

ROMA Board Meeting

Friday, July 18, 2025

9:00 AM – 1:30 PM

VIRTUAL Meeting

PRESENT:

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

Zone and AMO Rural Caucus Representatives:

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)

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

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

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)

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

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

Staff:

Petra Wolfbeiss, Director, Membership Centre, AMO

Afshin Majidi, ROMA Executive Treasurer

Karen Nesbitt, Senior Manager, Policy, AMO

Alicia Neufled, Senior Manager, Policy, AMO

Adam Garcia, Manager, Executive Office, AMO

Aiden Kennard, Policy Intern, AMO

Maria Rodriguez, Policy Advisor, AMO

Lora Tigno, Administrative Assistant, Membership Centre, AMO

Henry Khamonde, Membership Services Administrator, AMO

Farah Tayabali, Vice President, Redbrick

Megan Abraham, Consultant, Redbrick

Kaitlyn Mun, Digital Content Specialist, Redbrick

Regrets:

Jamie McGrail, Councillor, Municipality of Chatham-Kent (Zone 1)

Early Departure:

None Identified

1. Chair's Welcome and Introductions – Christa Lowry

The Chair welcomed members and staff and began the meeting with the following Land Acknowledgement.

"We recognize that the work of ROMA, and that of our members, takes place on the traditional territories of Indigenous peoples across what is now called Ontario.

As we gather virtually from many different locations, we acknowledge that we are each situated on traditional Indigenous lands, and we encourage everyone to take a moment to reflect on the lands they are on and their relationship to them.

ROMA's offices are located in Toronto, which is the traditional territory of many nations, including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishinaabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat peoples. Today, Toronto is home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples.

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

2. Declaration

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

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

3. Approval of Friday, July 18, 2025, Meeting Agenda (*Pages 1-3*)

Motion: *"That the Board approve the agenda for Friday, July 18, 2025."*

Moved: *Natasha Salonen*

Seconded: *Nathan Townend*

Carried

4. Approval of Friday, June 13, 2025, ROMA Meeting Minutes (*Pages 4-12*)

Motion: *"That the Board approve the minutes of Friday, June 13, 2025."*

Moved: *Janet Hager*

Seconded: Mark Wilson

Carried

DISCUSSION ITEMS

6. AMO Board of Directors Meeting Report Back – June 20, 2025 - Christa Lowry/All (Verbal)

The report back covered several key points:

- The AMO Board's report, including Brian Rosborough's retirement and the Indigenous Reconciliation Action Plan (IRAP) approved in June, to be launched at the August AMO Conference.
- The AMO Infrastructure Research Project, funded up to \$450,000, aims to inform future advocacy with the province and federal government, an RFP expected in fall 2025.

Motion: *"That the Board receive the June 20, 2025, AMO Board of Directors meeting report back as information."*

Moved: Dane Nielsen

Seconded: Natasha Salonen

Carried

7. Policy Briefing

i. Update on Policy Centre Priorities - Alicia Neufeld, Policy Senior Manager, AMO (Pages 13-15)

The Policy Center has been actively addressing trade and tariff uncertainties, including an estimated \$50 billion infrastructure cost escalation for municipalities in Ontario over the next two years, with nearly a billion dollars for planned projects impacted. The AMO forum on trade and tariffs is scheduled for October 24 in Toronto, as well as a webinar by Oxford Economics for members on July 30.

The team is also working on modular housing, Bill 6 and Bill 10, and a health survey covering 85% of the population. The discussion highlighted the need for better funding mechanisms and advocacy for municipalities.

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

Moved: Jennifer Murphy

Seconded: Steve McCabe

Carried

ii. Rural Infrastructure Strategy - Karen Nesbitt, Policy Senior Manager, AMO (Pages 16-28)

The discussion focused on the severe infrastructure challenges faced by rural communities, emphasizing the

need for a formula-based rural-specific fund due to vast geographies, small populations, and limited tax bases. Innovative approaches like Mapleton's municipal service corporation were highlighted. The conversation also touched on the economic contributions of rural areas, the aging population, and the need for better infrastructure to support growth. Concerns were raised about the current approaches to funding distribution, and the impact of resource extraction on rural economies. AMO's strategy will examine these issues and develop the strategy shining light on impacts across the municipal sector and realities.

Motion: *"That the Board direct policy staff to begin work on a rural infrastructure advocacy strategy, incorporating feedback and priorities identified by the Board."*

Moved: Mark Wilson

Seconded: Janet Hager

Carried

iii. AMO Conference Delegation Approach – Alicia Neufeld, Policy Senior Manager, AMO (Pages 29-32)

Board members were briefed on key messages to be delivered during ministerial delegations at the upcoming AMO conference. Emphasizing the Board's priority focus on infrastructure, rural health and housing/homelessness challenges.

Motion: *"That the Board receive the update on AMO Conference delegation approach and;"*

"That the Board prepare for the delegation meeting as informed by today's discussion."

Moved: Nathan Townend

Seconded: Jennifer Murphy

Carried

8. 2026 ROMA Conference Discussion (Pages 33-38)

- i. Keynote Speakers – Petra Wolfbeiss, Director, Membership Centre, AMO
- ii. Conference Theme – Petra Wolfbeiss, Director, Membership Centre, AMO
- iii. Sunday Lunch – Petra Wolfbeiss, Director, Membership Centre, AMO
- iv. Concurrent Sessions – Alicia Neufeld, Policy Senior Manager, AMO

The 2026 conference theme was confirmed as: *Ontario's Rural Leader's Conference*.

Staff reviewed a number of key decision points as planning for the 2026 Conference gets underway. Board members supported the return of Chantal Hébert as the opening keynote and also directed staff to consider former Mayor of Gatineau, France Belisle as an additional speaker.

Staff is also beginning development of concurrent sessions for further discussion at an upcoming meeting of the

Board. Staff and Board members reviewed the approach to the Sunday lunch offering with an agreement to explore joint Zone meet-ups to be scheduled over lunch thereby making a sit-down lunch option and draw to the sessions idea.

Motion: *"That the ROMA Board direct staff to begin development of the 2026 annual conference and to reflect the Board's decisions regarding the conference theme and content in the planning as discussed".*

Moved: Nicole Martin

Seconded: Janet Hager

Carried

9. Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan Follow-up Discussion - Christa Lowry/All (*Verbal*)

The Board agreed the best role for ROMA on this matter as a resource to support rural municipalities in the development and implementation of the Community Safety and Wellbeing Plans. AMO staff will explore the approach to doing so.

Motion: *"That the Board direct staff to explore opportunities for ROMA to support rural municipalities in advancing Community Safety and Well-being Plans, including options for resource sharing, advocacy, and knowledge exchange, and report back at a future meeting for more discussion."*

Moved: Carma Williams

Seconded: Pam Sayne

Carried

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

Board members were presented with preliminary design concepts for review and feedback. Feedback will be incorporated into the concept with updated options presented at the next meeting of the Board.

Motion: *"That the Board direct Redbrick to continue the rebrand exercise reflecting the discussion and feedback by the Board" and "That Redbrick come back to the next meeting with material for further review and discussion."*

Moved: Nathan Townend

Seconded: Natasha Salonen

Carried

TIMED ITEMS

11. 10:00 AM – 10:30 AM: ROMA Bursary Discussion – Adam Garcia, Manager, Executive Office, AMO (*Pages 39-48*)

A working group of Board members and staff was struck to review the best approach and award partnerships. The working group will present recommendations at an upcoming meeting of the Board.

Motion: *"That the Board establish a Working Group of Board members to discuss any proposed program expansions or substantive changes and to provide recommendations to the ROMA Board prior to final approval of awards agreements."*

Moved: Steve McCabe

Seconded: Carma Williams

Carried

INFORMATION ITEMS

12. Resolutions

Bill 5

- i. Resolution_Bill 5 - Risks to Communities_Town of Plympton-Wyoming (*Pages 49-51*)
- ii. Resolution_C2025-05-06_ Protect Ontario by Unleashing Our Economy Act, 2025_Tay Valley Township (*Pages 52-53*)
- iii. Resolution_R-250520-004_ Municipality of West Gray (*Pages 54-56*)

Disability without Poverty

- i. Resolution_2025-171_Disability without Poverty_Township of St. Joseph (*Pages 57*)
- ii. Resolution_2025-191_Disability without Poverty_Township of Champlain (*Pages 58-59*)
- iii. Resolution_2025-345_Disability without Poverty_Prince Edward County (*Pages 60-61*)
- iv. Resolution_Disability without Poverty_Township of Asphodel-Norwood (*Pages 62-63*)

Other

- i. Resolution_CSCC250528_OWFinancial Assistance Rates_County of Renfrew (*Pages 64-65*)
- ii. Resolution_204-2025_Standing for Canada_Twp of McGarry (*Pages 66-67*)
- iii. Resolution_20250602_Strong Mayor Powers_Municipality of Bluewater (*Pages 68-69*)
- iv. Resolution_10_Elect Respect Pledge_Twp of Amaranth (*Pages 70-71*)

Motion: *"That the Board receive the Information Items."*

Moved: Nicole Martin

Seconded: Steve McCabe

Carried

13. Correspondence

- i. LTR from FONOM to ROMA – Sponsorship Appreciation (*Pages 72*)
- ii. LTR from the Hon. Lisa Thompson, Minister of Rural Affairs re- ROD and Enabling Opportunity (*Pages 73-77*)
- iii. LTR to Minister Kerzner from NOSDA re-Bill 10 - Support for AMO Submission and NOSDA-Specific Concerns (*Pages 78-80*)
- iv. LTR to Prime Minister Mark Carney and Premier Ford from FONOM re-Immediate Action Needed – Softwood Lumber Dispute Threatens Northeastern Ontario's Forest Sector (*Pages 81-82*)
- v. LTR to Prime Minister Mark Carney and Premier Ford from NOMA re-Immediate Action Needed – Softwood Lumber Dispute Threatens Northwestern Ontario's Forest Sector (*Pages 83-85*)
- vi. LTR to Prime Minister Mark Carney from PE County RE-Advocacy-Tax-Exempt Canada Disability Benefit-Support for Disability Without Poverty (*Pages 86-87*)
- vii. Memo- Medical Certificate of Death and Expanding the Scope of Practice for Nurses (*Pages 88-89*)

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

Moved: *Dave Beres*

Seconded: *Carma Williams*

Carried

OTHER BUSINESS

14. Other business brought forward by members

- Western Warden Conference – scheduled for October 17. Several board members will be attending. A report on the potential date change will be provided at the August meeting.

15. Agenda items for future ROMA Board meetings

- Shared equipment agreement Town of Minto and NOTL
- Municipal service corporation – connect Mapleton and Judy (LAS)

ADJOURNMENT

16. Next meeting: August 17, 2025 – at the AMO 2025 Conference

17. Adjournment

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

Moved: *Natasha Salonen*

Seconded: *Dane Nielsen*