



MEMO / NOTE DE SERVICE

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TO: Finance and Corporate Services Committee

DESTINATAIRE : Comité des finances et des services organisationnels

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SUBJECT: AMO Annual General Meeting and Conference 2023 Member of Council Delegate Report (Councillor Kitts)

OBJET : Le rapport du délégué au congrès annuel et à l'assemblée générale de l'AMO 2023 (Conseillère Kitts)

PURPOSE

The purpose of this memorandum is to report to Committee following attendance at the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) Annual General Meeting and Conference.

Pursuant to the Council Expense Policy, Members of Council who undertake City-funded travel to the AMO Annual Conference must submit a written report to the Finance and Corporate Services Committee detailing their experiences, what they learned at the conference and how the City's position or interests were advanced.

BACKGROUND

The City of Ottawa is the fourth largest city in Canada, the second largest city in Ontario, and the largest city in the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO). In addition to AMO, the City is a member of a number of municipal organizations.

With greater emphasis being placed on stronger municipalities, the work of these organizations intensifies as they are the bodies responsible for advancing policies and negotiating agreements with the upper levels of government. The City of Ottawa can influence in this policy development and negotiations through participation in these organizations. To this end, Members of Council are invited to attend various conferences, conventions, and meetings both within and outside the municipality.

AMO brings Ontario's 400+ municipalities together to work on shared goals and challenges. The 2023 AMO Annual General Meeting and Conference was held in London between August 20-23, 2023.

DISCUSSION

My participation at AMO's 2023 conference was an opportunity to meet and network with other municipal leaders from across Ontario to discuss common challenges and solutions given the framework that all municipalities work within the province. Plenary programming included discussions on housing, the roles of non-profits and community organizations and ending homelessness (among others), sessions that aligned with the strategic goals of the City of Ottawa. In addition, in my role as Chair of Ottawa Public, I had the chance to discuss public health priorities and speak to the successes of, and the need for greater investment in, Ottawa Public Health's programs in my delegations with Ontario ministers.

Keynote speakers at the conference included Premier Ford, Catherine McKenna, and Minister Jones, who announced a reversion to a previous funding model for public health units across the province.

While I tried to take advantage of the plenary sessions as much as possible, I had to balance attending the sessions with my role in presenting a delegation on behalf of the City of Ottawa to the following provincial ministers:

- Minister Parsa – Children, Community, and Social Services – advocate for a one-time increase in funding to OPH’s Healthy Babies, Healthy Children program to reflect the growing needs for these services, as more parents are struggling with mental health and other challenges to children’s development. In addition to pressures on this service from population growth and greater complexities with supporting more newcomers to Canada, more than 150,000 people in Ottawa lack a primary care provider who can accept newborns in Ottawa. As a result, OPH has seen an increased demand for home visits and drop-in clinics from parents and their young children and OPH is unable to meet the demand within its existing funding allocation, even for families at the highest level of risk.
- Minister Jones – advocate for the restoration for the 75 (provincial) to 25 (municipal) funding formula that was needed to address the funding pressures required for pressing public health needs. As well as to have a commit to a defined level of inflationary increase to local public health units’ annual base funding allocation to support innovative practices in local service delivery such as the OPH Neighbourhood Health and Wellness Hubs. These accessible service hubs offer links to the health care system for residents including Black, Indigenous and racialized residents who do not have access to primary care providers.

Meetings with former Minister Clark and Minister Mulroney were declined. The City of Ottawa delegations also meet with the NDP caucus, as well as I met with the NDP caucus and Ontario Liberal caucus separately to discuss public health priorities.

Towards the end of the conference, conference attendees were given an opportunity to ask questions of the provincial cabinet in a panel format. Questions included:

- Provincial support for Bill 5;
- Ongoing impacts of recent changes to planning legislation;
- Transportation options for smaller communities;
- Supports for social services.

I also had the opportunity to as Council’s representative to AMO, to attend at the City of Ottawa reception organized alongside the City of Ottawa’s Economic Development Services team and Ottawa Tourism. Councillor Lo was invited to make a few remarks to

thank AMO organizers for the opportunity to welcome the conference back to Ottawa in 2024, inviting delegates to attend in 2024 to learn, engage with one another and experience everything Ottawa has to offer. The presentation included a short destination promotional video from Ottawa Tourism.

CONCLUSION

It is through the commitment of Members of Council, to attend conferences like the 2023 AMO Annual General Meeting and Conference, that the City of Ottawa's interests are advanced.

Catherine Kitts
Councillor, Ward 19 Orléans-South Navan

CC: Office of the City Clerk