

ROMA BOARD MEETING

Friday, May 17, 2024
9:00 AM – 11:30 AM

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)

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

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)

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)

Paul Latam, Councillor, Town of Grand Valley (AMO Rural Caucus)

Staff:

Afshin Majidi, Executive Treasurer, AMO

Petra Wolfbeiss, Director, Membership Centre, AMO

Lindsay Jones, Director of Policy and Government Relations, AMO

Adam Garcia, Manager, Executive Office

Karen Nesbitt, Senior Manager, Policy, AMO

Balqis Ehsan, Policy Advisor, AMO

Megan Abraham, Consultant, Redbrick

Lucas Stein, Digital Communications Intern, AMO

Lora Tigno, Administrative Assistant, Membership Centre, AMO

Guests:

None Identified

Early Departures:

None Identified

Regrets:

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

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

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 – None Identified

3. Cross Province Check-in – Robin Jones, Chair/All (*Verbal*)

Board members provided updates on local matters.

A number of key themes emerged regarding financial challenges of residents including:

- Property tax arrears-in a number of municipalities there has been an increase in tax arrears. Municipalities are working with residents on payment options.
- Hydro shut-offs – increase in hydro suspensions due to non-payment; and
- Increased demand for food bank and other services

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

4. Approval of Friday, May 17, 2024 Meeting Agenda (*Pages 1-3*)

Motion:

"That the Board approve the agenda for Friday, May 17, 2024."

Moved: Jamie McGrail

Seconded: Jennifer Murphy

CARRIED

5. Approval of Friday April 19, 2024, ROMA Meeting Minutes (*Pages 4-14*)

Motion:

"That the Board approve the minutes from the April 19, 2024 meeting".

Moved: Peter Emon

Seconded: Rainey Weisler

CARRIED

6. Executive-Treasurer – Afshin Majidi, Executive Treasurer

a. ROMA Financial Statements – Q1 (*Pages 15-21*)

Afshin Majidi provided an update on ROMA's Q1 financials. Conference revenues were healthy, despite increased costs in areas like food and AV. A successful 2024 conference provides additional support to a strong position in reserves.

Legal costs related to a drainage dispute are slightly over budget but expected. Auditors will present the year-end draft audited financial statements at the next meeting.

Motion:

“That the ROMA Board receive the March 2024 financial statements as presented.”

Moved: Paul Latam

Seconded: Mark Wilson

CARRIED

DISCUSSION ITEMS

7. Delegation Meeting(s) at AMO Conference – Robin Jones, Chair/All (*Verbal*)

The Board agreed to submit a request for a multi-minister delegation at the 2024 AMO Conference. Suggested issues to bring forward include:

- Rural housing and infrastructure
- Healthcare access and capacity
- Homelessness and opioids
- Review of provincial-municipal funding relationship

A strategic approach prioritizing key topics and informing all relevant ministers was emphasized, with the policy team tasked with refining issues and preparing briefing documents.

Motion:

“That the ROMA Board direct staff to prepare recommended delegation meetings and topics for board consideration.”

Moved: Paul Latam

Seconded: Steve McCabe

CARRIED

8. Revised 2024 Workplan – Robin Jones, Chair/All (*To be delivered*)

A streamlined and revised 2024 workplan was tabled. Members approved the revised work plan. It was agreed that specific actions will be discussed when the Board meets next in Thunder Bay, June 12-14.

Motion:

"That the ROMA Board approved the revised 2024 workplan,"; and

"That the Board, in Thunder Bay, determine key actions for the remainder of 2024".

Moved: Jennifer Murphy

Seconded: Pam Sayne

CARRIED

9. June Meeting Update – Thunder Bay – Robin Jones, Chair/All (*Verbal*)

Chair Jones shared the itinerary for the June meeting in Thunder Bay:

Agenda Highlights:

- Wednesday: Arrival and dinner organized.
- Thursday: Explore Roslyn's modular home factory, visit Kakabeka Falls, and possibly have lunch nearby.
- Visits: Chief of Fort William First Nation, the colonial fort in Thunder Bay, and the Terry Fox Memorial.
- Cultural Experience: Visit the Ahnisnabae Art Gallery.
- Friday: Business meeting with potential speakers from OMAFRA, sharing insights and stories about the Thunder Bay area.

A full itinerary with specifics will be provided in the coming weeks.

Motion:

"That the ROMA Board receive this item as information."

Moved: Steve McCabe

Seconded: Mark Wilson

CARRIED

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

Megan Abraham delivered the ROMA Communications update. Communications have focused on further promoting the "Fill the Gaps" paper and upcoming Teeny Tiny Summits.

Social media following and engagement remain steady. A new platform is being used for the ROMA newsletter (myEmma), providing better analytics, including link clicks and user engagement. The last newsletter performed well, with a 34.3% open rate and a high platform score.

Next steps include developing ROMA's annual report, preparing an upcoming newsletter focused on

broadband, highlighting the Teeny Tiny Summits, and updating video content for next year. The goal is to keep videos under two minutes for better engagement on social platforms.

Motion:

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

Moved: Sandra Datars Bere

Seconded: Carma Williams

CARRIED

POLICY

11. Policy Update - Karen Nesbitt, Senior Manager, Policy AMO (*Verbal*)

Karen Nesbitt provided the policy updates.

i. Broadband

- Following last meeting's approval of key messages, the AMO Policy Centre and Redbrick drafted an email to ROMA members highlighting the 2025 date and need to get ready to approve a lot of construction permits.
- AMO Policy staff surveyed a sample of rural municipalities on implementation. Key findings:
 - Where ISPs have engaged municipalities there's confidence and a plan to meet the 2025 implementation goal
 - But lots of ISPs have not made contact or have not shared details yet.
- Province continues to push ISPs to talk to municipalities and submit construction permits.
- Minister's roundtable with heads of council and CAOs in June

ii. Housing and Infrastructure

- Team Ontario joint letter sent to Minister Fraser to initiate trilateral negotiation on the Canada Housing Infrastructure Fund. Proposed an officials and political table. Political table to include representatives from AMO, Ontario Big City Mayors, Toronto, and Ottawa
- AMO submitted oral and written comments to the standing committee on Bill 185, Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act, which includes the province's newest housing supply action plan. AMO also submitted comments on associated postings on the Environmental Registry of Ontario and Regulation Registry. Comments focused on calls for:
 - Reversing more Bill 23 development charge changes, specifically restoring housing services and the cost of land as eligible costs
 - Enshrining MZO requirements for municipal approval and use in extraordinary circumstances in legislation.
 - Land use planning changes including in response to the newest PPS draft, namely:
 - To address ambiguity on when prime agricultural land severances and settlement

boundary expansions may be permitted under the new framework.

- Oppose downloading planning from region to lower tiers.
- Pushing for clarity on the Duty to Consult and consent with Indigenous communities.
- Raised environmental risk / capacity issues
- More consultation to come on housing supply action plan ideas announced with the bill, including more exemptions from the planning Act for community infrastructure like elementary and high schools and hospitals.
- Province released the Affordable Housing Bulletin
- The new Building Code was released in April, and takes effect in 2025. Ontario didn't adopt the federal energy efficiency building requirements. AMO wrote to Minister Calandra
- Links:
 - Written Bill 185 comments to standing committee:
<https://www.amo.on.ca/sites/default/files/assets/DOCUMENTS/Policy-Updates/2024/2024-05-08/StandingCtteFED-Bill1852024-05-06.pdf>
 - Bill 185 ERO and Regulatory Registry comments, as well as information on the Affordable Housing Bulletin and the new Building Code: <https://www.amo.on.ca/policy/land-use-planning-resources-and-climate-change/national-housing-strategy-funding-ontario>

iii. Other Updates

- New **draft Ontario Health Teams regulation** posted for comment. AMO submitted feedback: <https://www.amo.on.ca/policy/land-use-planning-resources-and-climate-change/national-housing-strategy-funding-ontario>
- The Ministry of Energy directed the Ontario Energy Board to look at the **funding model for electricity distribution infrastructure** and make recommendations to ease funding. The Electricity Distributors' Association estimates \$120 billion will need to be invested by 2050 to meet local distribution needs. The build out is driven by Ontario's electrification strategy and growth and will have a direct impact on municipalities as majority LDC owners. AMO is working with municipalities and energy partners to provide advice on how this infrastructure gets paid for and how expansion is coordinated with municipal planners.

Motion:

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

Moved: Mark Wilson

Seconded: Dave Beres

CARRIED

REPORTS OF AMO and ROMA COMMITTEES

12. Committee Reports

- i. Nuclear Waste Management Ontario (NWMO) Municipal Forum – Steve McCabe, Councillor, Township of Wellington North

Steve McCabe attended his first meeting as the ROMA NMWO municipal liaison. The meeting included a discussion on South Bruce and Ignace councils signing agreements for the Deep Geologic Repository (DGR) project. South Bruce signed a \$412 million agreement over 38 years, providing \$2.9 million annually. Ignace's site, located on Crown land, is 43 km from Ignace and 47 km from Dryden, requiring substantial infrastructure development. Both locations offer unique advantages and challenges.

The project's long-term nature includes overcoming hurdles like gaining approval from the Saugeen Ojibway Nation for South Bruce and the Treaty 3 communities for Ignace. Both communities must hold referendums with at least 51% support for the project to proceed. If either fails, the project will start over.

Key discussion points included the vast scope of the repository and its impact on local infrastructure and industry. Steve also raised a question about the management of excavated material, which is planned to be stored on-site, providing free gravel to local municipalities if needed.

Future steps involve potential tours of NWMO facilities to gain firsthand insight into the project. The board agreed on the importance of seeing the site's progress and understanding the process better.

Motion:

“That the Board receive the update on Nuclear Waste Management Ontario (NWMO) Municipal Forum as information.”

Moved: Steve McCabe

Seconded: Paul Latam

CARRIED

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

Pam Sayne shared with members information on the upcoming Summits:

- Tweed-June 5
- Minden-June 6
- Holstein-May 28

Steve McCabe will represent ROMA at the Teeny Tiny Summit in Holstein, Jennifer Murphy will attend the summit in Tweed, and Pam Sayne will attend in Minden.

Motion:

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

Moved: Pam Sayne

Seconded: Jennifer Murphy

CARRIED

iii. Other

INFORMATION ITEMS

13. Return to Combined ROMA and OGRA Conferences

- a. Grey County Resolution Letter - Town of Goderich - Return to Combined ROMA and OGRA Conferences *(Pages 22)*
- b. Municipality of Killarney_ROMA and OGRA Conf *(Pages 23-26)*
- c. Municipality of South Dundas _Combine ROMA and OGRA Conference *(Pages 27-28)*
- d. Temigami-Letter of Support Goderich OGRA ROMA *(Pages 29)*
- e. Township of Addington Highlands_LTR of Support_Mar26 Town of Goderich_ROMA and OGRA Conf *(Pages 30)*

14. Water and Wastewater

- a. Loyalist Township Motion regarding Affordability of Water and Wastewater Rates Letter *(Pages 31-32)*
- b. Resolution of Support - Tay Township - Affordability of Water and Wastewater Rates *(Pages 33-36)*

15. Tile Drain Loan Limit

- a. 2024 04 10 Town of Plympton-Wyoming Support Resolution - Adelaide Metcalfe - Tile Drain Loan Limit *(Pages 37-39)*
- b. Letter to Minister Thompson Request to Increase the Tile Drain Loan Limit_Elgin County *(Pages 40-43)*
- c. Municipality of North Perth _Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs - Tile Drain Loan Limit *(Pages 44-46)*
- d. Municipality of South Huron 2024.04.12 - Support Township of Adelaide Metcalfe - Request to Increase Tile Drain Loan Amount *(Pages 47-48)*
- e. Municipality of West Grey_2024-04-16 Resolution Letter Re Request to Increase Tile Drain Loan Amount *(Pages 49-51)*
- f. Township of Addington Highlands, Letter of Support – Township of Adelaide Metcalfe RE Request to Increase Tile Drain Loan Limit *(Pages 52)*

16. Other

- a. 2024 04 10 Town of Plympton-Wyoming Support Resolution - Terrace Bay - Energy Transition *(Pages 53-55)*
- b. Bonnechere Valley_Support Letter Resolutions Blue Box *(Pages 56)*
- c. Hastings County Motion - Sustainable Infrastructure Funding for Small Rural Municipalities *(Pages 57-58)*
- d. Kosicki v. Toronto - Adverse Possession of Lands *(Pages 59-60)*
- e. Loyalist Township _Motion Letter regarding Accessible Ontario by 2025 *(Pages 61-63)*
- f. Loyalist Township _Motion Letter regarding Housing Funding *(Pages 64-66)*

- g. Loyalist Township _Motion Letter regarding Public Health Laboratories (*Pages 67-68*)
- h. Municipality of Chatham-Kent _2024 Phase our of Free Water Well Testing (*Pages 69*)
- i. Municipality of Trent Lakes_2024-05-08 - Federal Capital Gains Tax (*Pages 70-71*)
- j. Ontario's Energy Transition Roundtable Discussion April 17 2024 (*Pages 72-90*)
- k. Response email from the Premier of Ontario re ROMA LTR of Support for FONOM (*Pages 91*)
- l. ROMA_LTR to Premier re_Support for FONOM (*Pages 92-93*)
- m. Timiskaming District Access to Transportation for Medical Appointments Meeting Minutes (*Pages 94-97*)
- n. Town of Smiths Falls_Basic Income Guarantee (*Pages 98-101*)
- o. Township of Southgate Resolution of Support No 2024-227 - Municipality of Brighton - Rideshare Services (*Pages 102-105*)
- p. Township of Stirling Rawdon_Hastings County - Sustainable Infrastructure (*Pages 106*)
- q. Warden Peckford Itr Minister Cho 25-04-2024 (*Pages 107-108*)
- r. Warden Peckford Itr Minister Jones 25-04-2024 (*Pages 109-110*)

OTHER BUSINESS

- 17. Other business brought forward by members
- 18. Agenda items for future ROMA Board meetings
 - ROMA branding

ADJOURNMENT

- 19. Next meeting: June 14, 2024, Location: **(HYBRID; Hotel: Valhalla Hotel & Conference Centre, 1 Valhalla Inn Road Thunder Bay Ontario P7E 6J1)**
- 20. Adjournment

Motion

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

Moved by: Jennifer Murphy
Seconded by: Dave Beres

CARRIED