RECOMMENDATIONS

For information and discussion purposes.

BACKGROUND

At the annual conferences of the Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), municipalities are invited to submit requests for delegations with provincial Ministers and/or their Parliamentary Assistants.

The Counties requested delegations with the following Ministers/Parliamentary Assistants at the 2020 ROMA Conference:

- Education: childcare costs and red tape
- Attorney General: increasing accounts receivable and limited tools available to collect
- Municipal Affairs and Housing: rent and utility scales for social housing
- Health: paramedic services review and public health
- Environment, Parks and Conservation: municipal responsibility agreements
- Long-Term Care: funding for the 60 existing beds at Maple View Lodge

The Counties was fortunate to have delegations with all of these ministries except Long-Term Care. For the purposes of this report, it will focus solely on the public health and municipal responsibility agreements – all other issues are covered in a Joint Services Committee report.
DISCUSSION/ALTERNATIVES

Below are the issues raised in each delegation, along with some notes based on the discussion with the Minister and/or Parliamentary Assistant.

Ministry of Health:

The Counties met with the Honourable Christine Elliott, Minister of Health to discuss the modernization of public health services. The Counties emphasized the importance of having municipal representation on Boards of Health, the need to maintain the public health services and local access, especially given the rural characteristics of Leeds and Grenville. The Counties encouraged the Minister to continue with transition funding for a further two years.

The Minister said that her ministry is engaged in consultations throughout the Province on public health. She noted her top health care priority is prevention and promotion – a fundamental role played by health units in Ontario. She said that the Province is listening and recommends the Counties participate in the upcoming consultations on public health.

Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks:

The Counties met with MPP Andrea Khanjin, the Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. Minister Jeff Yurek also attended the meeting. The Counties expressed concerns about municipal responsibility agreement, including the need for financial securities which is a deterrent to developers. The PA realized it was a balancing act to encourage development and at the same time ensuring environmental protection. She did indicate they were looking at ways to revise the Act and reduce red tape in processes. Heather Malcolmson, Director, Environment Assessment and Permissions Branch was in attendance and she indicated she would be willing to follow up with the municipalities represented, help them understand the options and discuss agreements with them.

Recommendations for Future Delegations:

The Counties submitted requests for seven delegations and was granted six delegations. This year, staff starting preparing in advance some of the briefing notes, even though it was not known whether delegations would be granted until closer to the ROMA Conference.
The following are staff’s observations and comments:

1. When Council decides to submit requests for delegations, it is important to have a clear issue and what the Counties is seeking from the Minister/Ministry.

2. As long as staff has a clear issue and understanding of the ‘ask’, they can prepare briefing notes in advance.

3. The issue should be a “Counties” issue. This would include the joint services, but not issues pertaining to local municipal responsibilities. Counties staff often are not familiar with the issue and it is recommended a local municipality make the request on behalf of a group of, or all ten lower-tier municipalities.

4. The Counties should consider providing a one-page graphic presentation of the issue when possible, along with the formal briefing note. This may require use of an outside communications firm, but provides a level of professionalism in the Counties’ delegation to the Minister or Parliamentary Assistant.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Nil.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil.

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ANDY BROWN                                   DATE
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER