



MINUTES

ROMA BOARD MEETING

Friday, July 19, 2024

9:00 AM – 1:00 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)

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

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)

Christa Lowry, 1st Vice Chair, Mayor, Municipality of Mississippi Mills (Zone 8)

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)

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

Staff:

Afshin Majidi, Executive Treasurer, AMO

Petra Wolfbeiss, Director, Membership Centre, AMO

Judy Dezell, Director Enterprise Centre, Business Partnerships & LAS

Karen Nesbitt, Senior Manager, Policy, AMO

Adam Garcia, Manager, Executive Office

Farah Tayabali, Vice-President, Redbrick

Aliya Khayat, LAS Billing & Settlement Clerk, LAS

Lucas Stein, Digital Communications Intern, AMO

Lora Tigno, Administrative Assistant, Membership Centre, AMO

Early Departures:

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

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

Peter Emon, Reeve, Town of Renfrew (AMO Rural Caucus)

Regrets:

Carma Williams, Deputy Mayor, Township of North Glengarry (Zone 7)

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

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

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

3. Approval of Friday, July 19, 2024, Meeting Agenda (*Pages 1-3*)

Chair Jones advised members that the multi-ministry delegation request was added to the agenda as Item 7.

Motion:

"That the Board approve the amended agenda for Friday, July 19, 2024, with the addition of Item 7, Multi-ministry delegation request."

Moved: Rainey Weisler

Seconded: Steve McCabe

CARRIED

4. Approval of Friday, June 14, 2024, ROMA Meeting Minutes (*Pages 4-10*)

Motion

"That the Board approve the minutes from the June 14, 2024 meeting".

Moved: Dave Beres

Seconded: Janet Hager

CARRIED

DISCUSSION ITEMS

5. LAS Water and Wastewater Expert Panel – Judy Dezell, Director Enterprise Centre, Business Partnerships & LAS (*Verbal*)

Judy Dezell reviewed the work underway by LAS on the creation of a municipal water and wastewater utility. To support this work, an Expert Advisory Committee has been formed to oversee the feasibility of developing a water and waste water municipal utility. Part of the work of the Committee includes sector consultation. A number of key questions have been developed to guide next steps. Judy solicited the Board's input on these questions:

- *How could a water and wastewater utility system be structured (i.e., voluntary participation, based on geography)?*
- *If water and wastewater systems moved a utility model, what impacts would this have on municipal budgeting and debt issuance?*
- *If LAS were to implement a utility model, what practical considerations are there?*
- *Is a utility model of interest in rural Ontario?*

The discussion focused on the benefits and challenges of regionalizing water utilities in Ontario. Key points included structuring models such as municipal service corporations or boards, the importance of involving local First Nations communities, and managing risks. Transitioning to utility models raised concerns about municipal budgeting and debt issuance. Practical considerations for employees, like job security, were also emphasized, along with the need for strong core boards and safeguarding water sources. Timing of implementation, particularly in relation to elections, was another significant topic.

Judy advised members that next steps include legal analysis, consulting private operators, and aligning next steps with municipal elections. Judy committed to returning to the Board as work progresses.

Motion

“That Judy Dezell, Director of Enterprise Centre and LAS, receive the feedback from the ROMA Board to inform the feasibility study of the creation of a municipal water and wastewater utility.”

Moved: Jennifer Murphy

Seconded: Rainey Weisler

CARRIED

6. Board Schedule for ROMA Booth - Robin Jones, Chair/All (*Verbal*)

The ROMA Board will have a booth at the upcoming AMO Conference in the City of Ottawa, August 18-21, 2024. Members were asked to commit time to being available at the booth over the time of the trade show.

Motion

“That the Board member participation schedule at the ROMA Booth in the AMO Exhibition Hall be confirmed and shared in follow up to the meeting”.

Moved: Peter Emon

Seconded: Paul Latam

CARRIED

7. ROMA Multi-Ministry Delegation Request for AMO Conference – Robin Jones/all

Chair Jones advised members that the provincial government would not be holding multi-ministry meetings at the 2025 AMO conference. The government had received over 900 delegation requests and the province advised they are looking to maximize the number of delegation meetings they can hold. Recognizing that the purpose of a multi-ministry meeting in developing cross-government understanding and action on rural matters would not be possible, the Board agreed to withdraw the delegation meeting request for 2024.

Motion

“That the Board direct staff to advise the province the request for delegation meetings be withdrawn for 2024 citing the lack of opportunity for a multi-ministry meeting”

Moved: Christa Lowry

Seconded: Christina Early

8. ROMA 2025 Conference Planning – Petra Wolfbeiss/All (*Pages 11-24*)

The Board had an opportunity to provide input into conference planning efforts related to keynote speakers, concurrent sessions, the conference theme, Zone meet ups and a Sunday lunch.

2025 Conference Theme: *Rural Routes*

Keynote speakers:

- Political pundit-staff to review options and costs
- AMO’s Social and economic Prosperity Review – Lindsay Jones

Concurrent Session Topics

1. Update on Healthy Democracy Project and Workforce Development Projects (with rural focus)
2. Basic Income
3. Water and Wastewater-updates from LAS and policy
4. Encampments and homelessness
5. Broadband
6. POA
7. Access to Health

8. Mental Health and the Opioid Crisis
9. Infrastructure
10. Energy
11. Economic Development

Zone Meet ups:

The Board agreed to maintain status quo by holding the meet ups Sunday morning of the Conference. The Zone meet ups will continue to be highlighted in promotions.

Sunday Lunch

Board members had previously requested staff to look into providing an onsite Sunday lunch for delegates. Lunch has traditionally not been available on Sundays in alignment with programming. Recognizing that many participants are onsite for delegation meetings and the back to back nature of these, a lunch would be helpful.

The Board agree that a Sunday lunch will be provided at the 2025 Conference at a cost of approximately \$120,000.

Motion

“That the Board approve the ROMA 2025 planning approach.” And

“That the Board direct staff to begin program development as discussed.”

Moved: Janet Hager

Seconded: Paul Latam

CARRIED

12. Revised 2024 Workplan – Robin Jones, Chair/All (*Pages 25-37*)

Building on feedback arising from members at the previous meeting, a revised and streamlined workplan for 2024 was tabled. The workplan focused on 3 priorities:

1. Advance ROMA’s policy work and advocacy in support of the economic, social and health well-being of rural Ontario communities.
2. Build ROMA’s leadership through strengthening Ontario’s municipal voice in aligning and partnering with sister associations and relevant others.
3. Advance rural leadership and local democracy in lead up to 2026.

Workplan activities will be developed with a focus on the anticipation of a provincial election.

Motion

“That the Board approve the revised workplan and that staff be directed to consider actions for discussion at the next meeting of the Board”.

Moved: Dave Beres

Seconded: Rainey Weisler

CARRIED

13. Board Orientation -September Meeting - Robin Jones, Chair/All (Verbal)

Members were advised that the September meeting of the Board will include a Committee of the Whole meeting that will be focused on Board orientation specific to their governance roles. This will align understanding within the Board including newly elected AMO rural caucus members.

Motion

“That the Board direct staff to plan the Board briefing for the September meeting as discussed”.

Moved: Steve McCabe

Seconded: Peter Emon

CARRIED

14. ROMA Communications Update – Farah Tayabali, Vice President, and Megan Abraham, Consultant, Redbrick (Verbal)

Farah Tayabali provided an update on communications, noting strong engagement from recent social media efforts and the upcoming Annual Report.

Motion:

“That the Board receive the Redbrick communication update as information”.

Moved: Peter Emon

Seconded: Janet Hager

CARRIED

POLICY

15. Policy Update - Karen Nesbitt, Senior Manager, Policy AMO (Pages 38-41)

16. Housing and Homelessness

- National Housing Strategy: In May, Canada and Ontario announced that \$350M National Housing Strategy funding will continue to flow to Ontario as per the original agreement, ensuring that municipal and DSSAB investments in community housing are able to proceed as planned. The province credits this federal decision to joint advocacy from AMO and the province. AMO continues to reinforce its position that all levels of government must work together to fundamentally re-think the way that community housing is funded in Ontario. As well, a shared commitment to end homelessness is required.
- Encampments: AMO issued a [position paper](#) in July.
- Ending homelessness research project this year to:
 - o Quantify the current scale and scope of chronic homelessness in Ontario and potential growth without additional interventions.
 - o Identify and cost solutions at a provincial level to end chronic homelessness in Ontario to a functional zero standard by 2030.
 - o Identify the gap between current municipal, provincial, and federal investments and the required investments to end homelessness in Ontario by 2030.
- Building Faster Fund: 10% for rural, small and northern pending; allocation has since been announced.
- The [AMO Knowledge Exchange on Community and Supportive Housing Symposium](#), October 1 - 2, will convene elected officials, municipal staff, federal and provincial representatives, Indigenous partners, and other sector partners for networking, knowledge sharing, and collaboration on how we can work together to advance community and supportive housing solutions. Registration open.

Infrastructure

- "Team Ontario" and Canada Housing Infrastructure Fund: Working with OBCM and with support from the AMO Executive and the province, shared analysis on the proposed conditions for the \$5B in national infrastructure funding. Shared with the federal government; waiting for next steps.
- Water/Wastewater Municipal Services Corporations – July launched [backgrounder](#) including:
 - Facts about MSCs for water and wastewater.
 - The benefits, strategic considerations and risks related to governance, finance, and planning.
 - Examples of four existing MSCs.
- Broadband implementation: Minister's Roundtable in June; next up are implementation supports and communication, namely a Municipal Access Agreement template which is under development under ERON's leadership with the province with municipal staff input. Province is working on the issue of private landowners blocking broadband installation.

Health

- Opioid Crisis – [paper](#) issued in July.
- Public Health Standards Review -
 - The province has begun confidential consultations on the Ontario Public Health Standards and public health funding
 - Our Health Transformation Task Force met with the Chief Medical Officer of Health and Ministry officials to provide feedback
 - Big area of interest is ensuring that there is alignment between expectations for public health units under the standards and capacity/funding to deliver on them.
- Access to care advocacy – joint AMO-OMA Resolutions Campaign.
 - AMO and the Ontario Medical Association (OMA) jointly developed a council resolution urging the province to recognize the physician shortage in municipalities. By adopting this resolution, municipalities

can play a crucial role in highlighting the urgent need for more healthcare resources and support.

Child Care

- Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care implementation
 - Joint advocacy with the province to adjust for-profit and not-for-profit providers' space ratios. Joint letter calling for more flex on ratios, to allow more for-profit operators to address wait lists.

Indigenous Relations

- Indigenous Advisory Council - Provided early direction on the approach to developing an AMO Indigenous Action Plan.
- Joint advocacy with Chiefs of Ontario – Provincial Policy Statement
 - Called for additional clarity on requirements for municipalities to engage with First Nations in land use development, asking for more guidance.

Finance and Governance

- Social and Economic Prosperity Review – Highlighted the new Minister letter-writing campaign ahead of the AMO Conference.
- Property Tax Review – Province consulting with AMO's Municipal Finance Task Force. Members called for a property tax reassessment, and a social and economic prosperity review as the property tax base is overburdened.

Motion

"That the policy updates be received".

Moved: Christa Lowry

Seconded: Jennifer Murphy

CARRIED

INFORMATION ITEMS

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

17. AMO POLICY PAPER

- a. Policy Paper on The Opioid Crisis (*Pages 42-55*)
- b. Policy Paper on Homeless Encampments in Ontario (*Pages 56-70*)

18. Champlain Bridge

- a. 2024-203 Champlain Bridge Rehabilitation-Municipality of Magnetawan (*Pages 71*)
- b. Resolution No. 2024-143 Support West Nipissing (Champlain Bridge)-East Ferris (*Pages 72*)
- c. Support resolution for replacement of Champlain Bridge-West Nipissing (*Pages 73-74*)

19. Discussion Paper on Regulating Commercial-Scale Geologic Carbon Storage-MNRF

- a. Geologic Carbon Storage Backgrounder *(Pages 75-77)*
- b. Posting_019-8767_Notification Letter_2024-07-10 *(Pages 78)*

20. National Basic Income

- a. 24-06-18 - Resolution - Request for Support of National Basic Income-Tay Valley Township *(Pages 79-81)*
- b. Correspondence-Lanark Basic Income Network-Request for Support of National Basic Income-28Jun2024-Perth *(Pages 82-93)*

21. Re-assessment Cycle

- a. 06.27.2024 Letter of Support Re reassessment cycle-Township of Pelee *(Pages 94-95)*
- b. 9.Support - Callendar - Resumption Property Assessment Cycle - 6.20.24-Township of Ewanturel *(Pages 96-99)*
- c. 2024-06-19 Letter of Support - Urging the Government to Promptly Resume Assessment Cycle-Township of North Huron *(Pages 100-102)*
- d. Resume Assessment Cycle Village of Oil Springs *(Pages 103-104)*

22. Road Closures

- a. LTR to Solicitor General_Road Closure Notification Protocol_2024-06-07_Town of Cochrane *(Pages 105-106)*
- b. Res. 24-131 Road Closures-Municipality of Mattice – Val Côté *(Pages 107-108)*

23. Sustainable Infrastructure

- a. Council Resolution - Investment in Municipal Infrastructure - July 8, 2024-Village of Merrickville-Wolford *(Pages 109-112)*
- b. Hastings re Infrastructure Funding_ Town of Gore Bay *(Pages 113-114)*
- c. Letter regarding County of Frontenac support for Sustainable Infrastructure Funding for Small Rural Municipalities *(Pages 115-116)*
- d. RESOLUTION - Investment in Municipal Infrastructure for Eastern Ontario-Township of Killaloe *(Pages 117-118)*
- e. Resolution Infrastructure Small Rural Municipalities-Township of North Dundas *(Pages 119-121)*
- f. Resolution Support 'Sustainable Infrastructure Funding for Small Rural Municipalities-Northumberland County *(Pages 122-127)*
- g. Support - Georgian Bay - Sustainable Infrastructure Funding - 6.19.24-Township of Ewanturel *(Pages 128-131)*
- h. Support Letter and Resolution to Increase Infrastructure Funding-TOWNSHIP OF BONNECHERE VALLEY *(Pages 132-133)*

- i. Support With Sustainable Infrastructure Funding-Municipality of McDougall (*Pages 134-136*)
- j. Sustainable Infrastructure-Village of Merrickville-Wolford (*Pages 137-138*)
- k. Township of Larder Lake Council Resolution - Sustainable Infrastructure (*Pages 139-140*)

24. OTHER

- a. A Critique of Source Water Protection in Rural and Northern Ontario (*Pages 141-149*)
- b. Endorsed Water and wastewater systems-Town of Laurentian Hills (*Pages 150-151*)
- c. EOWC Letter - OEB Registrar - Securing access to natural gas for Ontario's future - June 11, 2024 (*Pages 152-153*)
- d. How County Official Plans Zoning Changes negatively affect existing residential home ownership in order to meet provincial housing mandates-Pat and Andrew Gibson (*Pages 154-157*)
- e. Letter of Support - Municipality of Tweed - Sustainable Funding for OPP-Terrace Bay (*Pages 158-159*)
- f. Letter to all stakeholder District of Rainy River Services Board Update on CAO (*Pages 160*)
- g. letter to roma-Maxwell Christie (*Pages 161-162*)
- h. May29-24-InternationalStudentCap-County of Renfrew (*Pages 163-164*)
- i. Support Letter and Resolution Exempt Emergency Vehicles from Emission Standards-TOWNSHIP OF BONNECHERE VALLEY (*Pages 165-166*)
- j. Time to Grow - A Regional Economic Development Plan for Northwestern Ontario (*Pages 167-240*)

OTHER BUSINESS

- 25. Other business brought forward by members
- 26. Agenda items for future ROMA Board meetings

ADJOURNMENT

- 27. Next meeting: August 18, 2024, 2:00pm **In-Person at the AMO Conference**
- 28. Adjournment

Motion:

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

Moved: Rainey Weisler

Seconded: Paul Latam

CARRIED