



**MINUTES of the REGULAR MEETING of the BOARD
THURSDAY, September 17, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.
MEETING #07/26**

PRESENT (virtual): Colleen Fadden, Township of Lake of the Woods
Bill Langner, Township of Dawson

PRESENT (in person): Wade Desserre, Rainy River West
James Gibson, Township of Chapple
Debbie Ewald, Town of Rainy River (Chair)
Brendan Hyatt, Township of La Vallee
Andrew Hallikas, Town of Fort Frances (Vice Chair)
Don Canfield, Rainy River Central
Robert Burns, Rainy River East
Lisa Teeple, Township of Emo
Robert Ferguson, Town of Atikokan
Mike Ford, Township of Alberton

ABSENT: Telford Advent, Township of Morley

ADMINISTRATION: Charene Gillies, CAO
Leanne Gurski, Director of Finance & Infrastructure
Faisal Anwar, Director of Community Services
Heather Latter, Communications Advisor
Michelle Shute, Infrastructure Manager
Sandra Weir, Housing & Homelessness Prevention Manager
Aynsley McKinnon, Human Resource Manager

GUESTS (virtual): Randy Thoms (93.1 The Border)

- 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**
- 4. Approval of Agenda**
Resolution #46/26 MOVED BY B. Hyatt and SECONDED BY M. Ford:

RESOLVED THAT the District of Rainy River Services Board (DRRSB) approve the agenda of September 17, 2026 as presented.

Carried.

5. Approval of Minutes

Resolution #47/26 MOVED BY A. Hallikas and SECONDED BY R. Ferguson:

RESOLVED THAT the minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of the District of Rainy River Services Board held Thursday, July 16, 2026 be approved as presented.

Carried.

6. Committee Meeting Update

Brendan Hyatt, Chair of the Building and Service Review Committee, presented the draft minutes from their meeting on August 12, 2026.

7. In Camera

Guest left the meeting.

Resolution #48/26 MOVED BY W. Desserre and SECONDED BY B. Burns:

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

X Positions, plans, procedures, or instructions for negotiations conducted by or on behalf of the DRRSB.

X Litigation or potential litigation.

Carried.

8. Business Arising

8.1. NOSDA Housing Portfolio Project

The CAO provided an update on the proposed redevelopment of the Fifth and Frenette housing property, noting the first phase of the project is nearly complete. The second phase would focus on developing detailed designs, confirming costs, completing required approvals, and preparing the project for possible construction.

This work would provide the Board with clearer information about the project's cost, funding options, affordability, risks, and long-term viability before any major decisions are made. Proceeding with Phase 2 would not approve construction, demolition, or long-term borrowing. Those decisions would come back to the Board later, along with a complete business case. The estimated cost for Phase 2 is up to \$731,940, to be paid from reserves initially while staff continue to seek outside funding.

Resolution #49/26 MOVED BY D. Canfield and SECONDED BY L. Teeple:

RESOLVED THAT the District of Rainy River Services Board authorize Administration to proceed with Phase 2 of the NOSDA Housing Portfolio Project for the Fifth & Frenette redevelopment, to a maximum cost of \$731,940, funded from reserves;

AND THAT the Chief Administrative Officer be authorized to execute the agreements and take the administrative actions necessary to advance Phase 2;

AND THAT Administration report back to the Board with a comprehensive business case before any commitment is made to long-term borrowing or final redevelopment of the property.

Carried.

8.2. Fotheringham Court

Infrastructure Manager, Michelle Shute, provided an update on the structural and sanitary repairs planned at Fotheringham Court. An engineering study identified slab settling and drainage issues affecting the main-floor laundry room and public washrooms. Following the tender process, one bid was received that exceeded the available budget. Administration is working with the engineering consultant and contractor to revise the scope of work while still addressing the required repairs and reducing the overall cost.

The revised project cost is expected to be up to \$765,000 plus HST. Funding may include money already set aside for the project, available Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative funding, and uncommitted 2026 capital funds. Completing the repairs by the end of 2026 remains a priority to prevent further damage and maintain essential laundry and washroom services for residents.

Resolution #50/26 MOVED BY B. Burns and SECONDED BY J. Gibson:

RESOLVED THAT the District of Rainy River Services Board (DRRSB) award the Fotheringham Court Structural and Sanitary Repairs to M Builds if, in the opinion of Administration, it is in the best interest of the Board to do so, and if the project cost can be funded using a combination of funding already set aside for the project, available COCHI funding and uncommitted 2026 capital funds.

Carried.

9. New Business

9.1. Response Time Performance

The Board received the 2027 Response Time Standard Performance Report, which noted that RRDPS met its 2025 response-time targets for sudden cardiac arrest and CTAS 1, 4, and 5 calls; however, targets for CTAS 2 and 3 calls were not met due to factors such as geography, travel distances, road and weather conditions, dispatching, population density, and resource allocation. RRDPS continues to implement strategies to improve response capabilities.

Resolution #51/26 MOVED BY M. Ford and SECONDED BY D. Canfield:

RESOLVED THAT the District of Rainy River Services Board (DRRSB) receive the 2027 Response Time Standard Performance report as presented and furthermore, that the RRDPS 2027 Response Time Standard Performance Plan below be approved and submitted to the Ministry in compliance with regulatory requirements.

2027 Response Time Standard Performance Plan

1. Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA): Defibrillator to patient within 6 minutes, 45% of the time.
2. CTAS 1: Paramedic to scene within 8 minutes, 60% of the time.
3. CTAS 2, 3, 4, 5:
 - CTAS 2: Paramedic on scene within 10 minutes, 65% of the time
 - CTAS 3: Paramedic on scene within 15 minutes, 65% of the time
 - CTAS 4: Paramedic on scene within 30 minutes, 65% of the time
 - CTAS 5: Paramedic on scene within 30 minutes, 75% of the time

Carried.

9.2. Market Rent Increase

Sandra Weir, Housing & Homelessness Prevention Manager, provided a report to the Board recommending a rent increase for tenants in DRRSB-owned housing.

Resolution #52/26 MOVED BY D. Canfield and SECONDED BY A. Hallikas:

RESOLVED THAT the District of Rainy River Services Board (DRRSB) approve a market rent increase of 1.9% for 2027 for all DRRSB-owned units.

Carried.

9.3. ROMA

The Board received a report from Administration regarding participation in the 2027 ROMA, NOMA, and AMO conferences. Administration recommended not committing to the January 2027 ROMA Conference because of its timing shortly after the 2026 municipal election, as well as the need for the incoming Board to establish advocacy and budget priorities.

Resolution #53/26 MOVED BY D. Canfield and SECONDED BY R. Ferguson:

RESOLVED THAT the District of Rainy River Services Board (DRRSB) not commit to participating in the 2027 ROMA Conference and that decisions regarding attendance at the 2027 NOMA Conference and the 2027 AMO Conference be deferred to the incoming Board following its inauguration in January 2027.

Carried.

10. Administration Reports

10.1. Children's Services – Northern College Education Program

Faisal Anwar, Director of Community Services, presented an update on DRRSB's Accelerated Early Childhood Education Program with Northern College. Administration will develop a strategy to maximize use of the remaining prepaid program seats by addressing participation barriers and supporting the recruitment and retention of qualified Early Childhood Educators in the district.

10.2. Children's Services – Progress against the Directed Growth Plan

Faisal Anwar, Director of Community Services, also presented an update on implementation of the Child Care Directed Growth Plan. To date, 112 of the 149 new CWELCC child care spaces targeted for the district have been created, with work continuing to complete the remaining spaces by the provincial deadline of December 31, 2026.

10.3. Paramedic Services – Workforce Stabilization Update

Aynsley McKinnon, Human Resources Manager, provided an update on paramedic workforce sustainability. RRDPS has reduced its estimated staffing vacancy rate from approximately 33% in 2024 to 22% as of August 2026; however, staffing shortages continue to result in occasional reduced ambulance coverage. Administration will continue recruitment, retention, scheduling, partnership, and advocacy efforts to support a sustainable paramedic workforce.

11. Info Items

- 11.1 Land Ambulance Services Grant Letter
- 11.2 Land Ambulance Services Grant Funding
- 11.3 Minister Letter HPP Annual Progress Reporting
- 11.4 MMAH Housing and Homelessness Plan

12. Next Meeting

The next Regular Board Meeting of the District of Rainy River Services Board will be held in person on Thursday October 15th, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.

13. Adjournment

Resolution #54/26 MOVED BY R. Ferguson and SECONDED BY B. Hyatt:

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

Carried.

Meeting adjourned at 11:21 a.m.



CHAIR



SECRETARY-TREASURER (CAO)

October 15, 2026

DATE APPROVED