



August 1, 2020

Expansion of Broadband to Rural and Northern Ontario

The Province has been gripped by the Corona Virus Pandemic since March and every single citizen's life has been impacted. While we were stuck in our homes access to reliable Broadband has never been more important to Ontarians. Allan Thompson, President of Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) is one of those that has joined FONOM's voice, asking that Broadband become an *essential service*.

Those of us in Northern Ontario have referenced the need for more funding to expand Broadband for nearly a decade. The pandemic has shown that even with the considerable investment the Government of Canada, the Province of Ontario, Municipalities, and telecommunication companies have made, it has not been enough.

Students of all ages were asked to stay at home and learn remotely, previously we shared anecdotes of students sitting at Tim's doing homework using the stores Wi-Fi. That was whole communities this past spring, and the FONOM Board is concerned what this coming school year is going to look like (*We thank the Government of Ontario for committing to have every Highschool connected this year and the elementary schools next year*). This fall there will be university and college students that will have to move away from home, so they have access to a reliable connection.

As well many communities saw their summer residents early this year, and the impact put a strain on the already weak signals. Also, the recent Pandemic has had a predictable outcome for some long-time GTHA residences, as they now move to parts of the Province that did not have as many positive COVID19 cases. Those moving to the North are looking for waterfront property and reliable broadband, we have lots of water and not so much of the other. The lack of Broadband is scene as the number one hurdle to economic boom happening in the North.

The Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM) does not have a magic fix for the issue of Broadband, but we would like to share a few observations and if we can make a suggestion. Stated earlier, your government has and continue to make considerable investments to the expand Broadband across the Province. But communities still struggle to see improvements to the system. We would suggest that there be more transparency around the and what the Networks do with the funding.

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In Southern Ontario, your major problem is 70% of the population live within a 2-hour Sunday evening drive of the 400 and 401. Governments plan to spend Billions more to address the transit and gridlock issues. Northern Ontario has 8% of the Provinces population and over a fifth of households do not have reliable or internet at home. FONOM believes Northern Ontario can help with the gridlock by the Province making it more attractive for industry to relocate to our part of the Province. If a weak signal is stopping someone from relocating to a safer part of the Province, then we have to work together to address it.

So, we believe that a few things must happen in communities that have lower than 100 mbps, the province work with providers to create and maintain Hubs so those that require can connect. That the Province and Federal Government reallocate capital monies earmarked for the GTHA's gridlock and repurpose those funds to tackle Broadband across Northern and Rural Ontario, as we agree it is an *essential service!*

Attached Resolutions pasted at the FONOM 2016 and 2019 AGM's



New Ontario Police Detachment Boards

The Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM) appreciates an opportunity to talk about the Governance Model of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) Detachment Boards.

We understand that there are many communities with OPP contracts, and nearly 200 municipalities that presently do not have a contract. We want the Government to recognize that any change they make will impact almost 102 of our member municipalities in the Northeast. FONOM does not have an opinion on the Government's desire to have contracts with all Municipalities. But we do wish to share our vision with the Minister and the Government, as they move forward.

The size of Northern Ontario is large, so much so when we were kids, you had to flip the map over to find it. Because of the vastness of the region and the distances between communities, we believe each community is unique. Hearst and Kapuskasing are as different as Orangeville and Bradford are. Yves Morrissette, the CAO of Hearst shared this comment when he compares his community to Kapuskasing

"Although we share some characteristics (low populations, economically driven by the forest industry, aging population, youth-out migration, etc.), we are also very different on other fronts (language, socially assisted populations, drug use, relations and interactions with First Nations, etc.)."

These differences will impact their needs for policing, and there must be a mechanism in place to ensure a Community's differences are heard. Therefore, the FONOM Board recommends that for the detachments in Northern Ontario, the following.

- Each Municipality with a contract should have one appointee to a detachment board
- That Provincial Appointees no longer be chosen to sit on detachment boards, as we agree with AMO that the Province has considerable input to the Policing in communities
- The Municipality must have the autonomy to select an elected official, municipal staff person, or a private citizen to represent the community on the detachment board
- We believe that no detachment board should be larger than nine people; therefore, there may be more than one board per detachment

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- We believe the Province be responsible for the cost of the mandatory training of members of detachment boards
- We recognize and appreciate that the boundaries of detachments are reviewed every five years and that a detachment's boundary may need to change to address community policing needs. Therefore, we understand that the composition of the Boards may change to reflect the new boundaries of the detachments.

On behalf of our membership, FONOM would like to work with the Minister and her Government, in the next steps taken to move this issue forward. As several members of the FONOM Board have and continue to sit on Detachment Boards, we would volunteer to join any dialogue your Ministry holds on the Governance Model.

Attached;

AMO - New Ontario Provincial Police Detachment Boards: Building a Framework for Better Policing Governance

Resolutions from membership for Multi Minister Delegation

Public Health Funding

WHEREAS the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities has received resolutions from several of our membership, requesting that public health be funded through regular provincial taxation, not property taxation;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities hereby requests that Jim Pine, Facilitator of the Public Health Modernization consultations, review the current funding formula for Public Health and Rural & Northern Ontario municipalities; proposing exemptions for the province to implement for 2010

Introduction

*"Under the Health Promotion and Protection Act, since 1997, municipal governments are legally responsible for 100% of public health costs." The Funding for most of the Health Units programs in the Province was 75% funded by the Provincial Government and 25% by the Units Municipal Partners. There were also uniquely funded programs that the Province fully funded. The Units are responsive to the Ontario Public Health Standards: Requirements for Programs, Services, and Accountability (Standards) set by the Ministries of the Government. The Municipal Partners had representation on the Unit Boards and the Provincial Appointees, but they have no input on the Standards. Your Government have also seen many community resolutions that ask for Transparency in Public Health. These resolutions reinforce what Mayor ___n of ____ has said for years, *"the Municipal Partners in Health have no Pay for Say."**

The Provincial Budget in 2019 announced that the Government was changing the Grant amount, they contribute to the Units. The Budget document stated: *"the current structure of Ontario's public health units does not allow for consistent service delivery, could be better coordinated with the broader system and better aligned with the current Government priorities."* Due to the change, the Health Units in the North increased their levy by 10% and have announced the same next year, which means a 42% increase by 2021.

The Provincial Government continues to review the delivery of Programs they fund. They announce that reducing the number of Health Units may be a fiscally responsible option. The impact on the North was to be one Health Unit for the entire Province Northwest of Huntsville. FONOM appreciates the initiative, and we support the exploration of efficiencies that do not negatively impact the most vulnerable in the Province and hard-working individuals as well! The impact on our Membership has been a levy increase of 42%, which is considerable when they have no recourse. Communities have asked questions of their Health Units Boards, and some responses have come not from the Board but their Lawyer. FONOM is concerned with these reactions, and they are not the appropriate way to treat a funder and their partners in Medical Health.

Health Unit District Size

Much in this Government understands the uniqueness and vastness of the North, due to the unprecedented focus the area has received since your election. That's why the recommendation to have only one Health Unit for 90% of the Province landmass, is so out of character for this Government. Considering the geography, even having only one in the Northeast would create challenges for the Municipal partners. Please also be reminded that the drive from the Town of Parry Sound to Hornpayne is nearly 10 hours, and Hearst is over 9 hours.

Governance

Large geographic Boards are not new to elected officials in the North. You should be aware that the question of representation is a current discussion, as some communities must wait six terms of Council to have the right to appoint a Board Member. There is an example where to avoid a conflict between several communities, and a non-elected alternative was selected.

For discussion let us explore the one Health Unit Board in the North East and what the Board may look like (*Deloitte strategic planning expects recommend the optimal board size is between 7-9 people*); There are 110 municipalities, consisting of large Cities and nearly 100 communities with less than a 1000 people. All those communities would like a "Pay for Say," but a 150 person board is not practical. Presently there are five Health Units in the Northeast with a total of 74 Board members (*23 provincial appointees and 51 municipal representatives {38 elected and 13 citizens appointed by the municipal partners}*); combining them onto one Board is not functional either.

There are a few large Boards that work well, and the largest recommended is 31 people. We expect that the newly constituted Health Unit would have Provincial Appointees, so using the current ratio, ten members will be appointed. The remaining would be selected from the Member municipalities, six from Greater Sudbury, four from Sault Ste Marie, two from Timmins & North Bay, one from Parry Sound, West Nipissing, and Temiskaming Shores, leaving the 107 remaining communities **three** representatives. FONOM believes that our Membership, will overwhelmingly be opposed to this out any other possible scenario, and we will support their position.

We wish to take a moment to comment on the Submission made by the Medical Officers of Health for the five Northeastern Ontario Health Units, to Helen Angus, Deputy Minister of Health, and Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health. *Transforming Public Health for the People of Northeastern Ontario*. It represents a thoughtful blueprint for a way forward to provide the Standards to the public in our regions. If the Ministry believes that only one Health Unit in the Northeast, we support the operational plan created by the staff and MOH's of the of the 5 Northeast Health Units. Understandably we have an issue with the spirit of their discussion on Governance, as it is apparent that all but a few elected officials impede a functional board. Also, the recommendation that our members would not be able to appoint representation to the inaugural Board would be unacceptable.

Conclusion

The recent Pandemic showed how important a role the Health Units portray in Ontario. But it also showed how the Municipalities are respected by some of those that run the Health Units. The Medical Officers Submission reinforces this point. Therefore, we ask the Province to amend the *Health Promotion and Protection Act*, to upload the cost of Health Units to be funded by Provincial taxation.