



**MINUTES of the REGULAR MEETING of the BOARD
THURSDAY, December 18, 2025, at 10:00 a.m.
MEETING #10/25**

PRESENT (in person): Debbie Ewald, Town of Rainy River (Chair)
Andrew Hallikas, Town of Fort Frances (Vice Chair)
Bill Langner, Township of Dawson
James Gibson, Township of Chapple
Telford Advent, Township of Morley
Brendan Hyatt, Township of La Vallee
Don Canfield, Rainy River Central

PRESENT (virtual): Lisa Teeple, Township of Emo
Colleen Fadden, Township of Lake of the Woods
Robert Ferguson, Town of Atikokan
Mike Ford, Township of Alberton
Robert Burns, Rainy River East
Wade Desserre, Rainy River West

ADMINISTRATION: Charene Gillies, CAO
Leanne Gurski, Director of Finance & Infrastructure
Faisal Anwar, Direct of Community Services
Heather Latter, Communications Advisor

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1. **Call to Order**
The Chair called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.
 2. **Land Acknowledgement**
 3. **Attendance & Declaration of Conflict of Interest**
There were no declarations of Conflict of Interest and no regrets from any board members.
 4. **Approval of Agenda**
Resolution #66/25 MOVED BY D. Canfield and SECONDED BY B. Lagner:

RESOLVED THAT the District of Rainy River Services Board (DRRSB) approve the agenda of December 18, 2025 as presented.

Carried.

5. **Approval of Minutes**
The minutes from the November 20, 2025 Regular Board Meeting were reviewed and approved.

Resolution #67/25 MOVED BY J. Gibson and SECONDED BY D. Canfield:

RESOLVED THAT the minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of the District of Rainy River Services Board held Thursday November 20, 2025 be approved.

Carried.

6. Administration Reports

6.1. Community Services: Children's Services Innovation Fund – report included in meeting package

Faisal Anwar, Director of Community Services, informed the Board that the Children's Services team was successful in receiving \$107,079 from the Ministry's Innovation Fund, which will be used to fund two complementary programs: a Peer Mentoring Program and Child Care Professional Learning Modules. The long-term goal is to build self-sufficiency through mentorship and continuous learning.

6.2. Infrastructure: Fotheringham Court – report included in meeting package

Leanne Gurski, Director of Finance and Infrastructure, spoke to the report prepared by Michelle Shute, Infrastructure Manager, updating the Board on an upcoming engineering study at Fotheringham Court, a DRRSB housing property in Atikokan. The purpose of the engineering study is to determine the extent of slab settling and drainage issues in the area of the main floor laundry room and public washrooms at the site and to provide a scope of work and cost estimate to correct said issues.

6.3. Communications Report – included in meeting package

Heather Latter, Communications Advisor, gave an update on communications over the last quarter of 2026, including media releases, recruitment support, and media coordination.

6.4. CAO Update – report included in meeting package

CAO Charene Gillies provided an update to the Board, highlighting a meeting she attended in November, as part of DRRSB's MOU with KDSB and Treaty #3 where regional housing challenges, such as aging stock, overcrowding, and funding gaps, were discussed. She also mentioned DRRSB's ongoing support for the Emo Seniors' Centre and contribution to the Rainy River District Ontario Health Team leadership and operational activities with a current focus on advancing attachment to primary care for all district residents.

7. Business Arising

7.1. Exploratory Housing Development - report included in meeting package

CAO Charene Gillies provided an update the Board on ongoing work to explore housing development opportunities across the Rainy River District, including DRRSB's participation in a Northern Ontario Service Deliverers Association (NOSDA) housing portfolio initiative.

As part of this NOSDA housing work, DRRSB will be having a study completed for the Fifth & Frenette property, without immediate building commitments, to gain a better understanding of technical and financial feasibility and to position the DRRSB as a partner in the NOSDA work, for federal and provincial funding including new programs like Build Canada Homes.

8. New Business

8.1. Reserve Funds

Leanne Gurski, Director of Finance and Infrastructure, told the Board that DRRSB received two WSIB surplus rebate cheques in 2025 and recommended they be allocated into the Ambulance Vehicle Reserve and the Social Housing Reserve.

Resolution #68/25 MOVED BY D. Canfield and SECONDED BY J. Gibson:

RESOLVED THAT the DRRSB approve the additional transfer of \$224,593.31 to the Ambulance Vehicle Reserve Fund; and

Furthermore, that the DRRSB approve the additional transfer of \$212,797.94 to the Social Housing Reserve Fund.

Carried.

8.2. Draft 2026 Budget

Before Leanne Gurski, Director of Finance and Infrastructure, presented the draft budget. CAO Charene Gillies provided some context on the work to date, noting that the DRRSB program areas are facing increasing costs and fiscal pressures. The budget was presented as an early version recognizing work to achieve a final proposed version was ongoing.

After the budget presentation there was some discussion, with Board members agreeing there are also fiscal pressures within all municipalities. The Board directed administration to continue their work including to make further cuts and to bring a proposed final draft to the January board meeting.

9. In Camera

Resolution #69/25 MOVED BY B. Hyatt and SECONDED BY J. Gibson:

RESOLVED THAT the District of Rainy River Services Board (DRRSB) now meet in-camera to address matters pertaining to:

- A position, plan, procedure, criteria or instruction to be applied to any negotiations carried on or to be carried on by or on behalf of the DRRSB or local board.
- Personal matters about an identifiable individual, including DRRSB or local board employees.

Carried.

10. Information Items

- 10.1. NOSDA Priorities 2025-26
- 10.2. NOSDA Submission
- 10.3. NOSDA SolGen Reply
- 10.4. MCCSS Memo Support for Asylum Seekers
- 10.5. CMHA Ontario Pre-Budget 2026 Final
- 10.6. CMHA Ontario Pre-Budget 2026 Infographic
- 10.7. OAHS CEO Departure Notice – RRDSSAB
- 10.8. Northern Municipal Council Workshops Jan 2026
- 10.9. 2025 Auditor General of Ontario Report Primary Care Access

11. Next Meeting

The next Regular Board Meeting of the District of Rainy River Services Board will be held in person on January 15, 2025 starting at 10:00 a.m.

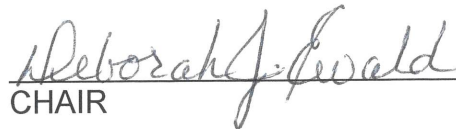
12. Adjournment

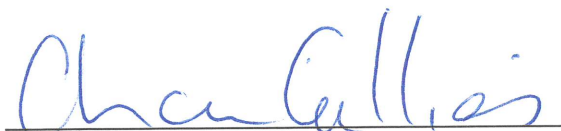
Resolution #70/25 MOVED BY B. Lagner and SECONDED L. Teeple:

13. RESOLVED THAT the District of Rainy River Services Board (DRRSB) meeting of December 18, 2025 be adjourned at 12:04 pm.

Carried.

Meeting adjourned.


CHAIR


SECRETARY-TREASURER (CAO)


DATE APPROVED