
**MINUTES of the REGULAR MEETING of the BOARD
THURSDAY, January 15, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.
MEETING #01/26**

- PRESENT (in person):** Debbie Ewald, Town of Rainy River (Chair)
Andrew Hallikas, Town of Fort Frances (Vice Chair)
Lisa Teeple, Township of Emo
Robert Ferguson, Town of Atikokan
Mike Ford, Township of Alberton
Robert Burns, Rainy River East
Wade Desserre, Rainy River West
Telford Advent, Township of Morley
Brendan Hyatt, Township of La Vallee
Don Canfield, Rainy River Central
- PRESENT (virtual):** Colleen Fadden, Township of Lake of the Woods
Bill Langner, Township of Dawson
James Gibson, Township of Chapple
- ADMINISTRATION:** Charene Gillies, CAO
Leanne Gurski, Director of Finance & Infrastructure
Faisal Anwar, Direct of Community Services
Heather Latter, Communications Advisor
Tanis Fretter, Children's Services & Income Support Manager
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1. Call to Order

The CAO called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

2. Land Acknowledgement

3. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

R. Burns nominated Deb Ewald for the position of Chair and A. Hallikas seconded the nominated. As no other nominations were presented, Deb Ewald was acclaimed as the Chair.

Don Canfield nominated Andrew Hallikas for the position of Vice Chair and R. Ferguson seconded the nomination. As no other nominations were presented, Andrew Hallikas was acclaimed as Vice Chair.

4. Attendance & Declaration of Conflict of Interest

There were no declarations of Conflict of Interest and no regrets from any board members.

5. Approval of Agenda

Resolution #01/26 MOVED BY L. Teeple and SECONDED BY M. Ford:

RESOLVED THAT the District of Rainy River Services Board (DRRSB) approve the

agenda of January 15, 2026 as amended. *(New business item was added - NOSDA Northern Housing Strategy)*

Carried.

6. Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the December 18, 2025 Regular Board Meeting were reviewed and approved.

Resolution #02/26 MOVED BY D. Canfield and SECONDED BY R. Ferguson:

RESOLVED THAT the minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of the District of Rainy River Services Board held Thursday, December 18, 2025 be approved as presented.

Carried.

7. Administration Reports

7.1. Community Services: Children’s Services Infrastructure Plan and Funding – report included in meeting package

Tanis Fretter, Children’s Services & Income Support Manager provided an update on plans related to the Start-Up Grant (SUG) and Canada-Ontario Early Learning and Child Care Infrastructure Fund to support child care expansion. These plans include issuing a feasibility study of the Fifth & Frenette property (former St. Michael’s School) to look at to create 73 new child care spaces for children aged 0-4. This project would utilize the full SUG and Infrastructure funding allocation to renovate a portion of the existing building and equip the new centre.

7.2. Finance:

7.2.1. Quarterly Investment Report – included in meeting package

7.2.2. Quarterly Maintenance Report – included in meeting package

8. In Camera.

Resolution #03/26 MOVED BY B. Hyatt and SECONDED BY M. Ford:

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

- Labour relations
- A plan to be applied to any negotiations carried on or to be carried on by or on behalf of the DRRSB

Carried.

Moved in camera at 10:33 a.m
Public session resumed at 10:56 a.m.

9. Business Arising

9.1. Proposed Updated Board Remuneration Policy G-3.2 – note included in meeting package

CAO Charene Gillies presented proposed updates to the Board Remuneration Policy (G-3.2), outlining the rationale for the recommended changes, demonstrating alignment with the District of Rainy River Services Board’s Strategic Plan, and providing an overview of the estimated financial impact and anticipated savings associated with the proposed amendments.

The Board members were mostly in agreement with the updates, but it was brought forth that the Chair and Vice-Chair positions have additional duties and responsibilities and should be compensated for those. It was agreed that a portion of the 2020 policy would remain in the updated policy, allowing for additional compensation for the Chair and Vice-Chair positions.

Resolution #04/26 MOVED BY D. Canfield and SECONDED L. Teeple:

RESOLVED THAT the District of Rainy River Services Board (DRRSB) approve the updated Board Remuneration Policy G-3.2 as amended effective January 15, 2026, to be applied retroactively to January 1, 2026, and direct administration to implement the policy and report remuneration costs annually as part of the budget process.

Carried.

9.2. Committee Lists – The Committee Lists were presented. No changes were made.

Resolution #05/26 MOVED BY D. Canfield and SECONDED R. Burns:

RESOLVED THAT the District of Rainy River Services Board (DRRSB) approve the Board Committee List as presented.

Carried.

9.3. 2026 Budget

Leanne Gurski, Director of Finance & Infrastructure, shared an updated draft of the budget, totaling \$38,602,958 and including a 4.63% municipal levy increase. There was some discussion about the inclusion of a few specific line items, as well as some information provided about the HOPE Centre. Some board members voiced that they felt the levy increase was still too high. J. Gibson moved to proceed to a vote on the motion, and a recorded vote took place, with nine votes in favour of approving the budget, four against, and one abstention.

Resolution #06/26 MOVED BY J. Gibson and SECONDED A. Hallikas:

RESOLVED THAT the District of Rainy River Services Board 2026 Budget, be approved:

Department	Budget Amount
Ontario Works	\$ 3,219,127
Children's Services	14,474,835
Paramedic Services	9,929,439
Community Housing	7,960,444
Central Administration	3,019,113
	\$ 38,602,958

DIVISION OF VOTES						
MEMBER	YEA			NAY		
	X	# of Votes	Total Votes	X	# of Votes	Total Votes
Alberton – Mike Ford				✓		
Atikokan – Robert Ferguson	✓					
Chapple – James Gibson	✓					
Dawson – Bill Langner				✓		
Emo – Lisa Teeple				✓		
Fort Frances – Andrew Hallikas	✓					
Lake of the Woods – Colleen Fadden	✓					
LaVallee – Brendan Hyatt	✓					
Morley – Telford Advent				✓		
Rainy River – Debbie Ewald	✓					
R.R. Central – Don Canfield	✓					
R.R. East – Robert Burns	✓					
R.R. West – Wade Desserre						
TOTALS						

Carried.

10. New Business

10.1. NOSDA Northern Housing Strategy

CAO Charene Gillies explained to that Board that to advance the housing development project, NOSDA must establish a new structure to receive, hold, and administer housing capital funding. This includes seeking Board approval authorizing the CAO, on behalf of DRRSB, to:

- Enter into a new Association Agreement establishing the NOSDA Pooling Association; and
- Opt into, and execute, Pooling Agreements related to the Affordable Housing Innovation Fund (AHIF) and Build Canada Homes (BCH).

Resolution #07/26 MOVED BY B. Hyatt and SECONDED BY W. Desserre:

WHEREAS:

- A. Northern Ontario Service Deliverers Association (“NOSDA Corp.”) has developed a system (“Pooling System”) by which some or all DSSABs and the City of Greater Sudbury (each, a “Service Deliverer”) may jointly pursue, obtain, and administer, funding; and
- B. The foundation of such system is proposed to be established through an Association Agreement, creating an unincorporated association having as its members, each Service Deliverer and NOSDA Corp. (the “Association”), and establishing the terms and conditions upon which Service Deliverers may opt in to the Pooling System for specific programs from time to time.

NOWHEREFORE, the Board of Directors resolve that:

1. The Rainy River District Social Services Administration Board, operating as the District of Rainy River Services Board, enter into the Association Agreement with the other Service Deliverers;
2. The Chief Administrative Officer and any other signing officer (the “Signing Officers”) of the corporation be and are hereby authorized to execute the Association Agreement in the form attached hereto with such amendments thereto as may be agreed upon with the other Service Deliverers and as the Signing Officers may deem acceptable; and
3. The Chief Administrative Officer be and is hereby appointed as the corporation’s Committee Representative for the Association.

Carried.

Resolution #08/26 MOVED BY A. Hallikas and SECONDED BY R. Burns:

WHEREAS:

- A. The Rainy River District Social Services Administration Board, operating as the District of Rainy River Services Board, has joined, or will join, the NOSDA Pooling Association (the “Association”), via an Association Agreement, having as its members (“Members”), the corporation known as Northern Ontario Service Deliverers Association (“NOSDA Corp”), each DSSAB, and the City of Greater Sudbury (together with each DSSAB, the “Service Deliverers”);
- B. The Association Agreement establishes the foundation for a system by which two (2) or more Service Deliverers may pool their resources and capabilities to jointly pursue certain endeavours (the “Pooling System”);

- C. The corporation has contemplated its role as a service manager for its service area under the Housing Services Act, and recognizes its mandate under that law to:
 - (i) devise a housing and homelessness plan;
 - (ii) carry out measures to meet objectives and targets relating to housing needs;
 - (iii) establish, administer, and fund, housing and homeless programs and services; and
 - (iv) provide housing.
 - D. The corporation’s service area, as is the case with many other service areas of other Members, is in critical need of new housing supply; a need of a magnitude recurring described as a “Housing Crisis”;
 - E. Conventional approaches to maintaining housing supply and affordability within service areas have had a limited impact on the Housing Crisis. Accordingly, the corporation, together with all other Members, recognize the need to address the Housing Crisis through innovative approaches, including through the recently developed Pooling System;
 - F. The Association Agreement requires a Commitment Resolution (as such term is defined in the Association Agreement) to be passed by the governing body of each Member in respect of each endeavour undertaken through the Pooling System; and
 - G. This resolution is a Commitment Resolution for the Affordable Housing Innovation Fund for funds that may be provided in response to the application submitted by Northern Ontario Service Deliverers Association (the “AHIF Program”) and the application intended to be submitted by NOSDA Corp. for funds that may be provided through the Build Canada Homes in the year 2026 (the “BCH Program”).
- NOW THEREFORE**, the Board of Directors resolve that:
1. The provisions of the above Sections C to E are hereby acknowledged and confirmed, and that, in recognition of them, the Rainy River District Social Services Administration Board, operating as the District of Rainy River Services Board, confirms its status as a Participating Member of the AHIF Program and the BCH Program; and
 2. The Chief Administrative Officer and any other signing officer (the “Signing Officers”) of the corporation be and are hereby authorized to execute a Pooling Agreement in respect of the AHIF Program and the BCH Program, in such form as the Signing Officers may deem acceptable.
 3. The Chief Administrative Officer be and is hereby appointed as the corporation’s Committee Representative for the Association.
- Carried.**

11. Information Items

- 11.1. DRRSB ROMA MNEDG Final Dec 2025
- 11.2. DRRSB ROMA Note Red Tape Final Dec 2025
- 11.3. DRRSB ROMA MMAH Housing Final Dec 2025
- 11.4. DRRSB ROMA MOH Final Jan 2026

- 11.5. MOF Pre-budget presentation 2026
- 11.6. RRDMA Presentation Jan 2026 Final

12. Next Meeting

The next Regular Board Meeting of the District of Rainy River Services Board will be held in person on February 19, 2026 starting at 9:00 a.m.

13. Adjournment

Resolution #09/26 MOVED BY M. Ford and SECONDED C. Fadden:

RESOLVED THAT the District of Rainy River Services Board (DRRSB) meeting of January 15, 2026 be adjourned at 12:03 pm.

Carried.

Meeting adjourned.



CHAIR



SECRETARY-TREASURER (CAO)

March 19, 2026

DATE APPROVED