



Representing the Districts of Kenora, Rainy River and Thunder Bay  
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Attention: Mayor and Council

## **NOMA Board Meeting Summary Report for February 28, 2024**

### **NOSM Administration Process**

Katie Biasiol, Celine Lariviere, Joanne Musico, Jessica Pope, and Paul Miron provided a presentation on NOSM admissions process. Receive approx. 1600 applications and approx. 320 interviewed after initial selection process made up of GPA and contextual score. Less than 5% of students are accepted into the program each year. 90% from Northern ON and 9% from rural and remote Canada. Physician must be part of NOSM institution to be eligible to teach. Of 1011 physicians who completed their MD and/or residency at NOSM U 467 practice at NOSM U and are eligible to teach. NOSM does not have the numbers of how many physicians staying in family practice. A discussion occurred regarding it being a buyer's market and municipalities pitted against each other to recruit physicians and the need to determine how to level the playing field to reduce the competition. NOMA and NOSM will meet annually for updates. Practise Ready - accelerated pathway for foreign trained doctors to become certified to practice in Ontario is coming soon and those interested must apply to be a site.

### **NWO Economic Development Plan Draft**

Katia Borjas provided a presentation on the current status and direction of the NWO Economic Development Working Plan. The board approved of the direction. The next working group meeting is March 19<sup>th</sup>. A draft plan will be discussed at the meeting. A final working draft will be presented to NOMA Membership during the conference AGM. Municipalities will have until May 17<sup>th</sup> to provide comments through a survey that will be sent out following the AGM.

### **Human Health Resource (HHR) Retention Discussion**

Jessica Lorrezzo, Dr. Erin Cameron, Heather Murchinson, and Adam Brown provided updates on human health resource pressures. We discussed various items including municipalities ensuring communities attractive to recruit HHR, collectively marketing northern communities, international students cap and the local impacts including diversifying communities and offsetting demographic declines, expansion of NOSM U will increase HHR but will only retain in North if have a good experience in communities, rural/northern pathway strategy for HHR, community recruiters, community concierge model ("welcome wagon") for wrap around services for HHR, Rural Coordination Centre of British Columbia and further inquiry into using this model in the North, recruiting NOSM U certified physicians to train, gaining competitive advantage in NW to recruit, look into learn and return incentives, gaining insight into the RPGNA agreements, agency nurses and locums, NP funding, and the need for a central list of who has capacity to train/take placements and where there is availability to do so in NW for all HHR including nurses, PSW, Lab techs etc. NOMA needs to educate Ministers on Northwest boundaries, advocate for transparent hospital and HHR funding, and advocate for a funding pot to be able to incentivize HHR to come to the North. Municipalities should send letter of support too show our need for international students and HHR.

## **2024 NOMA Conference Update & Prize Resolution**

134 registered, representing 21 municipalities, for the NOMA Conference. NOMA Conference draft agenda is complete (most updated version attached). Althia Raj has been secured as our keynote speaker. There are 7 ministers confirmed (see agenda). 29 exhibitors are secured. We are implementing exhibitor discovery booklets this year where those in attendance must visit and get a stamp from a minimum of 20 booths to be entered into a draw for a prize (~\$500 value). An additional \$500 to be used to purchase gift cards for the prize wheel.

There will be a pre-Gala dinner reception at the Victoria Inn from 6-6:45pm. The Gala dinner will then be followed by entertainment from Mackinley Delusions. We have hired a photographer for the Gala and pre-reception. Municipalities will have an opportunity to have professional photos taken if they wish.

## **Association's Meeting**

ED's from NOMA, TBDML, KDMA, and RRDMA met for our quarterly meeting. The associations shared that they have increased activities since covid and are increasing advocacy efforts. All AGM's were well attended. A discussion occurred regarding NOMA Conference planning, NOMA conference sponsorship, and Association AGM sponsorship. These conversations are on going and will be further discussed at our next board meeting in April.

## **Indigenous Municipal Conference**

Caldwell First Nation hosted first ever conference for municipalities in Southwestern Ontario "Reconciliation-in-Action" late last year. The conference focused on local governments developing a deeper understanding about the history, presence and experience of First Nations people who have lived on traditional lands, building partnerships between municipalities and FN community, and collaborating on economic development opportunities. The ED will reach out to First Nation groups, NAN, and other indigenous groups in the region to see if they are willing to co-host such a conference.

## **Not-for-Profit Corporations Act ONCA requirements for audit**

The Executive Director authorized to engage with legal to review if the changes to the Not-for-Profit Corporations Act (ONCA) impacts NOMA and to determine if NOMA is eligible for a review engagement vs audit under the new legislation. Approved for \$5k plus HST and disbursement fee.

## **Policy Updates**

The following updates were made:

1. Policy Number A002 AGM Policy to revise extra exhibitor fee,
2. The NOMA Constitution to remove associate membership,
3. The Role of the President to include board honorarium passed at September 2023 meeting.

## **Renewal of NPI Agreement & NPI Intern Agreement**

NOMA passed a motion to renew our 3-year Mutual Support Agreement with Northern Policy Institute from May 1, 2024, to April 30, 2027, where NPI provides NOMA with a Double Bronze level Northern Analyst Collective Membership that includes 10 days of research each year in exchange for an exhibitor booth at the NOMA Conference and 2 registrations. Additionally, NOMA passed a motion to support the Northern Policy Institute to ensure the success of the "Creating a Rural Coordinating Centre for Northern Ontario" project by entering into an agreement with NPI to support the project in the amount of 5K.

### **OEB decision on Phase 1 of Enbridge Gas rebasing application**

Kristen Oliver reported on the plan to phase out natural gas in Ontario and changes in funding structure and reduced capital for expansion. On February 22 the provincial government tabled the [Keeping Energy Costs Down Act](#) which makes amendments to the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) Act to address the cost of new connects to natural gas infrastructure. The legislation would reverse the December 2023 decision by the OEB that requires consumers to pay the cost of connecting a new home to natural gas infrastructure up front instead of over a period of 40 years in an effort to incentivize developers to choose the most cost-effective & energy-efficient option. AMO called on the province to clearly communicate the role of natural gas in Ontario's energy future power grid. At this time, the energy grid cannot handle natural gas to be removed. Environmental defence groups are advocating for natural gas to be phased out and move to heat pumps. However, in the North we would require a secondary heat source. This will be going to AMO executive meeting to decide on. **Attached is a draft resolution, a draft letter to send to MPP's, as well as a fact sheet** for interested municipalities. Please reach out to Kristen Oliver if you have any questions.

### **International Bridge Support Resolution**

NOMA passed a motion to support the resolution passed by the Town of Fort Frances regarding their call on the Government of Canada to enter negotiations to purchase the International Bridge for a fair price from Aazhogar, maintain and operate the International Bridge with minimal or no tolls, and construct a new International Bridge between Fort Frances and International Falls, that will operate toll free. NOMA further asks the Government of Ontario to cooperate with the Government of Canada to facilitate the purchase of the existing bridge and the building of the new bridge. **(attached)**

### **Conservation Officer Reclassification Support**

NOMA passed motion to support the resolution passed by Terrace Bay, Conmee, and the Thunder Bay District Municipal league regarding the Ontario Conservation Officer's Association in their efforts to have Conservation Officer Reclassified as Enforcement Officers and be compensated fairly based on the details outlined in their letter of support. **(attached)**

### **AMO - Social & Economic Review Support**

NOMA passed a motion to support AMO's Social and Economic Prosperity Review and asked the Province of Ontario to commit to undertaking a comprehensive social and economic prosperity review with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario to promote the stability and sustainability of municipal finances across Ontario. **(attached)**

### **Thunder Bay & Northwestern Ontario Local Immigration Partnership Support**

NOMA passed a motion to support the Thunder Bay Multicultural Association's application to continue as the agreement holder for the Thunder Bay & Northwestern Ontario Local Immigration Partnership. **(attached)**

### **Prohibition of criminals from municipal council Resolution**

NOMA decided not to support.

### **Municipal Concerns with MPAC's DSSA**

A discussion occurred and it was noted that municipal administration does not see an issue.

### **EWOC Housing Plan Support**

The NOMA Board deferred supporting their plan as they are interested in a presentation from EOWC first. The ED will organize a presentation for June 5<sup>th</sup> board meeting.

### **Northern Ontario Transportation Task Force Resolution**

NOMA passed a motion requesting the Minister of Transportation and ministry staff to work with the Co-Chairs of the Task Force to consider implementation of the recommendations within the Interim and Final Reports. A discussion occurred regarding Bearskin Air terminating flights to Kenora, Fort Frances, and Dryden as of May 11. Roger Nesbitt will work with Fort Frances CAO to develop resolution to bring to next NOMA Board meeting in April. **(attached)**.

### **Municipal Association/League Updates:**

**TBDML** – AGM is in Nipigon Feb 29-Mar 1.

**KDMA** – AGM took place in Kenora Feb 8-10. Max Nagy is new ED of KDMA. The next 2025 KDMA conference will be held in Ear Falls.

**RRDMA** – AGM took place in Emo Jan 13<sup>th</sup> with over 80 people in attendance. Established relations with Riverside Healthcare and meeting with them every 3 months. Sent 3 resolutions for NOMA. Next general meeting is April 7<sup>th</sup>.

### **Strategic Plan Report:**

- NWO Economic Development Working Draft to be presented to municipalities at the NOMA Conference. Municipalities will have 3 weeks to provide any comments to the draft. Revisions to be complete by June 5<sup>th</sup> to be approved by NOMA Board.
- Additional funding opportunities have been added to our website.
- “CAO Succession Planning” presentation by Scott Vokey, Executive Director, Ontario Municipal Administrators Association, at NOMA conference.
- Discussions around conference planning and the growth of the NOMA Conference. Potential for NOMA conference to take place permanently in Thunder Bay.
- Participated in REDO meeting and discussed transportation issues and priorities across the region and how to develop solutions. Northern Transportation Task Force Chairs to be consulted with to determine how best to aid moving forward the recommendations in the report.
- **Next learning morning is scheduled for May 29th from 9:30am to 12:30pm.** There are 5 presenters confirmed including: Cybersecurity Vendor Management by Randy Purse, Bill 23 and the New Provincial Policy Statement 2024 by Chantelle Bryson, NOMA Strategic Plan Activities by Katia Borjas, Career Development & Resilience by Louise Neil, and Pass the Prompt Workshops by Jessy Plante.

### **Executive Director Report:**

- Presented NOMA delegation package to Minister Calandra (MMAH), Minister Sarkaria (MTO), Solicitor General Kerzner, PA Robin Martin (MOH), and opposition leaders at the 2024 ROMA Conference. **MTO** - Northern ON Road Safety, Maintenance, and Rest Stops; **MMAH** - Housing First Programs, Capital Repairs on Community Housing & Retain Surplus Proceeds from Tax Sales; **SOLGEN** – MCITs; **MOH** - Housing First Programs, Capital Repairs on Community Housing, MCITs, “Rural & Remote Physician Services Coordination in Northern Ontario: A discussion paper on the model from BC”, Human Health Resources & Agency Nurses
- Meeting with Minister Tibollo secured March 5
- ED attended Economic Developers Council of Ontario Conference – developments in AI and ChatGPT could provide an opportunity for NOMA and municipalities (ex. Research).
- IESO/CVNW/NOMA hosted virtual workshop on Feb 14<sup>th</sup> re: renewable energy and upcoming procurement process. A video of session is on NOMAs YouTube channel.
- Sent letter to garner support for Terrace Bay Mill

- Sent letter re: IRCC International Student Cap and Negative Impact on NWO.
- Upcoming conference dates: **NOMA** April 24-26, **OFIA** April 30 – May 1, **FONOM** May 6-8, **NOSDA** June 25-27, **AMO** August 18-21
- ED request vacation June 10-28<sup>th</sup> but will still attend AMO in Barrie June 20-21 and NOSDA June 26<sup>th</sup>.

Notable Meetings Attended:

- Strengthening Public Health Webinar: Focus on Voluntary Mergers of Local Public Health Authorities
- How to attract new residents to your community webinar
- Economic Development Working Group Meeting 1 & 2
- Learning Session with AMO about Homelessness and Encampments
- ED and Intern attended REDO meeting to discuss Northern Ontario transportation issues.
- OFIA-Alliance meeting to discuss state of forestry and pulp and paper mills, forest road access, biomass, energy, and caribou. Looking to secure meeting with Ministers and Alliance members at NOMA Conference.
- EDCO Conference
- President Landry provided NOMA update at KDMA and TBDML AGM's.
- Association's Executive Director quarterly meeting re ROMA Conference, priorities, resolutions, Economic Development Working Plan, NOMA Conference & sponsorship.

Issue Tracker Updates:

**Mining** – Fred Mota reported they are not getting traction on tailing ponds. Jim Vezina stated having issues with E2R line and limited capacity. Kinross interested in having a mine in next few years. New road to cat lake first nation. Kevin Kahoot met with IESO and were given assurance that all the power Kinross needed would be available.

**Nuclear Waste Management Org** – Kevin Kahoot reported Ignace is holding a nuclear symposium April 12.

**The next NOMA Board meeting takes place April 24, 2024, in Thunder Bay, Ontario.**

Please contact me at any time if you wish to discuss any NOMA matters.

Sincerely,



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