



# MINUTES

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## ROMA BOARD MEETING

**Sunday, August 18, 2024**  
**3:00 PM – 4:00 PM**

**Westin Hotel, Ottawa, Ontario**  
**Quebec Room, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor**

### **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)

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)

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:**

Petra Wolfbeiss, Director, Membership Centre, AMO

Karen Nesbitt, Senior Manager, Policy, AMO

Farah Tayabali, Vice-President, Redbrick

Megan Abraham, Consultant, Redbrick

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:**

Steve McCabe, Councillor, Township of Wellington North (Zone 2)

Past Chair Robin Jones, Mayor, Village of Westport

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1. Past Chair Remarks – *Robin Jones*

Robin Jones resigned from her role as ROMA Chair and passed the Chair to 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chair, Christa Lowry. Robin thanked all the board members for their dedication in the advocacy work that ROMA has been doing.

2. Chair's Welcome and Introductions – *Christa Lowry, Chair*

Chair Lowry welcomed Board members and staff to the meeting. Chair Lowry reviewed the purpose of the meeting.

3. Review discussion items with Minister Calandra – *Christa Lowry, Chair/All*

The Board reviewed the items and messages to be discussed with Minister Calandra. These included:

1. Rural housing and Infrastructure
2. Shortage of Healthcare workers
3. Homelessness and opioids
4. Review of provincial-municipal funding relationship

4. Discussion with Minister Calandra – *Christa Lowry, Chair/All*

In response to the key matters above, raised by the Board, Minister Calandra offered the following:

Infrastructure:

- The Minister acknowledged that over the past year ROMA, through its advocacy, has influenced legislation.
- Minister Calandra acknowledged that infrastructure is a massive problem, that is "impossible to address", in particular the matter of wastewater.
- There is a need to unlock possible solutions over the coming months, recognizing rural capacity challenges. The Minister acknowledged that if Toronto cannot manage the issue how is it possible for rural communities to?
- Regarding the Building Faster Fund, unspent funds will go back into the housing enabling fund.
- The Minister indicated that the need for municipalities to be at the table has been communicated to the federal government-specific to the housing accelerator fund.

Healthcare Worker Shortage:

- Acknowledging the ongoing crisis of health care worker shortages, the Minister indicated "we are in a catch-up phases" as the policies and changes the province has been moving forward on will take time to have an impact, specifically in terms of long term care homes.

Homelessness and Opioid Epidemic:

- Significant funding has been committed to the issue and the province and municipalities need to work together. The federal government needs to come to the table in a meaningful way.

Prosperity Review:

- The Minister stated that if the prosperity review is to move forward, it must be a genuine exercise with everyone (province/municipalities/AMO) coming to the table as partners.

Following the Minister's comments, the importance and value of the Minister's recent housing summit was acknowledged. Chair Lowry requested the Minister consider a similar approach focused on rural housing. The Minister was receptive to the suggestion.

ROMA members also emphasized the importance of infrastructure funding to be unlocked for rural communities.

The Minister was thanked by the Board and it was acknowledged by the Minister and the Board that ongoing conversations and work together on matters of mutual interest will continue.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

### **5. Next meeting:**

- September 19, 2024 (4:00 PM-8:00 PM) – Committee of the Whole, ROMA Board Orientation (Hybrid)
- September 20, 2024 (9:00 AM-1:00 PM) – ROMA Board Meeting (Hybrid)

### **6. Adjournment**

#### **Motion:**

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

**Moved: Paul Latam**

**Seconded: Mark Wilson**

**CARRIED**