

**Ministry of
Municipal Affairs
and Housing**

Office of the Minister

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234-2026-2235

June 29, 2026

Amy Back
District Clerk
District Municipality of Muskoka
amy.back@muskoka.on.ca

Dear Amy Back:

The *Better Regional Governance Act, 2026*, (the Act) received Royal Assent on May 7, 2026. I am writing to advise Muskoka District Council of my intention to make an order under section 218.1 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, to appoint the next head of council of the District Municipality of Muskoka for the council term beginning November 15, 2026, and ending November 14, 2030, or as determined by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

The Act is intended to better align shared provincial-municipal priorities and strengthen the governance tools available to support growth in impacted regions. Beginning on November 15, 2026, the appointed head of council would also be granted “strong chair” powers – an enhanced leadership model that mirrors the strong mayor framework. If you are interested in strong mayor framework training, please contact your [Municipal Services Offices \(MSOs\)](#). For more information about the strong mayor framework, please see [the Ontario Municipal Councillor’s Guide, Chapter 10](#).

Individuals being considered for appointment as District Chair of the District Municipality of Muskoka must be eligible to vote in a lower-tier municipality within the upper-tier municipality under section 17 of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* (MEA) and eligible to serve on council under sections 257 and 258 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*.

Under the MEA, a person is eligible to vote if, on voting day, he or she:

- a) resides in the municipality or is the owner or tenant of land or spouse of such owner or tenant;
- b) is a Canadian citizen;
- c) is at least 18 years old; and
- d) is not prohibited from voting under the MEA or otherwise by law.

Individuals are not eligible for appointment if they are:

- an employee, clerk, treasurer, Integrity Commissioner, Auditor General, Ombudsman, registrar for lobbying matters, closed meeting investigator, or other holder of an administrative position of the municipality, unless they have taken a leave of absence;
- a judge of any court;
- a member of Ontario's Legislative Assembly or of Canada's Senate or House of Commons; or
- a public servant within the meaning of the *Public Service of Ontario Act, 2006*, unless authorized by the public servant's ethics executive.

Individuals are expected to possess exemplary leadership skills and should demonstrate the following competencies and experience:

- previous elected political experience and a strong understanding of regional and provincial priorities, including those specific to the upper-tier municipality to which they are applying;
- civic engagement and stakeholder management skills;
- innovative with experience leading major change initiatives in large organizations;
- effective communicator with proven ability to act as a facilitator and build trust;
- commitment to delivering exceptional service to customers/stakeholders; and
- decisive and strategic thinker.

Individual interested in being considered for the District Chair position must apply through the Public Appointments web page on the [Ontario Government's website](#). Applicants must first create a profile on this site and then select the position to which they wish to apply. Applications close on Monday, July 13, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. Shortlisted candidates will be contacted by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and invited to participate in an interview.

I would appreciate your assistance in posting this information on the municipality's website outlining the appointment process, timelines, the mandatory eligibility criteria and desired skills and competencies for the heads of council in the in-scope upper-tier municipalities.

We are committed to working collaboratively with the District throughout this process and provide you with further details as we work to finalize the appointment. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Nathaniel Aguda, Regional Director, Central Ontario Municipal Services Office - Priority Projects Branch at nathaniel.aguda@ontario.ca or 647-287-0637.

Regional councils play an important role in delivering shared priorities, like housing and housing-enabling infrastructure. I appreciate the District's continued commitment to effective and efficient local governance and collaboration on shared provincial-municipal priorities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert J. Flack". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Hon. Robert J. Flack
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

- c. Julie Stevens, Chief Administrative Officer, julie.stevens@muskoka.on.ca
Robert Dodd, Chief of Staff, Minister's Office, robert.dodd@ontario.ca
Martha Greenberg, Deputy Minister, MMAH, martha.greenberg@ontario.ca
Laurie Miller, Assistant Deputy Minister, Local Government Division, MMAH, laurie.miller@ontario.ca
Sean Fraser, Assistant Deputy Minister, Municipal and Housing Operations Division, MMAH, sean.fraser@ontario.ca