



Jeff Lehman and Bonnie Crombie named Chair and Vice Chair of Ontario's Big City Mayors for 2021-22

November 27, 2020 – At its final meeting of the term this morning, Ontario's Big City Mayors (OBCM) confirmed Mayor of Barrie Jeff Lehman as its Chair for the next two years. Mayor of Mississauga Bonnie Crombie was named Vice Chair.

OBCM also approved a number of motions to advance key public policy positions and to strengthen the organization internally.

These included a motion calling on the Government of Ontario to remove Schedule 6 of Bill 229, which proposes changes to Conservation Authorities' permitting, planning and enforcement powers, so that they can engage in further consultations to address concerns.

OBCM also passed a motion calling on the federal and provincial governments to immediately implement a paid sick leave program to support low-income workers, prioritizing those who continue to go to work to provide essential goods and services during the pandemic.

A policy paper on infrastructure programs, which calls for a shift from project-based funding to long-term funding that aligns with long-term planning, was endorsed by OBCM and will be posted publicly and shared with Canada's Minister of Infrastructure and Communities and Ontario's Minister of Infrastructure.

Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Steve Clark and Minister of Finance Rod Phillips were guests at today's meeting and provided updates on the Province's response to COVID-19 and the recent Provincial Budget.

The outgoing Chair, Guelph's Mayor Cam Guthrie, reflected on an eventful term that saw OBCM emerge as a leading voice on issues such as retroactive cuts to municipal funding and COVID-19 response and recovery. OBCM also expanded its role as a strong policy and advocacy partner, weighing in on a wide range of issues including housing, public health and ambulance reform, and infrastructure renewal.

"I want to thank our federal and provincial government partners, who have showed a tremendous willingness to engage with Ontario's big city mayors. I also want to thank Ontario's big city mayors, who have an unwavering commitment to serving their communities and are dedicated to advancing the public good in every city in the province," said Mayor Guthrie. "I am proud to welcome Mayor Lehman as Chair, and Mayor Crombie as Vice Chair, and I look forward to working with them in the term ahead."

Added incoming Chair, Mayor Jeff Lehman, "To say these have been challenging times would be an understatement. Cam's leadership has been outstanding, and as an organization we have been able to accomplish a great amount both in terms of strengthening our organization internally as well as establishing OBCM as a strong voice advocating for our sector. I am looking forward to carrying our collective agenda forward for the next two years, building on the great work accomplished so far."

The new OBCM term begins today, November 27, and runs until the final OBCM meeting of 2022.



“I want to thank Mayor Guthrie for his service to our Caucus and for showing incredible leadership through these volatile and uncertain times,” said Mayor Crombie. “There are still significant challenges ahead of us, as COVID-19 continues to grip all of our communities. In my new role as Vice-Chair, I am committed to working closely with Mayor Lehman to continue driving change and securing support for Ontario’s big cities.”

Also at today’s meeting, OBCM approved measures to strengthen the organization’s sustainability, including an annual financial contribution from members and a transition to full-time staff support for OBCM.

About Ontario’s Big City Mayors

[Ontario’s Big City Mayors](#) (OBCM), formerly known as the Large Urban Mayors’ Caucus of Ontario, includes mayors of 29 single and lower-tier cities with a population of 100,000 or more, who collectively represent nearly 70 per cent of Ontario’s population. OBCM advocates for issues and policies important to Ontario’s largest cities.

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Motions – November 27, 2020:

Sick leave:

Ontario’s Big City Mayors express their strong belief that nobody should have to choose between going to work sick, and losing their job. Paid sick leave is needed immediately as a measure to help stop the spread of COVID-19 and protect the health of essential workers. We urge the Federal and Provincial governments to immediately implement a paid sick leave program that will support low-income workers, prioritizing those who continue to go to work to provide essential goods and services throughout the pandemic.

Conservation Authorities:

WHEREAS on November 5, 2020, the Government of Ontario introduced Bill 229, the Protect, Support and Recover from COVID-19 Act (Budget Measures), 2020, which proposes changes to Conservation Authorities’ permitting, planning and enforcement powers (contained in Schedule 6);

AND WHEREAS Conservation Authorities play a critical role protecting our environment and natural heritage, mitigating natural hazards, and supporting municipal partners by providing an environmental, conservation and risk assessment lens on development applications;



AND WHEREAS proposed changes in Schedule 6 of Bill 229 have raised concerns amongst Conservation Authorities, First Nations, environmental groups, and community members in Ontario Big City Mayors' municipalities;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT Ontario Big City Mayors ask the Government of Ontario to remove Schedule 6 of Bill 229 to allow for further consultations to address any concerns, including the development of proposals that will improve Conservation Authority operations while strengthening environmental protections for the people of Ontario and ensuring cost-neutrality for municipal governments;

AND FURTHER THAT this resolution be forwarded to the Premier, the Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks, the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Minister of Finance, the leaders of Ontario's opposition parties, Conservation Ontario and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO).