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Chair and Members
Corporate Services Committee

RE: Report of the Association of Municipalities Ontario (AMO) – Update on Board Activities

It is my sincere pleasure to sit as London's representative on the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) Board of Directors and to bring the perspectives of London and the region to the provincial level discussions concerning the municipal sector.

AMO's Board of Directors has established the clear priority of working with the new Government of Ontario. Our goal is to identify and develop shared opportunities with the province to build strong communities and a strong Ontario, together.

I am pleased to submit this report on the most recent meeting of the AMO Board of Directors meeting, which took place on November 30, 2018.

Respectfully submitted,

Anna Hopkins
Councillor, Ward 9

Executive Centre Highlights:

Board approved AMO's 2019 Strategic Objectives, which focus on four themes - positioning municipal interests; stronger relationships and partnerships to benefit members; building member capacity and building internal organizational capacity. A new research project will focus on the disruptive economy trend and impact on property assessment, which is main revenue source for municipal governments outside of program grants and OMPF. Protecting the sources of revenue is important, but likely challenging against the government's desire to reduce/eliminate its \$15b deficit and to work at its huge debt. The Board also adopted its 2019 budget. Membership invoices and information on the 2019 Strategic Objectives will be sent in December.

The Board's 2018 Strategic Objectives say 23 of 27 specific activities completed such as the Local Share campaign, advancing municipal government interests in front of and during the provincial election. Subsequently, the government relations has matured quickly through AMO's 100-day plan. It included a new Memorandum of Understanding with the province. There have been a number of successes already, particularly in the area of labour.

The Board also approved a process to fill 11 vacancies across its six caucuses that have resulted from the municipal elections. A province-wide call for interest will be issued shortly noting the qualification requirements and that there are two key considerations (geographic distribution and growing gender parity) that will guide the Board's decision-making in filling the vacancies. The Board has a much stronger southwestern Ontario profile than in other parts of southern Ontario and female members has dropped to 17%.

Delegation from Second Harvest and Ontario Expansion of FoodRescue.ca: The Board directed staff to work with Second Harvest on the expansion of the Foodrescue.ca initiative and to help them establish several pilots with municipalities. Second Harvest is the largest food rescue organization in Canada. This food recovery work links directly with municipal work on organics, waste reduction/diversion, climate change and Renewable Natural Gas (RNG).

Membership Centre:

The Board's package contained information sent to municipal OMERS employers. It explains that conditional indexing, the most effective lever to manage plan sustainability did not receive the needed 2/3 vote of the OMERS Board. While net investment returns have improved, the Plan is not fully recovered from the 2008 financial crisis. OMERS is 94% funded while comparable plans are in surplus. Those plans have a conditional indexing policy approach. AMO has said that this approach makes sense to be used if the Plan gets hit with any new downturn. OMERS approved policy that allows paramedics to negotiate NRA 60 participation through collective agreement negotiations. NRA 60 is a higher cost for benefits at earlier retirement age. Municipal employers are strongly urged to get financial information from OMERS on these costs before paramedic negotiations begin.

Policy Centre Highlights:

Streamlining the Planning Process: In our recent review, it was found that legislative municipal requirements are not a key source of delay for land use planning and development approval timelines. Complete developer applications, digital solutions, up to date zoning bylaws, a one-window approach, and improving coordination between departments and commenting agencies can lead to a streamlined planning process.

Social Assistance Reform: The provincial government's new Social Assistance Reform Plan satisfies a number of municipal interests and priorities given high-level information at this time. Staff was directed to seek more information on areas of potential municipal concern including: that changes to the province's Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) may redirect clients to the municipally- administered Ontario Works Program; increasing administrative costs funded by property tax payers; new accountability mechanisms; administrative funding and the proposed municipal role in employment programs.

Recreational Cannabis Legalization Status: Update included: places of consumption rules; the opt-out deadline and process for informing the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario (AGCO); how to provide municipal input into the storefront siting process; and the parameters around cannabis legalization transition funding. Final licensing legislation and regulations are now public. AMO's advocacy focus is to advance municipal interests in AGCO guidance material development, including promoting early retailer engagement with municipal governments.

Double Hatters and Fire Interest Arbitration in the Fall Economic Statement:

An update on Bill 57 amendments to the Fire Protection and Prevention Act on Double Hatters and Fire Interest Arbitration was provided. Once Bill passes, it should provide enhanced protection for double hatters and provide a better fire interest arbitration process with new interest arbitration criteria. AMO is working with several municipal staff associations and legal counsel to develop an implementation strategy for municipal employers. AMO will make a Bill 57 deputation at the Standing Committee on Finance + Economic Affairs on December 3rd.