

Rural Mayors' Forum of Eastern Ontario

Meeting held June 2, 2017
Municipality of Mississippi Mills

In attendance:

Shaun McLaughlin – Mayor, Municipality of Mississippi Mills
Ron Higgins – Mayor, Township of North Frontenac
Kim Love – Mayor, Township of Madawaska Valley
Bonnie Adams – Reeve, Township of Carlow/Mayo
Vivian Bloom – Mayor, Township of Hasting Highlands
Tom Peckett – Mayor, Township of McNab-Braeside
Jim Gibson – Mayor, United Townships of Head Clara Maria
Glenda McKay – Mayor, Township of Greater Madawaska
Jane Dumas – Mayor, South Algonquin
Henry Hogg – Reeve, Township of Addington Highlands

Others present: Amie Currie, Recording Secretary - Mississippi Mills

1. Welcome - Mayor Shaun McLaughlin opened the meeting at 9:40 a.m.
2. Approval of Minutes from April 20, 2017
3. Marilyn Bird presented on the Lanark Transportation Association. She detailed the benefit of this service being available for individuals, families and children requiring transportation to medical appointments or to life enhancing social engagements. The benefits include relief of ambulance services, greater access for residents to mental health services, and increased quality of life. Lanark Transportation provides subsidized travel fares from 20%-100% dependent on traveler income.

A copy of the presentation will be forwarded.

4. Amy Cameron presented on the Reed Bed Rural Septage Solution. She detailed the use of reed beds as a rural septage solution that is both environmentally friendly and a low-cost alternative to other solutions such as water treatment plants. Ms. Cameron noted a few issues with reed beds, in particular the potential to introduce invasive species of phragmites and the potential to have higher levels of copper metal present in the beds. Ms. Cameron noted that various types of plants used in the reed beds can remove metal concentrations at different rates. She recommended when contemplating reed bed implementation, reviewing previously completed feasibility studies would be beneficial and would save costs.

A copy of presentation will be forwarded.

Members recessed at 11:29 a.m. and returned at 11:40 a.m.

5. Shawna Stone, Clerk – Mississippi Mills, made a presentation on creating an effective municipal complaint policy. She noted that an effective complaints policy reduces action of the Ombudsman and minimizes time wasted and costs associated with complaints. She also provided an overview of the Unreasonable Behaviour Policy, outlining procedures for dealing with unreasonable, frivolous, and/or vexatious public behaviour and complaints. She recommended policies be broad and flexible to deal with the variety of issues that may arise.

Copies of the policies were distributed to members.

Members recessed for lunch at 12:18 p.m. and returned at 12:44 p.m.

6. Review Provincial Issues Submission

Members discussed issues to bring forward to the provincial political parties before the 2018 election as they relate to and affect smaller municipalities. Members agreed to send out official list of issues to party leaders and to submit a request to meet with each provincial party leader for an hour. Mayor Higgins suggested the list of provincial issues be completed by the next scheduled meeting in August. He noted the importance of this meeting request, explaining that even a meeting with a provincial party policy advisor would be beneficial.

Members discussed information for each sub-issue that should be brought forward during the meetings with the party leaders including doctor recruitment and school closures. Reeve Adams noted that many municipalities do not have doctor recruitment programs on a county-wide level. Mayor Gibson suggested questioning the provincial parties on their support for one single school board system in the province. Reeve Adams noted that school closures are likely to affect local municipalities within the next few years.

Members discussed bringing forward building code issues. Mayor Gibson explained that when provincial parties are considering regulatory changes, the parties must be aware of how these changes disproportionality affect rural Ontario and smaller municipalities.

Members agree the focus for these provincial party meetings should be on identifying red-tape issues for the matters on the list.

7. Review of New Actions for Today

Mayor Higgins reviewed actions from the meeting:

- Submit a meeting request to leaders of each provincial party. Mayor Higgins will send out updated template of issues list.
- Mayor McLaughlin asked members to have their department heads note regulatory downloads that have caused increase cost and staff time to their small municipalities.

8. Round Table

Mayor McLaughlin - staff have found eleven properties that MPAC will take off the list.

Mayor Kim Lowe – O. Reg 366/09, Display Screens and Hand Held Devices, *Highway Traffic Act*. There is currently an exemption for Public Works employees to use two-way radios when driving. There is a government review of whether to keep or remove the exemption.

12 Adjourn

Next meeting will be held in TBD on August 4, 2017

Meeting adjourned at 1:52 p.m.

Amie Currie, Recording Secretary