

The Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) Board meets regularly to review matters of general interest to municipalities. As a Board member and part of its Regional and Single-tier Caucus, I am writing to share some highlights with you of the Board's recent meeting, held August 17, 2019.

For context, the AMO Board includes 39 members. The Board of Directors sets AMO's direction and adopts its policies and its priorities. As a corporate body, the Board of Directors ensures adherence to legal requirements, as set out in the foundation charter and in the law. The Board also delegates the overall management of the organization to the Executive Director and a team of professionals. The Executive Director is responsible for the Board's strategic orientation process and for its policies, as well as for the organization's financial and overall management.

Board meetings are normally held on the fourth Friday in September, November, January, March and June. There is also a Board meeting during the weekend prior to the AMO Annual Conference in August.

August 17, 2019 Meeting Results

At its August 17 meeting, the Board considered several matters and received information regarding a variety of issues. The following reflects a summary of the meeting's results:

Decisions

Community Benefits Charge

The Board endorsed recommendations provided by the Municipal Finance Officers Association of Ontario regarding regulations needed to support new community benefit charges (CBC). CBCs will replace the use of development charges in the calculation of "soft services" (recreation, child care, libraries), parkland dedication, and Section 37 density bonusing provisions. CBC calculations will be capped by a formula based on land valuation. Consultations on this cap are ongoing and MMAH has assembled a large group of municipal treasurers, MFOA, and AMO to conduct these discussions.

MFOA based its recommendations on the following guiding principles, which the AMO Board previously endorsed:

- **Growth should pay for growth** – Provincial legislation should consistently allow municipalities to recover the full cost of infrastructure related to development.
- **Complete, vibrant communities are good for everyone** – The services needed to support complete communities go beyond water, wastewater, and roads. No community is complete without parks, libraries, and other services that help residents thrive. Revenue is needed to finance growth-related costs for a full range of services.
- **Provincial red tape costs municipalities time and money** – Overly prescriptive reporting and processes become a costly burden and fail to recognize that municipalities are an order of government led by elected officials.
- **Provincial legislation related to municipal governance should be enabling and permissive** – Provincial legislation can be overly prescriptive. Restrictive legislation removes decision making power from local authorities and chips away at local officials' ability to respond to local concerns.

Great Lakes Canada Agreement Response

The Board directed staff to provide comments to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks and the federal Department of the Environment and Climate Change on a draft Canada-Ontario agreement regarding Great Lakes Water Quality and Ecosystem Health. Generally, these comments addressed:

- the need for long-term commitments for infrastructure investments (both federally and provincially) in municipal water-related infrastructure;
- municipalities' long-standing request to transition the Blue Box to full producer responsibility to reduce plastic and other waste in Great Lakes waters; and
- the need for funding and other supports to protect communities from flooding given that "once-in-a-century" storms are happening with increasing frequency

Opioids Response

The Board approved recommendations to the provincial government that focuses on an overall drug addiction strategy and incorporates a "whole of government" scope. These will be communicated via a letter to the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions. The proposed approach acknowledges the role Municipal governments and public health units have to facilitate local solutions. However, municipal services, including public health, police, fire and paramedics across Ontario, are already under great pressures to keep up and combat rising opioid-related harm and death rates. Local responses to the opioid overdose emergency need continued provincial leadership and support.

Updates

The Board received several updates regarding AMO activities and ongoing projects. These included:

AMO Conference – information provided about the 2019 AMO conference showed attendance was the highest ever and included participation from more than 20 provincial Cabinet members. The conference provided excellent networking opportunities and offered insights into leading practices that would be of interest to municipal politicians.

Asset Management - AMO will launch a new online introductory course for elected officials on municipal asset management this fall as it continues to build capacity and monitor sector progress aligned with requirements under AMO's federal Gas Tax program and the province's Asset Management Planning Regulation.

Blue Box/Recycling – there are ongoing discussions between lawyers representing AMO, the City of Toronto and Stewardship Ontario regarding the formula used for determining stewardship payments to municipalities for their blue box program. Generally, there are differences of opinion regarding the sufficiency and appropriateness of the method used to determine the amount payable to municipalities for the provision of blue box services.

Provincial Policy Statement Update – the province is consulting on updates to the Provincial Policy Statement. The Board received information regarding the scope of the consultation and

anticipated changes to the PPS. AMO has a Planning Task Force that will meet in September to discuss the detailed impacts of these changes and prepare a report for the Board.

Planning Best Management Practices - AMO staff developed a 'Planning Best Management Practices (BMP) Guide' to demonstrate leadership regarding streamlining the development application process.