as presented."*

Moved: Carma Williams

Seconded: Nicole Martin

Carried

iii. Future Conference Venue Plans (*Verbal*)

The ROMA Board approved finalizing the contract with the Sheraton Centre Toronto. The Board noted that the venue continues to offer strong value due to its accessibility, familiarity, cost-effectiveness, and the positive working relationship established between ROMA and the Sheraton Centre Toronto. Staff was directed to finalize the contracts and report back at the December meeting.

Motion: *"That the proposed contract with the Sheraton Centre Toronto to host the conference from 2028-2032 be approved; and*

"That staff be directed to finalize the contracts with the venue following the meeting."

Moved: Steve McCabe

Seconded: Pam Sayne

Carried

DISCUSSION ITEMS

6. AMO Board of Directors Meeting Report Back – September 26, 2025 - Christa Lowry/All (Verbal)

The report included the following highlights:

- The vacancy for AMO's Director of Policy position and the strong interest it has generated.
- AMO's advocacy at the federal level on aligning with FCM on infrastructure matters.
- The upcoming release of the RFP for the AMO Conference in Fall 2025.
- Progress on AMO's public affairs campaigns, including the Healthy Democracy Project and the Workforce Development Project, which will roll out in early 2026.
- Ongoing review of the Building Faster Fund.
- AMO's position on Automated Speed Enforcement.
- Continued discussions related to Codes of Conduct.

Motion: *"That the Board receive the report back from the September 26, 2025, meeting of the AMO Board of Directors."*

Moved: Dane Nielsen

Seconded: Carma Williams

Carried

7. Policy Briefing

- i. Update on Policy Centre Priorities - Alicia Neufeld, Policy Senior Manager, AMO *(To be delivered)*

The Policy Centre provided an update on current initiatives, noting that they continue to monitor recent funding announcements, including the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund (OCIF), the Federal Build Canada Homes (BCH) program, the Road Safety Initiatives Fund (RSIF), and ongoing oversight of HART Hub funding.

Staff also reported continued collaboration with Indigenous partners on the implementation of AMO's Indigenous Reconciliation Action Plan, which aims to provide a roadmap for local governments in supporting economic development, infrastructure needs, social priorities, and strengthened relationships

with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities.

In addition, the Policy Centre is turning its attention to the ROMA 2026 Conference, preparing mainstage and concurrent sessions that reflect and advance ROMA's key objectives and rural concerns.

Motion: *"That the Board receive the update on AMO policy priorities and activities as presented by Policy Senior Manager, Alicia Neufeld."*

Moved: Carma Williams

Seconded: Janet Hager

ii. Rural Infrastructure Strategy (Pages 28-40)

The ROMA Board endorsed moving ahead on a rural infrastructure advocacy strategy. This strategy will guide policy and advocacy efforts, provide the Board with a consistent and compelling narrative on rural infrastructure needs, and renew calls for the AMO socio-economic and prosperity review. Staff noted that this work will be supported by a survey to be distributed to members to gather broader insights into municipal asset management plans.

Motion: *"That the ROMA Board of Directors endorse the development and implementation of a rural infrastructure advocacy strategy to guide future policy and engagement efforts."*

Moved: Dane Nielsen

Seconded: Steve McCabe

Carried

iii. Rural Spending on Health and Scoping for a Rural Health Strategy (Pages 41-55)

The ROMA Board endorsed AMO staff's plan to develop a Rural Health Strategy informed by the findings of AMO's Health Survey, which highlighted significant municipal contributions to public health, ambulance services, and long-term care in 2024. The discussion emphasized the importance of community engagement and data-driven analysis to support effective strategic advocacy.

Motion: *"That the ROMA Board of Directors approve AMO Staff to draft a Rural and Northern Health Strategy that provides a progress report on ROMA's 2024 paper Fill the Gaps Closer to Home and provide updated data and priority recommendations."*

Moved: Nathan Townend

Seconded: Nicole Martin

Carried

iv. School Closure Moratorium Proactive Advocacy (Pages 56-67)

The ROMA Board endorsed a strategic approach aimed at lifting the province-wide moratorium on school closures to better protect schools in rural communities. Given the disproportionate impact of closures in these areas, the strategy will focus on key priority issues to guide advocacy on this matter.

Motion: *"That the ROMA Board approve a strategic advocacy approach to the potential lifting of the province-wide moratorium on school closures to protect rural schools."*

Moved: *Carma Williams*

Seconded: *Dane Nielsen*

Carried

8. 2026 ROMA Conference Update – Petra Wolfbeiss, Director, Membership Centre, AMO (*Verbal*)

The ROMA Board received an update on registration, exhibitor participation, sponsorship and mainstage programming for the 2026 Conference. With 747 delegate registrations and 43% of exhibitor booths sold, early indicators were positive.

Programming including mainstage and concurrent sessions were reviewed and discussed.

Also reviewed were options for the Sunday lunch, with agreement to explore joint Zone meet-ups held over a plated lunch to help increase participation and address the concern with space and offering Sunday lunch.

Motion: *"That the ROMA Board receive the 2026 ROMA Conference update as information."*

Moved: *Tanya Vrebosch*

Seconded: *Jennifer Murphy*

Carried

9. 2026 ROMA Board Meeting Dates - Christa Lowry/All (*Pages 68-69*)

Chair Lowry reviewed the memo proposing the 2026 ROMA Board meeting dates, noting that the schedule continues the bi-monthly in-person format established in 2025. Thursday evening Committee of the Whole meetings will continue.

Motion: *"That the ROMA Board approve the proposed 2026 meeting dates."*

Moved: *Nathan Townend*

Seconded: *Christina Early*

Carried

10. ROMA Post-Secondary Awards Renewal – Henry Khamonde, Administrator – Membership Services, AMO
(Pages 70-72)

Options and recommendations for the renewal and expansion of the ROMA Post-Secondary Awards for the five year period beginning in 2027 were tabled. Key decision points included:

- Continuing to provide the ROMA Award to Trent University and the University of Guelph (with increased opportunities to profile the award);
- Discontinuing providing the bursary to Lakehead University
- Establishing an award with Nipissing University;
- Expanding the program to include four recipients, including a partnership with the Ontario Municipal Administrators Association to support its bursary program.
- Expanding the funding contribution over 5 years from \$75,000.00 to \$100,000.00

Motion:

"That the ROMA Board continue its partnership with Trent University;

That the ROMA Board continue its partnership with the University of Guelph with the inclusion of the opportunity for ROMA to profile and promote the award;

That the ROMA Board discontinue its partnership with Lakehead and approve providing the award to Nipissing University;

That the ROMA Board approve an additional \$25,000.00 in support over 5 years to expand the program to 4 recipients; and

The ROMA Board explore supporting and partnering with the Ontario Municipal Administrators Association in support of its bursary program."

Moved: Steve McCabe

Seconded: Tanya Vrebosch

Carried

11. ROMA Communications Update – Farah Tayabali, Vice President, and Megan Abraham, Consultant, Redbrick
(To be delivered)

The discussion focused on the rebranding launch including coordination with the Chair and Executive on communications and key milestones. The Board received the proposed 2026 communication plan and committed to a review of the plan by the Executive Committee and follow up discussion with Redbrick.

Motion: *"That the ROMA Board receive the communication plan; and*

"That the Executive Committee meet to review the 2026 communication plan including discussion with Redbrick."

Moved: Pam Sayne

Seconded: Nathan Townend

Carried

TIMED ITEMS

12. 10:00 AM – 10:30 AM: Rural Data Project, HEAR (Health, Economy, and Adaptation in Rural Communities) Initiative – Leith Deacon, Associate Professor, Rural Planning & Development, University of Guelph (Pages 73-88)

The ROMA Board received the presentation and directed AMO staff to explore opportunities to promote the project to ROMA members.

Motion: *"That the ROMA Board receive the presentation; and*

"That the Board direct staff to collaborate with Dr. Deacon to clarify the benefits of the HEAR Initiative, review the survey details and timeline, explore additional channels such as AMCTO, and determine potential promotional activities, including a pre-conference workshop or webinar."

Moved: Steve McCabe

Seconded: Carma Williams

Carried

13. 10:40 AM – 11:00 AM LAS Concierge Service for Energy Planning – Judy Dezell, Director Enterprise Centre, Business Partnerships & LAS (Pages 89-93)

The ROMA Board approved LAS to pilot a rural energy concierge service and to encourage municipalities to prepare for IESO RFP participation, noting that this equitable approach can also support public education.

Motion: *"That the ROMA Board support LAS in piloting a rural energy concierge service and encourage municipalities to prepare for IESO RFP participation."*

Moved: Nicole Martin

Seconded: Carma Williams

Carried

INFORMATION ITEMS

14. Resolutions

NORDS

- i. 25-20-23 NORDS Pilot Program_Municipality of Huron Shores (*Pages 94-95*)
- ii. 25-129 NORDS_Municipality of Mattice – Val CôtéResolution_R-250520-004_ Municipality of West Gray (*Pages 96*)
- iii. 2025 08 26 Resolution Support FONOM NORDS Pilot_Twp of Strong (*Pages 97-98*)
- iv. 2025-094 make NORDS program permanent_Town of Parry Sound (*Pages 99-100*)
- v. Machar Support NORDS_Twp of Machar (*Pages 101*)
- vi. Municipality of St.-Charles Res 2025-223 - NORDS Pilot Program (*Pages 102*)
- vii. NORDS Pilot Program_Town of Cobalt (*Pages 103-104*)
- viii. NORDS Program_Township of McMurrich-Monteith (*Pages 105-106*)
- ix. NORDs Support Correspondence Letter_Twp of Black River Matheson (*Pages 107*)
- x. NORDS_Township of McGarry (*Pages 108-109*)
- xi. North Bay_Support for Making NORDS Pilot Program Permanent and Expanding Program Eligibility (*Pages 110-111*)
- xii. R-126-25 NORDS Progam_Ryerson Township (*Pages 112*)
- xiii. Res 2025-170-NORDS pilot program permanent-Township of Armstrong (*Pages 113*)
- xiv. Resolution 25-310_Municipality of Killarney_re-NORDS (*Pages 114-124*)
- xv. Resolution 2025-092 NORDS Program_Municipality of Mattawan (*Pages 125-126*)
- xvi. Resolution 2025-95 NORDS Pilot Program_Township of Hilliard (*Pages 127*)
- xvii. Support Making the NORDS Pilot Program Permanent and Expanding Program Eligibility_Town of Bruce Mines (*Pages 128*)
- xviii. Support Resolution 25-235 City of North Bay, RE Support for Making NORDS Pilot Program Permanent and Expanding Program Eligibility_Blind River (*Pages 129*)
- xix. Town of Hearst resolution No. 305-2025 - NORDS Program (*Pages 130-135*)
- xx. Town of Nemi_NORDS (*Pages 136*)
- xxi. Township of Bonfield_NORDS (*Pages 137*)
- xxii. Township of Evanturel-NORDS Pilot Program - Resolution No. 9 - 8.20.25 (*Pages 138*)
- xxiii. Township of Larder Lake-NORDS (*Pages 139-142*)

Softwood Lumber Dispute

- i. Motion of Support from Bonfield Township re- resolution of the softwood lumber dispute (*Pages 143*)
- ii. Municipality of Killarney_resolution re-the tariff impact on the softwood lumber industry in Ontario (*Pages 144-145*)
- iii. Support FONOM'S call for urgent action on Softwood Lumber Industry in Northeastern Ontario-Twn Parry Sound (*Pages 146-148*)
- iv. Support Resolution - FONOM - Softwood Lumber_Town of Nemi (*Pages 149*)

Strong Mayor Power

- i. Opposition to Strong Mayor Powers_Township of Amaranth (Pages 150)
- ii. Res 2025-168 Strong Mayor Powers-Signed_Town of Englehart (Pages 151)

Other

- i. 2025 09.10 _2025-223 Support for Ontario Forestry Sector-Village of Sundridge (Pages 152-153)
- ii. 2025-07-16 AFGO Soil Health_Township of Southwold (Pages 154-157)
- iii. 2025-08-12 - Resolution Letter Re. Request for Review and Reform of Provincial Offences System (Pages 158-161)
- iv. Building Case for a 2+1 Highway motion to support from Calvin Twp (Pages 162-171)
- v. EOWC Resolution - EOWC Support for the Standardization of Development Charges for Retirement Homes in Ontario (Pages 172-174)
- vi. Grey Highlands Resolution 2025-423 - Bill 17 (Pages 175-176)
- vii. LTR -Support Letter re Municipality of Chatham-Kent re Bill 5-Risks to your communities and support_Twp of Stone Mills (Pages 177-179)
- viii. Moratorium on Aerial Spraying Glyphosate in the TImiskaming Forest_ Town of Cobalt (Pages 180)
- ix. Motion for ROMA - Elect Respect (Pages 181-182)**
- x. Municipality of Calvin's Council Resolution 2025-257 is support of the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc Re ON Reg 391-21 (Pages 184)
- xi. Municipality of Central Huron - Letter of Support - Bill C-2 section 77.5 (Pages 185-188)
- xii. Municipality of Central Huron - Letter of Support - Raising OW and ODSP (Pages 189-194)
- xiii. Municipality of West Grey Resolution Re-Advocacy for Disability Without Poverty (Pages 195-197)
- xiv. Parry Sound Mega School resolution of Whitestone Council (Pages 198-199)
- xv. Res 2025-214 - Natural Gas Expansion - Project Cancellation-Municipality of St.-Charles (Pages 200-201)
- xvi. Resolution for NOMA - Consultation on the Future of Community Natural Gas Expansion (Pages)
- xvii. Resolution of Essex County Council - Elect Respect Pledge (Pages 204-206)
- xviii. Resolution of Support - Declaration of Food Insecurity within Merrickville-Wolford (Pages 207-208)
- xix. Resolution to extend deadline for fire certification_Larder Lake (Pages 209-212)
- xx. Support Resolution - Municipality of Tweed re OPP Funding-Town of Plympton-Wyoming (Pages 213)

Motion: "That the ROMA Board support the ELECT Respect Resolution by AMO Board member and Mayor of Burlington, Marianne Meed Ward."

Moved: Carma Williams

Seconded: Steve McCabe

And;

Motion: "That the Board receive the resolutions as information."

Moved: Jamie McGrail

Seconded: Nicole Martin

Carried

15. Correspondence

- i. C25-147 - Chief Coroner Review_Report (Pages 214-220)
- ii. C25-147A - Outgoing.AMO.ROMA.Huyer.Recommendation Letter.22Sep2025 (Pages 221-222)
- iii. Elect Respect Letter from Mayor Meed Ward to ROMA (Pages 223-224)
- iv. FONOM Elects New Leadership at Parry Sound Board Meeting (Pages 225-226)
- v. ICI Letter to ROMA re-update on Blue Box Collection (Pages 227-231)
- vi. Letter from the Honourable Todd McCarthy, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (Pages 232-233)
- vii. LTR from the Hon. Trevor Jones, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness (Pages 234-237)
- viii. LTR to MMAH re-Request for Municipal Modernization Program Funding from County of Renfrew (Pages 238-240)
- ix. Trent Hills Council's Collaborative Response - Strong Mayor Powers - Municipality of Trent Hills (Pages 214-242)
- x. Wendy Landry appointed to IESO Board – NOMA (Pages 243)

Motion: *"That the Board receive the correspondence materials."*

Moved: *Dane Nielsen*

Seconded: *Carma Williams*

Carried

OTHER BUSINESS

16. Other business brought forward by members

17. Agenda items for future ROMA Board meetings

ADJOURNMENT

18. Next meeting: December 18 – ROMA Committee of the Whole / December 19 – ROMA Board Meeting

19. Adjournment

Motion: *"That there being no further business, the Board move to adjourn."*

Moved: *Dane Nielsen*

Seconded: *Jennifer Murphy*

Carried