

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



Mayor Christa Lowry

AMO Board Meeting - October 20, 2020

The AMO Board met via Zoom on September 25, 2020. The Board of Directors consists of 43 Directors organized into the following organizations:

- Association Française des Municipalités de l'Ontario
- County Caucus
- Ontario Big City Caucus (formally Large Urban Caucus)
- Northern Caucus
- Regional and Single Tier Caucus
- Rural Caucus
- Small Urban Caucus

Of note, Perth CAO Michael Touw also serves as an AMO Board Director as the staff position on the Small Urban Caucus. Board Orientation and administrative matters took a significant portion of the agenda. Matters of note include:

AMO Board Vacancies

Two director positions are currently vacant: the staff positions in the Rural and Large Urban Caucus. Outreach is currently underway to identify qualified candidates. All candidates will be interviewed by the Caucus directors, and a subsequent recommendation for appointment by the Caucus to the AMO Executive Committee and/or Board in December or January.

Presentation: Winter Maintenance Road Salt

Martin Keller, Source Protection Program Manager Grand River Conservation Authority
Chitra Gowdra, Senior Manager, Watershed Planning and Source Protection, Conservation Halton

Their report and presentation highlighted trends showing the over-application of salt and increased sodium and chloride concentrations in groundwater. The application of salt on roads and parking lots are identified as a primary source of this contamination. The report also highlighted liability legislation which provides a framework for the over-application of salt including the Minimum Maintenance Standards, the Occupier's Liability Act, and by extension, joint and several liability. It also discussed the lack of standards for private parking lots where plowing contractors often engage in over-application of salt to maintain contracts and limit liability. The report also highlights federal endeavours related to salt use.

Salt Application Resolution from Lake Erie Source Protection Committee

The Lake Erie Region Source Protection Region's report, referenced above, identifies the limits of what currently can be done under the Clean Water Act addressing over application of winter maintenance chemicals and factors influencing winter maintenance decisions. The Committee sought AMO's endorsement of their resolution. The Committee's resolutions contain recommendations to find a balanced approach to the identified challenge, addressing broader issues such as liability and training, but also more technical items to improve the source protection regulatory framework.

Cybercrime and Municipal Cyber Security

At the 2019 AMO Conference in Ottawa, cybercrime and municipal cyber security emerged as key topics with delegates. The experiences of several AMO members effected by cyberattacks made it clear that in this age of ever-expanding use of digital technology and systems connectivity, municipal governments are prime targets for cyber criminals.

In response, AMO reconstituted its Digital Government Task Force to explore opportunities in municipal cyber security. The culmination of the Task Force's work is a Municipal Cyber Security Toolkit. AMO's Digital Government Task Force consists of elected officials and municipal staff with expertise in municipal IT systems, government services, reporting, and digital initiatives. Chief Information and Technology Officers, CAOs, Clerks, directors and managers in information and technology systems, business planners, risk managers, and legal staff participated at Task Force meetings.

The Municipal Cyber Security Toolkit speaks to municipal policy and procedures, IT policy and procedures, insurance, audit and legal considerations, training and education, as well as roles of AMO, the Province and police services.

The Toolkit can be found on the AMO website here: www.amo.on.ca/AMO-PDFs/Reports/2020/A-Municipal-Cyber-Security-Toolkit-FINAL-2020-09-3.aspx

Of note: AMO is also co-hosting a Municipal Cyber Security 101 forum on October 22. The forum is targeted to council members and municipal staff who may not be familiar with cyber security basics. Details will be communicated through all AMO channels leading up to that event.

Child Care and Early Years COVID-19 Update and Advocacy

Since the onset of the pandemic, AMO staff and municipal service manager representatives have been working productively with the Ministry of Education to promote safety, sustainability, flexibility, and advance notice of changes (as much as possible).

There is an opportunity for AMO advocacy to both the federal and provincial governments to sustain and grow childcare and the early years system during the COVID-19 period and beyond into the post pandemic years. There is a good business case for AMO to do so which the Board supports; both to protect against rising municipal costs and to provide better services that will improve residents' quality of life and contribute to healthy and prosperous communities.

If funded adequately, childcare can play a key role in Ontario's economic recovery from COVID-19. Maintaining existing childcare spots has been essential to allowing parents to return to the workplace. Maintaining employment in the childcare sector is also key to recovery, especially in northern and rural communities, where child care systems can help attract and retain the skilled workforce needed to grow local economies. Further, childcare can help reduce poverty and is essential for early childhood development, leading to improved educational outcomes and a stronger labour force in the long term.



Christa Lowry
Mayor of Mississippi Mills