



**MINUTES of the REGULAR MEETING of the BOARD
THURSDAY, March 19, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.
MEETING #02/26**

- 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
Colleen Fadden, Township of Lake of the Woods
Bill Langner, Township of Dawson
Wade Desserre, Rainy River West
Telford Advent, Township of Morley
Brendan Hyatt, Township of La Vallee
Don Canfield, Rainy River Central
- PRESENT (virtual):** Robert Burns, Rainy River East
- REGRETS:** Mike Ford, Township of Alberton
- ABSENT:** James Gibson, Township of Chapple
- ADMINISTRATION:** Charene Gillies, CAO
Leanne Gurski, Director of Finance & Infrastructure
Faisal Anwar, Direct of Community Services (virtual)
Aynsley McKinnon, Human Resources Manager
Sandra Weir, Housing & Homelessness Prevention Manager
Michelle Shute, Infrastructure Manager

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- 1. Call to Order**
The Chair called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.
 - 2. Land Acknowledgement**
 - 3. Attendance & Declaration of Conflict of Interest**
Mike Ford sent regrets for this meeting.
There were no declarations of Conflict of Interest and
 - 4. Approval of Agenda**
Item 8.5 GCT#3 Housing Summit was added to the agenda.

Resolution #10/26 MOVED BY L. Teeple and SECONDED BY W. Desserre:

RESOLVED THAT the District of Rainy River Services Board (DRRSB) approve the agenda of March 19, 2026 as amended.

Carried.

5. Approval of Minutes

The minutes from January 15, 2026 Regular Board Meeting were reviewed and approved as amended to include the recorded vote under 8.3 2026 Budget.

Resolution #11/26 MOVED BY A. Hallikas and SECONDED BY C. Fadden:

RESOLVED THAT the minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of the District of Rainy River Services Board held Thursday, January 15, 2026 be approved as amended.

Carried.

6. Administration Reports

- 6.1. Privacy Report: The DRRSB Privacy Officer provided information about annual privacy and access-to-information report required under MFIPPA and PHIPA. Privacy requests remain low with most relating to Ambulance Call Reports. All requests were handled within legislated timelines, and there were no appeals, privacy complaints or reportable breaches. Work through 2026 includes a review of our policy framework, developing some basic staff training to help increase understanding of their role in the organization related to the release of information, review and updating of the policies and procedures and the development of a privacy assessment tool.
- 6.2. Human Resources (HR) Report: Administration provided highlights of HR activity throughout the second half of 2025 including implementing organizational realignment changes, staff development activities, and recruitment and staffing changes. It was noted the DRRSB continues to struggle with employing the number of Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) required to maintain legislatively required ratios and administration is continuing to employ new ways to attract RECE's to the organization.
- 6.3. Communications Report: The DRRSB Communications Advisor provided information about communications activities over the last quarter including media releases on housing, homelessness, and continued financial pressures experienced by municipalities. Website improvements were made and at the recommendation of our cyber insurance providers, individual email addresses were removed.
- 6.4. Paramedic Services Update: Administration reported that the Rainy River District Paramedic Services successfully completed the Ministry of Health Land Ambulance Service Review late last spring and has been recertified to continue operating until January 1, 2029. The Ministry recognized the work done to be well prepared for the review and noted the required follow-ups were addressed promptly. The positive review was encouraging given the ongoing challenges we're facing related to workforce shortages, recruitment challenges, and complex calls that require us to continue to work differently and more collaboratively than was required in the past.
- 6.5. CAO Report
 - 6.5.1. Pre-Budget Presentation: CAO Charene Gillies attended a pre-budget meeting with representatives from the Ministry of Health in January. The message delivered

focused on the need for provincial investment in repairing and renewing aging social housing as a fiscally responsible way to protect existing assets and to avoid great costs later. A key message conveyed was the gap between our projected annual capital repair needs and available funding to address those needs. The provincial budget will be released March 27, 2026.

6.5.2. Strategic Plan Update: The report included in the board package provided a high-level overview of Year 1 implementation against goals and commitments. Year 1 focused heavily on building the foundation for longer-term progress through stronger planning and reporting, workforce and digital improvements, strategic advocacy, and advancement of housing and redevelopment opportunities. It is anticipated in Year 2 we will continue to build on progress particularly around planning and reporting to better enable us to be ready for the continually changing service landscape.

7. Business Arising

7.1. Amended Board Remuneration Policy: The Policy has been updated as directed at the January 15, 2026 board meeting. The amended policy was included in the board package.

7.2. Housing Security: Michelle Shute, Infrastructure Manager, reported security cameras have now been installed in three properties, with plans to add additional cameras as part of ongoing safety enhancements. She also advised that updated card-access systems will be implemented over time to improve control over building access. Sandra Weir, Housing & Homelessness Prevention Manager, provided an update on the increased staff presence within DRRSB managed housing through a pilot project that began in January and will continue until the end of March. As part of this initiative, staff are on-site in the evenings, conducting walkthroughs, engaging with tenants, identifying safety concerns and monitoring for any inappropriate activity. Consideration is being given to extending or expanding the project next year. She also noted that DRRSB staff have been attending tenant meetings to increase engagement, respond to questions and offer referrals.

8. New Business

8.1. NOSDA AGM – Members to attend: The NOSDA AGM will be in North Bay this year. R. Ferguson and D. Ewald the previously elected DRRSB NOSDA Board representatives were supported to attend.

Resolution #12/26 MOVED BY D. Canfield and SECONDED A. Hallikas:

RESOLVED THAT the District of Rainy River Services Board (DRRSB) approves the payment of appropriate per diems and travel expenses, as set by RRDSSAB Policy & Procedures, for the attendance of two members at the NOSDA AGM & Conference in north Bay, ON during the week of June 9-11, 2026; and

FURTHERMORE, that the members attending will be Debbie Ewald, Chair, and Board Member Rob Ferguson.

Carried.

- 8.2. Apportionment – 2026 Levy: The final 2026 apportionment schedules were included in the package and will be distributed to the municipalities following approval.

Resolution #13/26 MOVED BY W. Desserre and SECONDED R. Ferguson:

RESOLVED THAT the District of Rainy River Services Board (DRRSB) approve the 2026 Apportionment, as presented.

Carried.

- 8.3. Allowance for Doubtful Accounts 2025: The Director of Finance report on the doubtful accounts for 2025. It was clarified that this amount is what was deemed uncollectable at the end of the year and anything that is collected going forward would be deemed as revenue.

Resolution #14/26 MOVED BY C. Fadden and SECONDED B. Hyatt:

RESOLVED THAT the District of Rainy River Services Board (DRRSB) approve the Allowance for Doubtful Accounts (AFDA) in the amount of \$39,439.98 as at December 31, 2025.

Carried.

- 8.4. Paramedic Services – Ambulance Response Times: The Response time report was included in the package for Board approval as required by the Ministry of Health. From January 1 to December 31, 2025, response time targets for Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA), CTAS 1, 4, and 5 were met. The targets for CTAS 2 and 3 were not achieved. Contributing factors include geographical challenges, MPDS, population density, resource allocation, weather, travel distance and road conditions.

Resolution #15/26 MOVED BY B. Langner and SECONDED D. Canfield:

RESOLVED THAT the District of Rainy River Services Board (DRRSB) receive the 2025 Rainy River District Paramedic Service Response Time Standard Performance Report as presented:

And FURTHERMORE that the report be approved and submitted to the Ministry in compliance with regulatory requirements.

Carried.

- 8.5. GCT#3 Housing Summit – Members to Attend: The Board Chair and Vice-Chair have been invited to attend the Annual Grand Council Treaty #3 Housing Summit in Winnipeg from March 24-26, 2026 along with the CAO and Housing & Homelessness Prevention Manager. Their attendance and participation reflects the Board’s ongoing commitment to the Memorandum of Understanding with KDSB and Grand Council Treaty #3.

Resolution #16/26 MOVED BY R. Ferguson and SECONDED C. Fadden:

RESOLVED THAT the District of Rainy River Services Board (DRRSB) approve the payment of appropriate per diems and travel expenses, as set by RRDSSAB Policy & Procedures, for the attendance of two members at the Grand Council Treaty #3 Housing Summit in Winnipeg, MB during the week of March 24-26, 2026; and

FURTHERMORE, the members attending will be Debbie Ewald, Chair and Andrew Hallikas, Vice-Chair.

Carried.

9. New Business

- 9.1. Chair Report (ROMA): The Chair reported on the DRRSB’s attendance at ROMA which included participation in four delegations. The meeting with the Associate Ministry of Housing focused on capital repair funding gaps, the challenges small municipalities face in financing aging infrastructure, and higher northern construction costs, including elevator repairs. A subsequent funding request through COCHI residual funding for elevator repairs was denied, and follow-up will continue.
- 9.2. Governance and Policy Committee (By-Law Updates): A report included in the package summarizes the proposed bylaw changes. The proposed changes were provided for board member consideration, recognizing the current DRRSB by-law requires that notice of changes be circulated at least 45 days prior to a vote. The proposed changes will be brought forward for consideration at the May 21, 2026 meeting.

10. Information Items

- 10.1. RRDMA Sustainable Funding Letter
- 10.2. 2025-26 MHS4PSP funding RRD
- 10.3. DSSAB IO Loan Program
- 10.4. Rainy River DSSAB COCHI Residual
- 10.5. Letter of Support RCIP Feb 9, 2026
- 10.6. ROMA Ministry of Red Tape Reduction
- 10.7. 2026 AMO NOSDA OMSSA Homelessness Report Summary
- 10.8. 2026 AMO OMSSA NOSDA Helpseeker Full Report

11. Next Meeting

The next Regular Board Meeting of the District of Rainy River Services Board will be held virtually on April 16, 2026 starting at 9:00 a.m.

12. Adjournment

Resolution #17/26 MOVED BY A. Hallikas and SECONDED C. Fadden:

RESOLVED THAT the District of Rainy River Services Board (DRRSB) meeting be adjourned.

Carried.

Meeting adjourned.



CHAIR



SECRETARY-TREASURER (CAO)

April 16, 2026

DATE APPROVED