



Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus

Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus
 January 19th, 2006
 10:00am
 Lisbon Room, Ambassador Hotel, Kingston

COUNTY	HEAD OF COUNCIL 2005	HEAD OF COUNCIL 2006	STAFF
County of Frontenac	Bill MacDonald	Bill Lake	Elizabeth Fulton
County of Haliburton	Jim McMahon	Murray Fearrey	Jim Wilson
County of Hastings	Charles Mullet	Clarence Zieman	Jim Pine
City of Kawartha Lakes		Barb Kelly (Mayor)	Jane Lunn
County of Lanark	Susan Freeman	Aubrey Churchill	Peter Wagland
United Counties of Leeds and Grenville	J. Douglas Struthers	Ronald E. Holman	Stephen Fournier
County of Lennox and Addington	Clayton McEwen	Douglas Bearance	Larry Keech
County of Northumberland	Peter Delanty	Rick Austin	Bill Pyatt
County of Peterborough		Neal Cathcart	Gary King
United Counties of Prescott and Russell	Denis Pommainville <i>Past-Chair: Jacques Hétu</i>	Gary J. Barton	Stéphane P. Parisien
County of Prince Edward		Leo Finnegan (Mayor)	Dick Shannon
County of Renfrew		Bob Sweet (Chair)	Norm Lemke Lorna Knight
United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry	Alvin Runnalls	Jim McDonell	Mike S. Waddell
Other guests:			Warren Sleeth (MMAH) Dan Borowec (FedNor) Kathy Woods (Natural Resources Inc.)

1. Call Meeting to Order/Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone and took this opportunity to welcome the new Wardens' to the Caucus and to pass on best wishes to the past Wardens. The Chair thanked the past Wardens for all of their time and effort over the last year. The Chair also wanted to introduce special guests Mr. Doug Reycraft (Chair of AMO County Caucus) and Mr. Warren Sleeth (Regional Director-Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing).

Doug Reycraft took the floor and thanked the Chair, noting his appreciation for the opportunity to join the meeting today and tomorrow. He also extended his congratulations to the new 2006 Wardens. Mr. Reycraft spoke to the composition of the County Caucus, which consists of 6 members. Two are ex-officio positions (Chair of EOWC and Chair of the WOWC), 3 other individuals are elected for a one-year term, which commences at the annual AMO conference and the secretary-treasurer is an appointed official. The EOWC 's Jim Wilson has held this last position for the last several years.

In addition, Mr. Reycraft noted that in the past few months AMO has been working on many issues, specifically the OMERS issue, although other issues such as Land Ambulance and OMPF are also important and recognized as such. AMO will continue to champion for these major issues in this coming year.

The Chair thanked Doug for speaking and noted that tomorrow the EOWC will be joined by; Ms. Pat Vanini (Executive Director, AMO) and Mr. Roger Anderson (President, AMO).

The Chair also noted that he was greatly disappointed with the lack of members of parliament who will be present at the meeting on Friday. The overwhelming feeling from the elected is that the EOWC deserves more respect and greater interest in our activities.

2. Introduction of New Wardens

3. Approval of Minutes

- August 14th, 2005

Approval of Joint Minutes

- August 14th, 2005
- October 28th, 2005

Moved by: Warden Mullet

Seconded by: Warden McMahon

THAT the EOWC minutes of August 14th, 2005 and the joint minutes of EOWC/WOWC from August 14th, 2005 and October 28th, 2005 be approved.

CARRIED

4. Approval of Agenda

Moved by: Warden Struthers

Seconded by: Warden Cathcart

THAT the meeting agenda for January 19th, 2006 be approved.

CARRIED

5. Overview of 2005 Achievements

The Chair Bob Sweet thanked the CAO s' for their work over the last year and noted that without their commitment and tireless efforts the Caucus would not be as successful. The Chair noted that the Caucus should be proud of the CRF Reconciliation, it was a major issue and at the ROMA/OGRA Conference the Premier announced that we would get what was fair. In 2006 we have set forth to deal with the Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund and the issues of "winners and losers", as well as many other issues of importance.

6. Elections (Chair and Vice-Chair)

The elections of the Chair commenced with the meeting to be handed over to Norm Lemke, CAO of the County of Renfrew, as the Secretary-Treasurer of the EOWC. Mr. Lemke noted before he commenced with the election process, that the CAO's have been appreciative of the excellent working relationship with the Wardens. The 2005 Wardens have been wonderful to work with and the CAO's value this partnership, which is of value to all involved counties. Norm spoke to some preliminary issues, noting that the current EOWC Terms of Reference are rather general in nature and in some cases lack procedural process. In terms of the election of the Chair, the assumed standard is that only the 2006 Wardens and the current Past-Chair are eligible to vote. Norm Lemke then opened the floor for nominations, for the position of Chair.

Moved by: Past-Chair Héту
Seconded by: Warden Barton

THAT Warden Sweet be nominated for the position of 2006 Chair of the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus.

CARRIED

Norm Lemke requested first call, second call and third and last call for further nominations for Chair. Norm Lemke asked for a mover and seconder to close the nominations for Chair.

Moved by: Mayor Kelly
Seconded By: Warden Cathcart

THAT nominations for 2006 Chair be closed.

CARRIED

By acclamation the 2006 Chair of the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus is Warden Sweet, County of Renfrew.

Nominations for Vice-Chair were then called for on the floor.

Moved: Mayor Finnegan
Seconded by: Warden Fearrey

THAT Warden Cathcart be nomination for the position of 2006 Vice-Chair.

CARRIED

Norm Lemke requested first call, second call and third and last call for further nominations for Vice-Chair. Norm Lemke asked for a mover and seconder to close the nominations for Vice-Chair.

Moved by: Warden Austin
Seconded by: Warden McDonell

THAT nominations for 2006 Vice-Chair be closed.

CARRIED

By acclamation the 2006 Vice Chair of the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus is Warden Cathcart, County of Peterborough.

7. 2006 Schedule of Meetings

Provided as an information item.

Mr. Sleeth was asked to depart the meeting at 9:54 am.

8. Issues Briefing

The CAO s' have created a Briefing Book which highlights the most important issues going forward into 2006. Included in this book are the issues and proposed responses for each item. This briefing book has not been distributed outside of the Caucus and AMO at this time. All outside organizations and government departments will receive an abbreviated edition with the EOWC responses removed. Since these responses will be discussed at this time, Ministry staff was asked to leave the room.

In addition to the briefing items, Starting at Tab 8 (in the back of the book), there are a series of information reports including the Future Directions Report and information on OMPF with the up-to-date numbers. Thanks are extended to Larry Keech and his staff for taking on the task of updating the OMPF data. This meeting needs to focus on discussion of each issue to determine if they are framed how the Caucus would like. The Chair asked that we walk through each issue generally and then return to speak to each issue more specifically.

Overview

Fiscal Gap

The CAO s attempted to bookend these issues in order to highlight the issue of the fiscal gap. The EOWC would like to support AMO on this issue and also it would be beneficial if all of the issues could be linked back to the Fiscal Gap. As identified on the information pages provided, there is a huge discrepancy between Ontario and the rest of Canada in terms of social services, housing and health program spending. This is an easy way to explain why the property taxpayers are under increasing stress.

*Note that the pie chart title on page 3 should read the property tax dollar (which includes all taxes).

Land Ambulance

Land Ambulance is not a new issue, and although there is a land ambulance MOU table underway, there is still no decision on many of the issues at this time and costs are continuing to increase.

Stephen Fournier noted that the final report should be in the MOU system by the beginning of February and he feels that from a municipal perspective we have done our best to get the issues and concerns across. Doug Reycraft noted a land ambulance report will be delivered in early February.

OMPF

Jim Pine spoke to the OMPF issue noting that what the CAOs tried to do was to un-spin this particular issue as it is very complicated. In a chart form there is a summary of what is happening; these are the most recent numbers as published by the government, which demonstrate that there is a gain at the lower tier level, but an overall shortfall of \$17 million when looking at the upper-tier and lower-tier combined.

Stephen Fox and his staff looked into the October 2005 information to determine what the overall shortfall is, which is still \$17 million. The OMPF, despite all of the rhetoric, continues to be complicated and is changing all the time.

In addition, it was noted that there is no real incentive on the municipalities' part to save any money, with Ontario Works for instance. The overall consensus is that the funds in the OMPF are inadequate and in fact there are only three counties in Eastern Ontario that will receive OMPF by the time it is phased-out. The EOWC needs to convince taxpayers and the government that all is not well, just because the lower-tier municipalities have received more money.

Future Direction Update

The EOWC hired Allan and Partner Inc. to complete the annual update to the Future Directions Report 2005, and the fiscal crisis is clearly worsening over time. Levy increases represent a 26% increase over 3 years, creating tremendous stress on the property tax bill. One issue that is fundamental (LSR) is the \$24 million shortfall in downloaded service costs, which have been funded on the backs of taxpayers since 2002. Added to the \$24 million, the full impact of the OMPF, which is another \$17 million, for a total of \$35 million.

Future Directions Comparison

Allan and Partners Inc. completed a comparison of the Eastern Ontario Counties and the Western Ontario Counties, as the EOWC often note that Eastern Ontario is fiscally disadvantaged compared to other parts of Ontario. This report highlights some of the major differences and a summary is provided in the briefing notes. It differences include that Eastern Ontario is larger geographically, with a smaller population and a taxable assessment that is less than half of WOWC. In addition, the income of Eastern Ontario citizens is less than Western Ontario and 19% percent lower per average household than the Provincial average.

Rural Plan

The Province has previously released a rural plan that has a lack of municipal perspective, with the focus mainly on education and health. The EOWC would like to create a Prosperity Plan that will serve as a positive contribution and possible influence for when the province redesigns their Rural Plan.

The Chair and members of the EOWC met with representatives from Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs, who acknowledged that the Provincial Rural Plan was meant as more of a communication tool versus a policy document and they have indicated a desire to work with us. The EOWC Eastern Ontario Prosperity Plan would provide them with input in

terms of current delivery systems and also on a proactive side, to develop a plan to identify how to attract growth in Eastern Ontario.

In terms of the Eastern Ontario Development Fund (EODF), consultant (Kathy Woods) and the individual representing FedNor (Dan Borowec) made a presentation on EODF initiatives. Investments into EODF projects have levied over \$56 million dollars in Eastern Ontario.

OMERS- Bill 206

Jim noted that the CAOs calculated an estimate based on the first reading of Bill 206, which identified a cost of \$11 million at the upper-tier in Eastern Ontario Counties. AMOs costing was \$380 million across the province based on the information available from the first reading. After the second reading of the Bill, a half a billion dollars across the province annually to run this program was anticipated.

The \$11 million increase for Eastern Ontario will be in addition to the 9% (2006) increase and supplemental plans, all of which will continue to increase exponentially. Although there was a comment by the Minister that stakeholders were consulted, it is evident that municipalities are not considered stakeholders.

Fiscal Crisis

Want to ensure that we are current with our financial information as we are reaching double digit increases. Jim Wilson, CAO of Haliburton County, has completed work with Ministry of Municipal Housing financial information to show hospital and health spending in Eastern Ontario. This data comes from the provincial database; the total amount of \$268,152,108 includes both upper and lower tiers.

Briefing Book: In-Depth Analysis

a) The Fiscal Gap

The Caucus is comfortable with this issue and they are directing the CAOs to craft questions around this issue to be addressed on the conference floor.

b) Land Ambulance Funding

The "Pay your Bill" theme is prevalent on this issue. The Caucus does want to note that they are not looking for the Province to take back this service, as many Counties are excelling at service delivery.

c) OMPF

The Caucus is clear that we are going to have to deal with the \$17 million dollar shortfall in the upper tiers, keeping in mind that we need to press the issue of only one-taxpayer.

d) Future Directions

- 2005 Update

- Comparison of Western Ontario to Eastern Ontario

e) Rural Plan

Consider funding for completion of Rural Prosperity Plan.

f) *OMERS*

Clearly there are no municipal stakeholders interested in Bill 206 as it is written, and the question is, who is encouraging this Bill to go forward. Doug Reycraft feels that the Bill will go forward no matter what. AMO has made a MFIPPA, *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, request to the Province to support claims of costing. Doug Reycraft also noted that in addition to the costs listed, there would be funds required to pay for the administrative support as a result of assuming the plan administration, on top of the approved increase for 2006.

g) *Fiscal Crisis*

General discussion was that the Briefing Book would serve as an excellent tool throughout the year as the EOWC takes on these issues.

Moved by: Warden Austin
Seconded by: Mayor Finnegan

THAT the briefing book be accepted as presented with aforementioned changes as applicable.

CARRIED

9. ROMA/OGRA Conference

Delegations

The Caucus agreed to have Warren Sleeth set up a group delegation as he has in the past, in order to maximize the time the Caucus has to speak with the Ministers and Parliamentary Assistants.

Joint Meeting

EOWC will be holding a meeting on Sunday February 19th at 3pm, which will be followed by a joint WOWC/EOWC meeting at 4pm.

Questions on the floor

There is a request for staff to generate questions for the ROMA/OGRA conference, specifically for the bear-pit session.

Mr. Sleeth returned to the meeting at 12:30pm.

10. EODF update

This program is a combination of local and regional initiatives which have underwent a third party evaluation on request from FedNor. Although this review has not been released, the preliminary document has been favorable and return investments have shown the program to be highly successful. Regionally \$1.2 million has been spent, the first regional project being the Eastern Ontario Opportunities Action Plan, EOOAP, which was created to take a look at what opportunities existed in Ontario. Natural Capital Resources Inc., was responsible for the development of this plan. The EOOAP has spurred lots of activity and momentum, which was evident last week as a comment from OMAFRA staff indicated that they have noted with interest the economics that have been developing in Eastern Ontario. There is a fair indication that the

fund will continue despite any political party change at the upcoming election and that there will not be a break in funds.

Broadband Initiative

Through EODF funding, a map has been formed, that now shows all the gaps, county by county, noting the affected households or parcels. In terms of Broadband throughout Eastern Ontario, it would cost \$67 million to provide broadband throughout Eastern Ontario, keeping in mind that the project would generate 2 to 1 in a return on this investment.

Peter Wagland has been involved with the Broadband initiative and he spoke to the fact that Dan Borowec has represented both the EOWC and the CFDC's admirably in front of the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade representatives in terms of this issue. Chair Bob Sweet thanked Dan for his persistence and involvement to date on this initiative.

11. EOOAP update

Arising out of the discussions with representatives from OMAFRA, it was indicated that there are numerous possibilities available to influence government rural policy, including an inter-ministerial group to use as a springboard to other venues, whether that is an Eastern Directors meeting or a Rural Caucus meeting. The plan proposed currently is to 1) get an RED, Rural Economic Development, application submitted, which would require no funds from the EOWC and 2) the EOWC would need to invest dollars for presentations, communications, roll-out, etc. The general sense is that the Prosperity Plan would be ready for June and launched throughout September. The total cost for development of the Prosperity Plan would be approximately \$88,000. The EOWC has \$40,000 from EODF funds and would be looking at getting the remaining funded. ADM will support this financially and the EOWC could continue to work with Dan Borowec to develop this business case as a continuation of the EOOAP.

Motion to have up to a maximum of \$20,000 assigned to contribute to the Prosperity Plan.

Moved by: Mayor Finnegan

Seconded by: Warden Cathcart

THAT the EOWC approve the expenditure of a maximum of \$20,000 out of EOWC funds, for the development and launch of the Prosperity Plan.

CARRIED

12. Bill 3

The Chair spoke to the Private Members' Bill brought forward by John Yakabuski, MPP Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, in terms of allocating gas tax to all municipalities instead of just those who have transit systems. This Bill has passed first reading and gone to committee. Private Members Bill is a free vote in parliament, with many members supporting this initiative.

13. Website

Norm Lemke, CAO of the County of Renfrew, indicated that the website has been a key communications component for the EOWC. Since the conception of the website in May/June 2005 there is an indication that the level of usage on the website has been significant and has been increasing as the website address has been made more available. Appreciation for the work

that the County of Renfrew Information Technology Department has done on this project was also extended. There was a request to add the website address to the letterhead.

14. Emergency Planning Pandemic

The CAOs group conducted an informal poll in terms of their understanding of where the Health Units are in the pandemic planning process. The overwhelming concern is that when a pandemic spreads as quickly as the evidence suggests, there will be a shortage of time to develop the plans should the need arise. It has been indicated that some health units have moved ahead quickly, but others have not. It is the desire of the EOWC to send letters to local health units, the Chief medical Officer of Health and the Minister of Health. The letter would be requesting the boards to move forward with their plans, as there is a clear direction for the Boards of Health to take a lead role in pandemic planning.

Moved by: Mayor Finnegan
Seconded by: Mayor Kelly

THAT a letter be sent to all Eastern local Health Units, the Chief Medical Officer of Health and the Minister of Health and Long-term Care requesting the Boards of Health move forward with their pandemic planning plans for the health and safety of all Eastern Ontario citizens.

CARRIED

15. Correspondence

Moved by: Warden Cathcart
Seconded by: Warden Holman

THAT the correspondence be received as information.

CARRIED

16. New/Old Business

Warden Struthers attended two meetings of the Mayors for the future of agriculture in Ontario, who are formulating a "rural plan". The EOWC has concerns of duplication.

Financial Statement

A quick calculation of expenses was done and there is the anticipation that the funds will be utilized completely by the end of 2006.

Moved by: Past-Warden Héту
Seconded by: Warden Holmand

THAT the financial statement be received as presented.

CARRIED

Possible increase in dues to \$3000 for the future was discussed and at this time it was felt that more funds are needed, a request be made at that time.

Bill 123

In the view of the Caucus there is significant overlap and duplication with the Municipal Act and there are issues with items within the Bill that will have potentially significant costs. AMO has taken the position that it is a duplication of the requirements of the Municipal Act and has put forth a petition to exempt municipalities.

Moved by: Major Finnegan
Seconded by: Warden Austin

THAT Bill 123 be supported and the government petitioned to support AMO position.

CARRIED

March Meeting

As a result of work done by Vince Fabiilli and Warren Sleeth, the regional directors have made the EOWC material a priority and they have great knowledge about the work of the EOWC. The CAOs have arranged a meeting in March with them.

- Jim Pine will update the necessary briefing book materials and e-mail them to the CAOs so they can update their books.
- A suggestion was brought forward to invite opposition members to the January meeting, which may boost overall attendance
- In terms of MPAC, the Ombudsman who is looking into this service is not making any changes, but rather he is looking into situation in which people phone MPAC and are not given correct information.

17. Adjournment

Moved by: Major Kelly
Seconded by: Warden Holman

THAT the meeting of January 19, 2006 be adjourned.

CARRIED

Chair
Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus
Bob Sweet

Secretary/Treasurer
Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus
Norm Lemke