



January 27, 2021

MEDIA RELEASE

FONOM had a productive meeting with members of Premier Ford's Cabinet during the ROMA Conference

Due to increasing numbers of Covid-19 cases across the Province, the FONOM Board participated virtually during the 2021 Rural Ontario Municipal Associations (ROMA) Conference. Board members shared three Policy Positions with Minister's Clark, Romano, Elliott, Mulroney, Fedeli, and MPP's McDonald, Miller, and Thanigasalam, also over 50 Ministry staff were on the call. We discuss planned topics, including Satellites' role in addressing the North's Broadband deficiencies. We shared our thoughts on the Transportation issues facing communities and commerce in the North. President Whalen commented, "*we want to ensure that any Northern Provincial Transportations Strategy is not to only take people and resources out of the North*" as well as seeking clarity from the Province on the challenge the Province is experiencing with Homelessness, Mental Health & Addictions.

The board members also discussed the Ontario Vaccine distribution strategy, commenting that the Provincial Task Force is not forgetting the North. We noted that several Northern Health Units had recently received shipments of the Moderna Vaccine.

Earlier this month, at a FONOM's Board meeting, Chad Evans, Vice President of Corporate Service for the ONTC, provided the Board an overview of their current divisions. He spoke to the synergies that have developed since the ONTC transitioned to the Ministry of Transportation. "*the ONTC continues to be a valuable community partner for so many municipalities,*" said FONOM President Danny Whalen, "*we appreciate their efforts to connect the North.*" As well shared was the process that is presently underway to assess rail conditions, which will aid the Government when they discuss the of the Northlander.

During the Board meeting, members shared regional observations of the impacts the COVID19 pandemic has on communities. Stressed by several is the enhanced co-operation between communities and agencies, hoping that these lines of dialog continue after the pandemic ends. The Board also discussed the release of FONOM's third of eight "GoNorth" videos (www.youtube.com/watch?v=qkEeQSnLHnA). The videos have been well received, as they are showcasing Northern Ontario as a healthy part of the world to operate a business. The Board shared their appreciation to Drew Gauley

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(Good Gauley Productions), Jennifer Baker (Jennifer Baker Consulting Ltd), and Todd Eastman's team from the Trade, Investment & Marketing (TIM) Unit of (ENDM). For all the hard work done on these videos and their promotion.

FONOM is an association of some 110 districts/municipalities/cities/towns in Northeastern Ontario mandated to work for the betterment of municipal government in Northern Ontario and strive for improved legislation respecting local government in the North. It is a membership-based association that draws its members from northeastern Ontario and is governed by an 11-member board.



President Danny Whalen
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