

Regular Council Meeting – August 5, 2025

Agenda Item #14.3

Notice of Motion: Councillor P. Banks – V.O.I.C.E. Coalition - Request for Support and Endorsement

Moved By: Councillor P. Banks

Seconded By: _____

WHEREAS Strong Mayor Powers have been extended to 216 Ontario municipalities, with more expected by fall 2025;

AND WHEREAS over 130 municipalities have formally opposed these powers due to concerns over democratic accountability and local governance;

AND WHEREAS the V.O.I.C.E. coalition is hosting an open advocacy session at the 2025 AMO Conference on Monday, August 18, from 1:00–3:00 p.m. at Joey Rideau in Ottawa;

NOW THEREFORE be it resolved, that the Township of Rideau Lakes endorses and supports this V.O.I.C.E. event and encourages all Ontario municipalities to attend;
AND THAT the attached invitation be sent along with this resolution to all 444 Ontario municipalities, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Council Members Opposed to Strong Mayor Powers
On behalf of V.O.I.C.E.
(Vocal Ontario Integrity Coalition for Electeds)

To: All Ontario Municipal Council Members
Re: United Opposition to Strong Mayor Powers – A Call to Action

Dear Council Members,

We write to you as a coalition of municipal council members from across Ontario, united under the banner of V.O.I.C.E. Our group formed out of growing concern over the expanding use of Strong Mayor Powers in this province. These powers grant disproportionate authority to a single elected official, undermining the democratic role of councils and the principle of collaborative governance.

To date, over 130 municipalities, out of the 216 currently operating under Strong Mayor Powers have formally voiced their opposition. Momentum is building, but more voices are needed to safeguard local democracy. The time to act is now.

We are pursuing a two-pronged strategy:

1. Advocacy and Awareness at the 2025 AMO Conference

We've secured dedicated space during the AMO Conference in Ottawa, taking place August 17–20, to spotlight this issue. We warmly invite you to attend:

Monday, August 18th, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

Joey Rideau – 50 Rideau Street, Ottawa

<https://joeyrestaurants.com/location/joey-rideau>

Our keynote speaker, Councillor Mark Hunter of Stratford, an experienced municipal council member and practising lawyer will speak on the legal and democratic implications of Strong Mayor Powers and how councils can respond. This is your opportunity to connect with peers, ask questions, and strengthen our collective voice. No RSVP required, just come ready to engage.

2. Municipal Resolutions and Coordinated Legal Action

We urge councils to:

1. Pass a formal resolution opposing Strong Mayor Powers.
2. Consider financial support, in any amount, toward a potential Charter challenge, if dialogue with the province fails.
3. Forward any passed resolutions for financial support or opposition to Strong Mayor Powers to Councillor Paula Banks (contact below).
4. Note that all contributions can be conditional on widespread municipal participation. A constitutional law expert will be retained to lead or support the case alongside participating municipal legal teams.

Why Collective Action Matters



This issue is too critical for any municipality to face alone. Acting together provides:



1. Shared costs, reducing the burden on individual councils.
2. A strong, united voice to clearly signal to the province that local democracy must not be eroded.

If your council shares these concerns, we encourage you to reach out. If you'd like to be added to our contact list for updates and coordination, please contact Councillor Paula Banks.

Thank you for your continued dedication to your community and principled governance. We look forward to connecting with you in Ottawa.

In solidarity,
Council Members Opposed to Strong Mayor Powers
On behalf of V.O.I.C.E. Ontario
Vocal Ontario Integrity Coalition for Electeds

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