

TO:	CHAIR AND MEMBERS FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING OF NOVEMBER 5, 2012
FROM:	GRANT HOPCROFT, DIRECTOR OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND COMMUNITY LIAISON
SUBJECT:	MINISTERIAL DELEGATIONS, AMO ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, CONFERENCE, AND TRADE SHOW 2012

RECOMMENDATION

That, on the recommendation of the Director of Intergovernmental and Community Liaison, the following report with respect to the Ministerial delegations at the AMO Annual General Meeting, Conference and Trade Show for 2012 BE RECEIVED for information.

PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER
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Board of Control, November 12, 2008
Board of Control, December 9, 2009
Board of Control, July 21, 2010
Finance and Administration Committee, December 15, 2010
Finance and Administration Committee, *2011 AMO AGM*, October 19, 2011
Finance and Administration Committee, *Host 2014, 2015, 2016*, October 19, 2011
Finance and Administration Committee, *AMO Annual General Meeting, Conference and Trade Show 2014*; April 16, 2012

BACKGROUND

Prior to the AMO Annual General Meeting, Conference and Trade Show which took place in August 2012 in Ottawa, Mayor Fontana and members of Civic Administration requested the opportunity to meet with provincial ministers on issues of concern to the City of London. The City was successful in organizing ten meetings with provincial ministries and opposition leaders. This report summarizes the discussion and follow up to each one of those meetings.

Minister Duguid – Economic Development & Innovation

This discussion concerned economic development challenges to the region and barriers to growth for the commercialization of new technologies. Minister Duguid expressed the hope and desire that London rebound quickly from the economic recession. He expressed confidence that Bill 11, *Attracting Investment and Creating Jobs Act, 2012* would be re-introduced into the legislature this fall, and in fact the Bill has since received Royal Assent. The Act provides for the creation of the Southwestern Ontario Development Fund to assist the region through the provision of financial assistance and incentives. (On October 19, the Ministry released further details regarding fund criteria, eligibility and the application process for both business and municipal streams of funding.)

Minister Duguid is interested in the mentoring of new start-up enterprises and asked several questions about the capacity of London and its partners to mentor entrepreneurs. Mayor Fontana described the Prosperity and Enterprise Centre to the Minister and committed to sharing the proposal with him.

Minister Bradley – Environment

London's meeting with Minister Bradley and his staff focused on two areas of concern: the reinstatement of the delegation of approval authority for the storm water approvals process which the City of London had for approximately 10 years until 2008 and the potential implications of the development of policies and regulations related to intra-basin transfers of the two regional water systems (Lake Huron and Elgin Area Primary Water Supply) and the City of London. Minister Bradley was supportive of exploring the City assuming greater responsibility under the storm water approvals process. The province wants to make government more efficient and ensure approvals are timely. The Ministry of Environment is working with the Chief

Administrative Officers of MARCO (Mayors and Regional Chairs of Ontario) on timely approvals and is open to suggestions.

With respect to Intra-Basin Water Transfers the Minister listened to the City's concerns. He could not commit to a resolution at this time and encouraged the City to also continue working with the Ministry of Natural Resources and federally, with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the Department of the Environment.

Minister Jeffrey – Labour

Mayor Fontana conveyed the City's challenges with interest arbitration and the ability of a municipality to pay, and agreed that the Bill (*Ability to Pay Act*) introduced in the last session was helpful, taking us part of the way, but that more was needed. Minister Jeffrey indicated that the government was open to further input from the opposition. Minister Jeffrey suggested the City also work with the opposition parties to make its interests known. (This Bill was reintroduced into the legislature but has now been suspended with the prorogation of the Legislature.) The Minister also commented that there are existing provisions in the legislation that could be used to ask for written reasons for a decision. It was also noted that municipal governments are working more closely when entering into bargaining.

Minister Meilleur – Community Safety and Correctional Services

Minister Meilleur and Assistant Deputy Minister Steven Small indicated that the problems at the Elgin-Middlesex-Detention Centre are their highest priority at the moment. They committed to providing the Mayor with regular updates. They indicated that 300 beds are being added to the overall system which should alleviate some of the challenges. They were planning a media tour of the facility. A long-term goal is to develop an additional facility at the site for those serving "intermittent sentences" which would address many of the concerns.

Minister Matthews – Health and Long-Term Care

Minister Matthews was briefed on staff efforts to resolve challenges with recovering the appropriate provincial share of the ambulance cost-share. She committed to working with the City and County to resolve the issue. (This issue has since been resolved and Minister Matthews committed to restoring \$400,000 to the Land Ambulance budget for 2012.)

Minister Wynne – Municipal Affairs and Housing

Mayor Fontana asked the Minister to consider providing more flexibility around "in-camera" sessions to permit the City to discuss economic development and land acquisition issues. She committed to exploring the issue. Removing property tax caps was also raised with the Minister. The Minister raised the upcoming issue of expiring federal affordable housing programs and asked for the City's support through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to work with the federal government to resolve this issue. Mayor Fontana communicated that he as a co-chair of the Big City Mayors' Caucus working group on affordable housing would continue to advocate on this issue.

Deputy Minister George Zegarac – Education

Mayor Fontana briefed Deputy Minister Zegarac on London's support for expediting integration of Education, Child Care and Early Learning Systems through a more coordinated system mandate and additional capital funding to support the development of Neighbourhood Family Centres located at schools. Deputy Zegarac replied that funding for several of the London sites was under review and that most would probably qualify. Mayor Fontana also spoke in support of bringing more international students to our secondary schools in London. The Ministry advised that Toronto and Ottawa are already bringing international students into their public schools and encouraged London and the Thames Valley District School Board to consider their experience in moving forward.

Dikepa Damerla, Parliamentary Assistant to Minister Chiarelli – Minister of Infrastructure

The meeting with Minister Chiarelli's Parliamentary Assistant focused on the 401 corridor development, the federal Long Term Infrastructure Plan and London's Bus Rapid Transit Plan (BRT). The Ministry will continue to implement Highway 401 interchange improvements in the Southern Highway Plan, and to consider how they might work with the City and private sector investors to attract investment and economic opportunities along the corridor. The City and LTC were encouraged to proceed with filing the Business Case in support of the BRT at the earliest opportunity.

Yasir Naqvi, Parliamentary Assistant to Minister Duncan – Minister of Finance

This meeting was a delegation of Mayors led by Kingston Mayor Mark Gerretsen on the heads and beds issue. Since 1987, the Heads and Beds payment has been set at an annual rate of \$75 per head. The delegation asked that the Province adjust the current rate to \$146 per head to reflect inflation from 1987 to 2012. The parliamentary assistant advised that the current

financial situation does not leave room for any action on the heads and beds levy at the present time, but that he would bring the views of the delegation to the attention of the Minister of Finance.

Tim Hudak – Leader of the Official Opposition, Progressive Conservative Party

Mayor Fontana asked that Mr. Hudak work with the government to pass the arbitration legislation. Mr. Hudak indicated he would like it to go much further; he has since proposed amendments to the *Ability to Pay Act* when it was re-introduced into the provincial legislature. Mr. Hudak spoke to his interest to have a wage freeze imposed across the public sector. He also expressed his support for the horse racing industry at Western Fair, and outlined his thoughts on the process for new casino locations, and for adding casino functions to existing facilities.

Andrea Horwath, Leader of the New Democratic Party, met in London with Mayor Fontana for discussion earlier in the summer. Discussion included the state of the economy in the London region and her parties support for the Southwestern Ontario Development Fund.

While the Legislature is prorogued, we will continue our advocacy on our priority issues with our local MPPs, Ministers and members of the Opposition Parties.

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