

December 4th, 2018

Report To: Mayor and Council

From: Doug Brown, CAO

**SUBJECT: Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) - Annual Conference – January 27, 28 & 29, 2019**

Traditionally, the Mayor, two members of Council, and the CAO have attended the ROMA Conference scheduled during the last week in January of each year. The Town's main purpose of attending the ROMA conference was to bring community issues, concerns and challenges to the appropriate provincial government ministries for awareness and assistance. Secondary, it was also an opportunity for additional training and development of Council members. (Please refer to the attached draft 2019 ROMA Conference agenda for your reference).

In order to meet with Ministries, there is a delegation request process that must be adhered to. The deadline for submitting delegation requests for the 2019 ROMA conference is December 10, 2018. There is never a guarantee that the Town's official delegation requests will be granted. A similar exercise takes place for the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) for its annual conference scheduled mid-August of each year and the Town has also been sending a delegation of 4 members to this conference.

The political landscape in the Rainy River District has recently changed, with our local MP, The Honourable Greg Rickford, Minister of Indigenous Affairs, Minister of Energy, & Northern Development and Mines suggesting that Council should meet directly with him to discuss local issues and challenges, at his office in Fort Frances on a regular basis. It is his opinion that the 15-minute delegation "dog and pony show" with the individual ministries doesn't provide sufficient results and is costly to the municipality. He has indicated that it is his job to ensure our issues are addressed by him throughout the year and that adequate responses to the issues are achieved in a timely fashion.

Presently, administration has already pre-registered 4 members for the ROMA conference and booked the hotel rooms. From a financial standpoint, the Town will be subject to cancellation charges in amount of \$ 868 for hotel rooms. The impact to the Town of the provincial government moving towards balancing a provincial budget is not fully obvious at the time of the preparation of this report.

At this time, a decision on whether or not to attend the 2019 ROMA conference is required. If the decision of Council is that the Town will attend the Conference, then Council will then be polled to determine what are some of issues, concerns and challenges to be addressed. In addition, Council will by resolution select two members they wish to attend the conference. The selection of the two Council members will be addressed during the COW portion of Council meeting where the recommendation of the A&F Executive Committee will be discussed.

The Administration & Finance Executive Committee recommends the following with respect to the annual ROMA Conference;

- 1) Defer sending a delegation from the Town of Fort Frances to the 2019 ROMA conference.
- 2) Attendance at the 2020 ROMA conference will be reviewed in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2019 prior to the early bird registration timeline for the event.
- 3) Administration will provide the Honourable Greg Rickford, Minister of Indigenous Affairs, Minister of Energy, & Northern Development and Mines with a schedule of the 2019 COW and Council meetings in order to establish a regular quarterly or monthly meeting between both parties to discuss local issues and challenges.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Doug Brown". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Doug Brown, CAO

**Council approval of this report will** agree to the recommendation of the Administration and Finance Executive Committee to:

- 1) Defer sending a delegation from the Town of Fort Frances to the 2019 ROMA conference.
- 2) Attendance at the 2020 ROMA conference will be reviewed in the 4th quarter of 2019 prior to the early bird registration timeline for the event.
- 3) Administration will provide the Honourable Greg Rickford, Minister of Indigenous Affairs, Minister of Energy, & Northern Development and Mines with a schedule of the 2019 COW and Council meetings in order to establish a regular quarterly or monthly meeting between both parties to discuss local issues and challenges.