



MUNICIPAL RETIREES ORGANIZATION ONTARIO

ANNUAL REPORT

June 2016

In December of 2015, the MROO Board of Directors adopted its Strategic Plan for 2016-2018. What are we trying to do, why, how and for whom?

Each year, an annual workplan is adopted in order to implement the three-year plan. At our quarterly meetings, the Board reviews the workplan to monitor progress and confirm we are on track.

The key objectives of MROO's 2016-2018 plan are the organizing principle for this annual report.

STRATEGY #1

Continue to improve current services to members and develop new services identified in the member survey

Initiative: Continue to survey our members every three years re existing services and potential new services

Report: This initiative was undertaken in spring of 2015, in advance of the development of the 2016--2018 strategic plan, and will next be undertaken in the spring 2018.

Initiative: Continue to use all available methods to increase attendance at Spring and Fall zone meetings

Report: The nine zone meetings in the spring of 2016 attracted approximately 1100 members, no increase from previous years. Those members who attend have consistently given high reviews to the quality of the all-day meetings. The directors in the most populous zones will again arrange membership meetings in the fall.

However, given MROO membership approaching 19,000 and steadily rising, additional measures will be required in order to meet the 2018 target of 10% of membership attending meetings each year.

Initiative Organize local coffee/muffin morning meetings for members and prospective members



Report: This initiative will enable MROO to serve members in smaller centres where all-day zone meetings are not feasible, in larger centres where more meetings with members can be held at minimal cost, and in existing local retiree groups, such as retired firefighters. Each director has an allocation in the 2016 budget to expedite local morning meetings. While very few have yet been held, some members have indicated their willingness to help make arrangements and a number of meetings will be held in the coming year.

Initiative Periodic broadcast emails to members with links to educational or advocacy content

Report: This initiative is intended both to increase the frequency of communication with our members and to provide additional useful information on matters related to retirement. Approximately one-third of members have an e-mail account, over 6000, a number which is growing steadily. Together with the updating of our website, MROO has improved its capacity to send broadcast e-mails.

To date, very few broadcast e-mails have been sent. On the other hand, the updated MROO website contains new content weekly insofar as it contains Twitter messages which draw attention to articles and studies related to pensions and retirement. MROO has several dozen Twitter followers. Furthermore, MROO has recently created a Facebook account. Information of interest to members has begun to be periodically posted. MROO has several dozen Facebook followers.

Initiative Arrangements with one or more travel/tour firms to offer travel discounts to MROO members and/or arrange trips for MROO members

Report: Our member surveys have consistently demonstrated the interest of members in potential services related to travel and tourism. Accordingly a Request for Proposals was developed and sent to seven firms in the travel and tours business. The responses helped us to identify that MROO's interests would be best served by a full-service firm which organized its own tours, marketed tours pre-arranged by other firms, made travel arrangements for members on demand, and was available to members both electronically and in physical offices throughout the province.

On that basis, MROO selected Merit Travel as its preferred travel partner. A relationship with Merit is now being defined and a first communication with members about this initiative is expected in the summer of 2016, with a full mailing to members in the fall.

Initiative: Sponsor or arrange local special interest programs / courses / events in partnership with other local organizations



Report: This initiative is intended to respond to members' consistently expressed interest in speakers and special events of a social and educational nature at the local level, in addition to zone meetings. In most cases, the most expeditious way to offer this service will be to work with other local organizations and /or offer to co-sponsor events with them.

MROO has set a target of at least one such local co-sponsored course, program, or event per zone in 2016; each director has a budget allocation with which to do so.

Initiative: Based on advice from ENCON Group and Mitchell Abbott Group (MAG), continue to seek affordable improvements to MROO-sponsored retiree insurance programs

Report: Based on advice from ENCON Group, the Board approved enhancements again this year to the MROO Health Insurance Plan and optional Annual Travel Emergency medical insurance plan. We are proud to have introduced the "YouRNurse" service to the MROO health plan benefits. Practical advice provided by experienced nurses will be available to MROO Health Plan members and their families to help them navigate the health care/home care field and to advocate for them when necessary. In addition, both the vision care claims maximum and the emergency dental claims maximum have been increased. The Alliance Group on-line pharmacy is now available to all MROO members.

We are grateful not only to ENCON but also to Manulife (the underwriter for MROO health and dental insurance plan) and RSA (the underwriter for the Annual Travel Medical Emergency option with the MROO Plan) for having implemented an open enrolment period in September and October of 2015. From May 1 2015 to the same date in 2016, the MROO Health Plan added 758 net new policy holders.

A significant innovation was added to the Annual Travel Medical Emergency option. Participants now have the option to choose a coverage for individual out-of-province trips of up to 180 days, including 30, 45, 60, 90, 120, and 150 day options. On this basis, the Annual Travel Emergency option was also available during the open enrolment period. From May 1, 2015 to May 1, 2016, the Annual Travel Emergency Medical option gained 884 new policy holders.

Initiative: Continue to promote retirement planning seminars and provide current retirement planning information

Report During 2015, 20 MROO retirement planning seminars were hosted by 14 OMERS employers for over 400 employees. We are on track to provide 20 seminars again in 2016. The seminars continue to receive very positive reviews



from both participants and the host municipalities. Again, we are grateful to the host employers and to OMERS Training and Education staff for their participation and support. Several counties, cities, and regional municipalities host one or more seminars each year.

In addition, MROO provides retirement planning information to members through its weekly Twitter feed, Facebook and website. Through presentations and newsletter articles, we also provide valuable information to members of the Ontario Municipal Human Resources Association. The Retirement Planning Guide distributed to seminar participants is being updated in 2016.

STRATEGY #2

Continue advocacy on behalf of OMERS retirees

Initiative: Maintain our current level of advocacy with OMERS

Report: Throughout the year, MROO has continued to advocate, and support OMERS advocacy, that OMERS be able to invest the RRIF funds of OMERS retired members. We were pleased that OMERS staff indicated in June of 2015 that they would take a more active approach to this matter, in response to hundreds of questions and requests from retirees. We were more pleased when, at the Spring 2016 information meeting for OMERS stakeholders, OMERS staff announced that a way had been found to permit holders of Additional Voluntary Contribution accounts with OMERS as an RRSP investment to retain these accounts as a RRIF investment. We remain disappointed that the Ontario Ministry of Finance has not yet adopted a regulation under the Pension Benefits Act, which would permit holders of Additional Voluntary Contribution accounts with OMERS as a LIRA (Locked-in Retirement Account) investment to retain these accounts as a RRIF investment.

OMERS has received several requests from “legacy” pension plans, which existed before 1962 and were not folded into OMERS, to be integrated into OMERS or at least to entrust their funds to OMERS for investment. While not wanting to jeopardize the financial position of the OMERS fund, MROO has generally supported integrating municipal legacy pension plans with OMERS.



The proposed Ontario Retirement Pension Plan (ORPP) , when implemented beginning in 2018, will require employee contributions from, and employer contributions on behalf of, all part-time, seasonal and contract workers not covered by an equivalent pension plan, including municipal employees not covered by OMERS. MROO has supported OMERS' initiative to forewarn municipal employers and encourage them to enroll any eligible employees in OMERS.

Initiative: Non-partisan participation in federal and provincial elections

Report: MROO is proud, during the lead-up to the October 2015 federal election, to have obtained statements from the four national parties on a series of questions related to pensions and retirement income, and to have included a summary and comparison of the four parties' positions in our July 2015 newsletter.

Initiative: Advocate on behalf of defined benefit pension plans and expansion of the CPP

Report: Throughout the year, MROO has continued to write to the Ontario Government and the new federal government to encourage the expansion of the Canada Pension Plan. While changes to the CPP require agreement from two-thirds of the provinces representing two-thirds of the population, we are encouraged by the fact that both Ontario and the new federal government support change. We have also written to support the reinstatement of age 65 as the age of eligibility for Old Age Security, and are pleased by the federal government's commitment to doing so.

Also in its correspondence with both governments, MROO continues to urge better treatment of pension funds and pensioners in the event of company bankruptcy. Seeing the evasion of responsibility to pensioners by employers such as US Steel Canada (formerly Stelco) must surely signal a change to federal laws to better protect pensions. We have also written to both governments about proposals to introduce target benefit plans, insisting that no pensioner should be forced out of his/her defined-benefit plan without his/her individual informed consent. MROO continues to benefit from the outstanding expertise among the other member organizations in the Canadian Federation of Pensioners.



Initiative: Survey members on advocacy and retirement issues

Report: An e-survey is planned for late in 2016. In the meantime, more members are responding individually to issues raised in our newsletter and on Facebook..

STRATEGY #3

Increase membership and improve membership communication methods

Initiative: Increase membership

Report: From May 1, 2015 to May 1, 2016, MROO gained over 2000 net new members. Indeed, from the beginning of 2016 until the June 2016 Annual Meeting, over 700 net new members have been added, bring our total to 18,800. Clearly, our varied efforts to make OMERS pensioners and pensioners-to-be aware of MROO are bearing fruit. Much is due to the work of our directors, alternates and ambassadors; to the marketing undertaken by the ENCON Group, to the support from over two dozen employers and union locals who purchase MROO memberships for their retiring employees/members, to the much-appreciated cooperation from OMERS, and to the support of other retiree groups such as the Police Pensioners Association Ontario and the Retired Professional Firefighters Association Ontario.

It is worth noting , however, that in 2015 OMERS added over 8000 new retirees, bringing its year-end total to 141,000. More are expected in 2016. More members means a bigger voice for our advocacy and a broader base for our programs. Despite our successes in growing our membership, more remains to be done.

Initiative: Improve our website

Report: This initiative has been a remarkable success over the past year. [Www.mroo.org](http://www.mroo.org) now has a very professional feel and very attractive look, with a wealth of information. Content is added more regularly, thanks to the work of Motions Media, our office administrator Linda Mailer and alternate director Max Sutton. The new website is an indispensable instrument in our advocacy credibility, our information to members, and our attraction of new members and supporters.



As previously noted, MROO now also has a Facebook account on which material is frequently posted, driving readers to our website for further information.

Initiative: Improve newsletter delivery methods

Report: Later in 2016, we plan to offer e-mailing of newsletters to those members who would prefer. Already, our newsletter or a link to it, is being distributed electronically by the Ontario Municipal Human Resources Association and the Ontario Municipal Administrators Association to their members..

Initiative: Make more human resource departments aware of MROO

Report: Our long-time sponsorship of the Ontario Municipal Human Resources Association has yielded an unquestionably greater awareness of MROO among the municipal sector. In 2016, we intend to develop a similar relationship with the Ontario Association of School Business Officials, in order to boost awareness of MROO among non-teaching school board employees, via school board HR departments. We have also taken steps to make MROO better known in the public library sector.

We will continue to make contact with other associations of OMERS employers in other sectors, in order to make the Human Resources personnel in those sectors more aware of MROO and, in turn, to make retiring employees in those sectors more aware.

Initiative: Continue to work with OMERS to make OMERS members aware of MROO

Report: MROO representatives attended all but two of the 40 retiree pension information sessions presented across the province by OMERS Training and Education staff. As such, this has been a major commitment for MROO and an excellent opportunity to make pensioners aware of MROO. Our short introductions to MROO usually succeed in generating follow-up questions by those attending. Increasingly too, MROO representatives are staying for the 5:30 session with active employees. While we have not to date made presentations to these sessions, we do introduce ourselves informally and distribute materials.

We will continue to encourage OMERS to make retired members aware of the schedule of MROO's membership meetings, as well as those of the other OMERS retiree organizations.



Initiative: Make and retain contact with the largest OMERS employers

Report: The objective in developing or cementing our relationship with the largest OMERS employers (those employing more than 500 OMERS members) is to maximize the return for our efforts to enlist the help of employers to make retiring employees aware of MROO. For maximum efficiency, we will be concentrating on the 61 large employers in zones 3 and 4 (the Golden Horseshoe). We already enjoy a good relationship with several of these employers, primarily among the 25 municipalities. These relationships - the County of Wellington and Regional Municipality of York, to name just two - have proven very efficient at building awareness.

In 2016, we will approach most of those large municipalities who are less familiar with MROO, enlist the support personnel we need to approach the 17 school boards, and approach a variety of other employers such as the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation and Metrolinx.

STRATEGY #4

Increase support for representatives to better serve members and promote MROO

Initiative: Increase usage of existing tools and develop new tools and guidelines as needed

Report: We are in the process of producing a new tri-fold brochure to introduce MROO at OMERS information sessions, conferences, meetings with union locals, etc. As noted elsewhere, the new website plays an important role in introducing MROO attractively and informatively to prospective members and other organizations.

Initiative: Improve training for representatives at the zone level

Report: Attracting more volunteers across the province is critical for MROO's future success both in launching local activities and building awareness among local retiree groups, union locals and associations, and employers. Ensuring that new volunteers have good training will build their confidence. Every zone director has been asked to hold at least one meeting of MROO volunteers/representatives in his/her zone in 2016, both for training and for planning future activities. Additional orientation is planned for those zones with new directors in 2016.



Initiative: Provide director training in areas of identified priority

Report: Training priorities were identified by a survey of directors in 2015. Director training is being incorporated into regular quarterly Board meetings. To date, training has taken place on governance responsibilities; training on making presentations is planned. The President and Executive Director will also meet with our new directors later in 2016. The role of a zone director is growing and changing. We want to ensure a high level of confidence among directors.

Initiative: Share successes, ideas, issues and resources with other Zone Directors

Report: A full day of our June Board meeting will be devoted to sharing ideas and experiences for zone activities to more effectively implement the relevant strategic plan initiatives. Later in 2016, each director, in conjunction with the other MROO representatives in that zone, will develop a 2017 workplan for discussion with other directors at our December meeting and incorporation into the 2017 budget.

Initiative: Increase the number of Ambassadors to assist Directors to arrange local services, events, and partnerships and to provide zone coverage

Report: No responsibility of zone directors is more important for MROO's future success than the recruitment of more MROO ambassadors in local communities and in the various sectors of OMERS membership. While several new ambassadors have stepped forward in recent years, we remain far short of our objective to have at least one ambassador in each major centre of population and at least one in each major employee association and union in the OMERS Plan.

Initiative: Ensure that adequate resources/ support service personnel are in place as needed to achieve preceding goals and in keeping with available funds

Report: The Board has developed several new financial comptrollership policies over the past year to continue to maintain value and accountability in our activities and expenditures. Each year's audit confirms the effectiveness of our financial practices.

At the same time, MROO remains well-funded, with the means to make significant progress toward our strategic objectives. In 2016, we will enhance the alignment between our resource allocation and our strategic objectives by requesting a 2017 workplan from each director and by developing our 2017



workplan in conjunction with our 2017 budget. Our directors will have the confidence that, subject to accountability and reporting, funds are available to accomplish their local initiatives.

Our Thanks

MROO has a number of important relationships that extend our reach and our access to important information. These include OMERS, the ENCON Group and MitchellAbbott, of course, but also the Police Pensioners Association Ontario, the Retired Professional Firefighters Association Ontario, the Canadian Federation of Pensioners, the Ontario Municipal Human Resources Association, Ontario Municipal Administrators Association, and the Ontario Coalition of Senior Citizen Organizations, among others. We are grateful for their support.

Our retiree health insurance plan, and our rewarding relationship with the ENCON Group, are now in their fourth decade. We remain proud of that pioneering accomplishment and grateful to Don MacLeod and Ted Stephens for their foresight..

We appreciate the support of our members who attend zone meetings, endorse our advocacy concerns, praise our newsletter and website, and help us spread the word about MROO.

Our directors, alternates, ambassadors and volunteers have brought us to where we are today, Each new year takes us further.

William Harford, President, on behalf of the Board of Directors

Mississauga, Ontario June 2016