



**MROO**

**Municipal Retirees  
ORGANIZATION ONTARIO**

# **ANNUAL REPORT 2023 - 2024**

**Municipal Retirees Organization Ontario - MROO**

4094 Tomken Road, Mississauga, ON L4W 1J5

Telephone: 1.800.595.4497

# Municipal Retirees Organization Ontario Annual Report



## June 2024

Another fruitful year has seen perhaps the most important change to the governance of MROO in decades with the finalization of the new By-Law No. 7 and its adoption by the Board of Directors. Ratification by the members is expected at the Annual Meeting of Members in June.

This Herculean task was spearheaded by our President, Ketih Robicheau and shepherded along by a Governance Committee that was truly committed to the undertaking. Numerous meetings and countless hours were required but the group rallied behind the goal and persevered until the end. While this new By-law may have been mandated by the Ontario Not-For-Profit Corporations Act, the need for this overhaul was evident to the entire Board. These changes clear up some ambiguities and contradiction and should make life easier for the Board and Executive moving forward.

As is normal there was some change at the Board level, excitedly bringing aboard new faces while at the same time, sadly seeing the departure of others that have been around for a number of years. To our new members we say welcome, and to our departing members we say, farewell and thank you for your service.

One big change that should not go unnoticed was to the Scholarship Committee's operations and budget. New timing was instituted, for both submittal of qualifying documents and Committee review, which should make life easier for both the students and the Committee members. Additionally, the Scholarship Committee's budget has now been tied to a specific revenue source meaning increased interest in the program will no longer result in drastic overages in that budget line-item.

## Strategy 1      Membership Growth and Services

*MROO retains members and grows membership by increasing value to members and representing them.*

**Objective:** Deliver regular communications and education programs to members.

**Report:** The MROO Webinar Series continues to be well received, and anticipated, by our members. Excellent creative input from MROO volunteers has also assisted the Executive Director in delivering new and exciting content for our attendees. This is in addition to the consistent presentations by partners like Victor Insurance. Attendance and registration numbers continue to climb.

This year the November All-Zone Zoom Meeting was officially held for the first time (though a meeting was held previously in November during the COVID shutdown with Mr. Andre Picard as the guest speaker) with guest speaker Dr. Riley Moynes. We look forward to putting together another exciting morning for our Members this November.

**Objective:** Set realistic and achievable member targets and review annually.

**Report:** As of December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023, MROO had a total of 36,131 members which reflects the removal of 663 deceased members. There was a total of 2,427 new members in 2023, an increase of 6.7%.

Expecting membership increases in the 6-7% range would be quite aggressive but keeping that as a target, at least in the near term, is the goal.

**Objective:** Enhance benefits and value for money to members with new partnerships.

**Report:** Red Wireless, a Rogers Preferred Supplier, was brought on as a partner in 2023 and the program is now in full swing. While there were hiccups in some customer service areas to begin with, the feeling now is that better education and increased experience for their call center staff has helped reduce those issues for our Members.

With Loblaws and their in-house optical retailer, Thomas & Pringle, retrenching from offering specific partner deals to instead focusing on an overall 'low-price model,' the search began to find a new partner for MROO. Happily, we found that partner in Specsavers.

An international, and fast-growing brand, MROO became Specsavers first organizational partner in Canada, a model that they are looking to use across the country. Specsavers coverage is very strong in the province and growing at a remarkable rate. Specsavers was also a willing supporter of our Zone Meetings and appeared at 7 of the 9 meetings in 2024. At each meeting they were well supported by our Members.

**Objective: Enhance member database to become member-centred, know them.**

**Report:** Our Marketing Manager, with assistance from our Operations team successfully migrated our member database from GHD to Zoho. This has allowed for better data management, swifter responses for our partners, and a clearer picture into where we have fallen short in data management in the past.

**Objective: Issue Request for Proposals (RFP) and complete a branding study that will differentiate MROO.**

**Report:** This process is under way and the Marketing Manager will bring information forward to the June Board of Directors Meeting.

## Strategy 2    Advocacy

*MROO develops proactive and effective advocacy to address relevant issues and concerns in real time.*

**Objective: Develop/revise advocacy program to address member and emerging issues in a timely manner.**

**Report:** The development of an Advocacy Committee has not yet been undertaken. Completion of the new by-law should free up time for this initiative.

**Objective: Survey to identify advocacy issues most important to Members.**

**Report:** The 2024 survey asked Members what the most important areas for MROO were to advocate for on their behalf.

### **Top 5 Issues That MROO Members Care About (Advocacy):**

1. Health and Healthcare
2. Housing, LTC, Aging in Place, Long Term Care
3. OMERS and Pension Protection
4. Taxes (including CPP, OAS)
5. Dental and Travel

**Objective: Assess seniors' housing demonstration project opportunities (e.g., Abbeyfield) in our real estate needs study.**

**Report:** The Housing Support for Ontario Seniors put forth a motion to sponsor the creation of a Canada Homeshare site in a yet to be determined Ontario city. While the motion won support of the Board, tumult within Canada Homeshare, including the departure of their director to a “for profit” home sharing service, meant this donation was not fulfilled.

## Strategy 3      Reputation and Awareness

*MROO improves awareness and its reputation among current and prospective Members and key stakeholders.*

**Objective:** Leverage public relations (PR) function to expand reach/ impact of reputation matters.

**Report:** Each endeavour undertaken by MROO is evaluated and, if warranted, circulated in press releases to various media outlets to attempt to garner coverage. This was successfully done after substantial donations made in the COVID year.

This year, with the two targeted scholarships that have been awarded, one to a student at Carleton University, Phillippe Forster, and one to a student at Lakehead University, Maydena Remenda, we will focus on using these awards to further MROO's public relations goals.

Both recipients will be featured in the July Print 2024 Newsletter, on the MROO website and on MROO social media. PR outreach is currently being completed in the Thunder Bay Area and Ottawa areas.

**Objective:** Review Scholarship Program impact for PR and awareness, revise.

**Report:** The public relations efforts around Scholarship Awards was returned exclusively to the marketing portfolio for 2024. An aggressive target of 25 stories was the goal. While the final number was a little short of that goal there were still 18 stories highlighting our recipients.

**Objective:** Increase awareness of MROO by OMERS Employers.

**Report:** MROO increased interaction with organizations like OMHRA and OMAA through both greater engagement at conferences and through additional advertisements in their own publications. This allows for members to become more familiar with MROO before they encounter us at the various conferences and trade shows.

## Strategy 4      Organization Capability and Effectiveness

*MROO identifies and implements the organization structure and resources, particularly staffing and technologies, necessary to implement strategic direction.*

*MROO builds organization capabilities to levels that serve the evolving structure and resources in place over time.*

**Objective: Review Human Resource (HR) Plan to determine appropriate level of staffing needed by MROO.**

**Report:** Monitoring of workloads continues with a focus on maintaining an exceptional level of customer service. Currently, contract staff see increased activity at specific times (scholarship, zone meetings). While contract staff levels seem to be adequate, analysis is on-going. If additional assistance is required, this will require a decision on additional contractors versus increasing billable hours for current contract staff.

**Objective: Identify real estate (office) needs and opportunities (e.g., Abbeyfield) and present a viable plan to Board**

**Report:** The Office Accommodation Advisory Committee met several times and an exploratory visit to several “office sharing” locations was undertaken. In the end the Committee agreed that the current office location, especially with the removal of on-site storage, was adequate for our needs and reasonably priced.

**Objective: 1. External and internal communications tools development.  
2. Migration strategy to modernize IT and communications platforms.**

**Report:** These objectives are now completed, and further user training is planned.

## **Strategy 5                      Good Governance**

*MROO improves decision-making by adopting good practices, processes, conduct, information, deliberation, communication, and respect for the outcome.*

*MROO maintains role clarity of the people working on its behalf, which fosters greater focus and accountability.*

**Objective: Update Constitution/By-laws & policies re Not-for-Profit Corp Act**

**Report:** This task is complete at the Board level and awaiting ratification by the Membership.

**Objective: Develop onboarding, orientation, and training programs/processes**

**Report:** Manuals for Directors and Alternate Directors are now complete. Ambassadors' manual will be completed in 2024.

**Objective: Develop training programs to help Board members govern effectively**

**Report:** The Executive Director has been tasked with returning Board training options for 2025 to assist in increasing Director knowledge and effectiveness.

## Conclusion

The finalization of the new By-law was a major accomplishment and will give the Board the time to focus on new advocacy projects and further documenting and streamlining how MROO operates.

The return of Zone Meetings, creation of new committees, addition (and subtraction) of conferences, and increased Retirement Planning Seminars means that there is increased pressure on both revenue generation and on expense management. A focus on better allocation of expenses through new systems like Zoho (for expense claims) means year-over-year analysis is becoming easier. This will result in more accurate budgeting and increased financial accountability across the organization.

These results show the dedication of a small number of volunteers to ensure that Members are put front and center on all decisions. These volunteers are focused on sustainability of the organization and continued growth that will ensure longevity for the Municipal Retirees Organization Ontario.