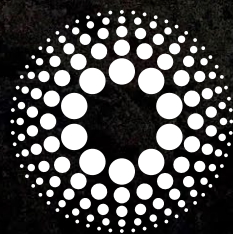


2024 Annual Report



NOVA SCOTIA
FEDERATION OF
MUNICIPALITIES

Harvest Moon, Green Bay, Municipality of the District of Lunenburg



**NOVA SCOTIA FEDERATION
OF MUNICIPALITIES**

Introduction

Welcome to the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM) 2024 Annual Report. NSFM remains the collective voice of Nova Scotia’s municipalities, advocating for the shared priorities of all municipally elected officials and 49 diverse municipalities.

Guided by our 16-member Board of Directors—elected by our members—and supported by an appointee from the Association of Municipal Administrators Nova Scotia (AMANS), NSFM continues to drive meaningful change.

As a trusted advocate, we collaborate with municipal councils and engage with provincial and federal decision-makers to address the evolving priorities of local governments. Through strategic partnerships, policy development, and funding administration, we empower municipalities to deliver essential services and build stronger, more resilient communities across Nova Scotia.

Mission

To enable effective local government for Nova Scotia’s communities by facilitating strategic advocacy, education, and collaboration.

Vision

Effective local government and strong, sustainable communities.



Cape Forchu, Municipality of the District of Yarmouth

Board of Directors



Mayor Carolyn Bolivar-Getson
Municipality of the District of Lunenburg
President



Mayor Sandra Snow
Town of Kentville
Vice-President



Mayor Brenda Chisholm-Beaton
Town of Port Hawkesbury
Past-President



Councillor Belle Hatfield
Town of Yarmouth
Southwestern Shore Representative



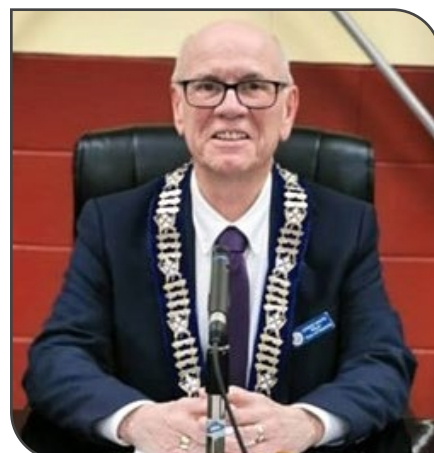
Councillor Paula Huntley
Town of Kentville
Valley Representative



Deputy Warden Brad Redden
Municipality of the County of Annapolis
Valley Representative



Councillor Andy Thompson
Municipality of Pictou County
Colchester/Cumberland/Pictou/
East Hants Representative



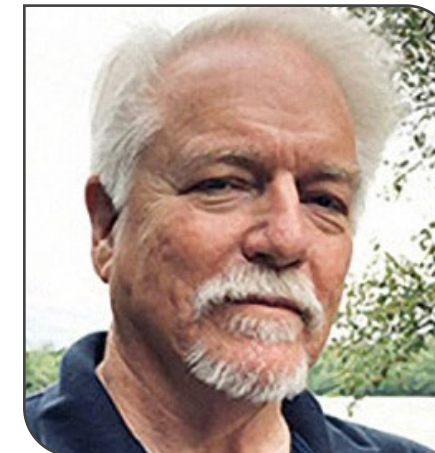
Mayor Lennie White
Town of Westville
Colchester/Cumberland/Pictou/
East Hants Representative



Councillor Paul Russell
HRM Representative



Mayor Laurie Boucher
Town of Antigonish
Cape Breton Strait Representative



Deputy Warden James Fuller
Municipality of St. Mary's
Cape Breton Strait Representative



Councillor Eldon MacDonald
CBRM Representative



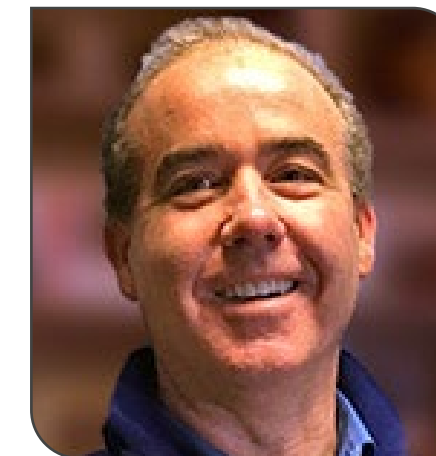
Councillor Sam Austin
HRM Representative



Councillor Chasidy Veinotte
Municipality of the District of Lunenburg
South Shore Representative



Councillor Maddie Charlton
Region of Queens
South Shore Representative



John MacKinnon
AMANS Representative



Cardinal - Photo by Diana McKay

NSFM Staff

Juanita Spencer – Chief Executive Officer

Dani Coffey – Director of Policy and Government Relations

Judy Webber – Director of Events and Member Development

Ian Morrison – Director of Operations and Communications

Mary Claire Lake – Director of Finance

Wesley Petite – Policy Advisor

Charlotte Tavenor – Office Administrator

Lucy MacLeod – Fund Navigator

Charlene Fekeshazy – Communications Advisor

Gordon Smith – Coastal Land Use Planning Coordinator

Debbie Nielsen – Lead Program Manager, SCCF

Brandon Durkee – Grant Coordinator, SCCF

Julia Anctil – Grant Coordinator, SCCF

Gab LeVert – Communications & Engagement Officer, SCCF



Dawn, Rural Nova Scotia - Photo by Diana McKay



Message from the President

Carolyn Bolivar-Getson

The 2024 Annual Report highlights a year of remarkable progress, collaboration, and resilience for the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities. This year has been defined by growth and a steadfast commitment to strengthening our communities. It is also an opportunity to celebrate the contributions of our newly elected and returning municipal officials, as well as the dedicated administrators who work tirelessly to support municipalities across the province.

The NSFM Board of Directors has provided strategic leadership and thoughtful direction throughout the year. Together, we set ambitious goals, navigated complex challenges, and laid a strong foundation for the organization's continued success. Our collective efforts reflect the shared vision that drives NSFM forward.

A historic milestone this year was the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), a landmark development for Nova Scotia's municipalities. This agreement represents a formal commitment to a collaborative partnership that will benefit municipalities across the province. By focusing on shared goals, the MOU paves the way for meaningful progress, strengthened governance, and an enhanced quality of life for our communities.

As President, I had the privilege of working alongside our Board of Directors to provide strategic oversight and clear leadership to NSFM. This included the implementation of an Executive Committee that worked on and discussed a variety of important files throughout the year. Establishing a new and robust Code of Conduct for the Board and for attendees of our events was one such initiative. Through focused and thoughtful decision-making, we advanced a strategic vision that will continue to guide NSFM long after my term.

The past year was also marked by meaningful strides in learning and engagement. NSFM's conferences, webinars, and workshops provided invaluable opportunities for members to collaborate, share knowledge, and address pressing challenges. These initiatives reinforced the importance of innovation and partnership in building stronger, more resilient municipalities.

While this year brought its share of challenges—from provincial elections to severe storms like Beryl—Nova Scotia's municipalities have shown remarkable resilience. Leaders and citizens came together to support one another, rebuild, and move forward with renewed determination, demonstrating the strength and adaptability of our communities.

Collaboration remains at the core of NSFM's work. Strong relationships among municipal leaders, administrators, and provincial counterparts has been critical to our success. The commitment of NSFM's Board members, combined with the passion and dedication of our entire membership, continued to inspire progress and strengthen our collective impact.

To my fellow Board members, thank you for your steadfast support, insight, and dedication. Each of you has brought a unique perspective and unwavering commitment to our shared mission. As we look ahead, NSFM is well-positioned to build on the achievements of the past year. With a strong foundation in place and a continued focus on collaboration, innovation, and strategic leadership, we are ready to address future challenges and seize new opportunities.

Thank you to all members, partners, and stakeholders for your dedication to building stronger, more vibrant municipalities across Nova Scotia. Together, we are making a meaningful difference for the communities we serve.



East Hants - Photo by Lori Simmonds



Message from the CEO

*Juanita Spencer,
Chief Executive Officer*

As we reflect on 2024, it's clear this was a transformative year for NSFM and the municipalities we serve. Collaboration, innovation, and a steadfast commitment to member needs has driven our progress.

Strengthening Municipal Governance

The proclamation of the Municipal Code of Conduct stood out as a significant milestone. This legislation elevates professionalism and trust in municipal governance, providing clear frameworks and tools for addressing challenges. We are proud to have worked closely with members and the Province to bring this vital initiative to fruition, and we're supporting its rollout with tailored training sessions.

Advancing Advocacy Priorities

This year marked the first full cycle of our restructured Advisory Committees, which addressed key issues such as climate change—focusing on coastal protection and offshore wind development—public safety, including the vulnerable persons registry and cellular coverage for emergency preparedness, and municipal autonomy. These committees serve to amplify your voices and guide our advocacy efforts, ensuring they align with municipal realities and priorities.

In policing, NSFM's participation on provincial and federal committees helped highlight financial pressures and push for fairness in service delivery. Meanwhile, our work in emergency management contributed to enhanced preparedness for severe weather events, including the integration of the Vulnerable Persons Registry into provincial regulations.

Innovative Funding Solutions

Through the Sustainable Communities Challenge Fund (SCCF), NSFM administered nearly \$9.4 million to support local sustainability projects. This program showcases the ingenuity of our municipalities and other eligible applicants and their commitment to building resilient communities.

Additionally, we engaged with the Province to address barriers in funding programs, leading to improved predictability, better alignment with construction season, and the launch of a municipal funding database. These advancements make accessing critical resources easier for all members.

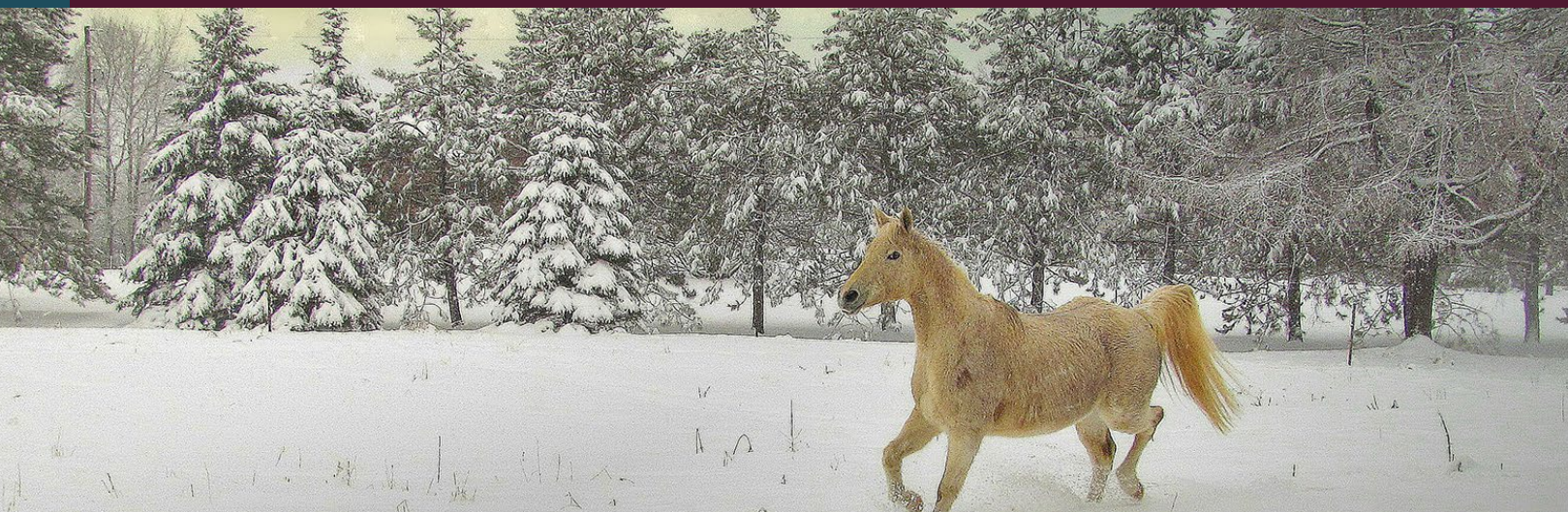
Expanding Programs and Services

NSFM continues to offer value-added programs that save municipalities time and money. From Canoe Group Purchasing to Group Benefits and the HST Offset Program, these initiatives reflect our commitment to meeting members' needs efficiently.

Looking Ahead

As we enter a new chapter following municipal elections, we welcome the fresh perspectives of newly elected officials and the continued dedication of returning leaders. The road ahead will require collaboration, adaptability, and vision as we address emerging challenges and seize new opportunities.

Thanks to our members for answering our calls for input and feedback and for your ongoing engagement and trust in NSFM. Collaboratively, we are able to successfully advocate for the issues of municipalities across Nova Scotia.



Horse in Snow - Photo by Diana McKay

Organizational Highlights

NSFM Annual Elections

NSFM held its second regular election for the Board of Directors using an online voting system. Electronic voting provides an opportunity for more members to participate and NSFM looks forward to further member engagement on important decisions using inclusive and user-friendly online platforms.

NSFM & Legislation

Provincial Bills

NSFM monitored the provincial legislature and provides our members with important information about proposed legislation. In 2024 this included:

- Bill 419 (*Financial Measures Act of 2024*). This Bill expanded the ability for all municipalities to sell or lease property at less than market value for any purpose that the municipal council deems beneficial for the municipality
- Bill 407 (*Antigonish Consolidation Act*) at the Law Amendments Committee. The decision to consolidate was agreed to by joint-council decision making and NSFM supports regional collaboration on this basis
- Bill 455 (*An Act to Establish a Department of Emergency Management and Authorize the Establishment of a Nova Scotia Guard*), created the Department of Emergency Management and the new Nova Scotia Guard volunteer response team. With municipalities holding important responsibilities related to the preparation for, prevention of, response to, and recovery from emergency events, NSFM staff paid close attention to this development. NSFM staff have contributed to the initial conversations on how this department will collaborate with municipalities

Municipal Code of Conduct

Following in-depth consultation in 2023, the Municipal Code of Conduct Working Group met for a final time to provide input on the plan ahead. This was a great follow through on a multi-year effort to establish a Code that is fair and effective.

In response to Working Group recommendations, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing made legislative changes with Bill 419 to enable Municipal Code of Conduct to clarify how decisions and financial penalties would proceed in practice.

Proclamation of the Code took place immediately after the municipal election on October 20, 2024. NSFM will be facilitating training sessions for elected officials to assist in understanding and applying the Code of Conduct.

Advocacy & Issue Monitoring

Advisory Committees

The new NSFM Advisory Committees on Areas of Municipal Interest had their first full year of activity. During this year, these Advisory Committees established their Terms of Reference, selected Chairs and co-Chairs, and wrote their respective Statements of Municipal Interest.

The Advisory Committees were also busy reviewing member requests, discussing pressing challenges and opportunities for municipalities, and recommending advocacy priorities to the Board of Directors.

The primary activities of these committees were:

Equity & Community Wellbeing

This Committee held five meetings in 2024. All meetings were held virtually. Furthermore, meetings were well attended, and the Committee was engaged in its work.

- Election of Chair and Vice Chair
- Establishment of meeting dates until the end of 2025
- Adoption of Terms of Reference and recommendation of acceptance to the Board of Directors
- Terms of Reference subsequently accepted by the Board of Directors
- Adoption of Statement of Interest and recommendation of acceptance to the Board of Directors
- Statement of Interest subsequently accepted by the Board of Directors

- Review of Advocacy Prioritization Framework
- Appointment of additional member of the Committee
- Presentation from James McLean, Director, Research & Policy and Jeneane Fast, Research & Policy Associate from the Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking regarding research and work and to receive feedback of related challenges as viewed by elected municipal leaders
- Presentation from Julie Glaser, Manager of Accessibility, Equity, Anti-Racism Program and Roxanne Pereira, Municipal Accessibility, Equity, and Anti-Racism Program Coordinator for Association of Municipal Administrators Nova Scotia (AMANS) regarding research and work on EDIA and accessibility issues
- No advocacy requests fielded in 2024



Morning on Lochiel Lake, Saint Mary's District



Mount Uniacke Provincial Park

Climate Change

- Put forward a recommendation to the Board to make coastal protection an advocacy priority with progress monitored via the Climate Change Committee
- Received an update on the progress of municipal resources to support coastal land use planning from the Project Director at the Department of Environment and Climate Change
- Received a presentation from the Deputy Director of Planning at MODL on the process of implementing their coastal land use planning by-laws
- Received an introduction to NSFM's Coastal Land Use Planner who has been working with municipalities to assess individual and collective resource requirements

Infrastructure

- Received a presentation from Kris Vascotto, Executive Director, NS Fisheries Alliance for Energy Engagement, on the impacts of offshore wind for the fishing industry
- Hosted a Mayors/Wardens/CAO webinar with the federal committee on the Regional Assessment for Offshore Wind in NS Committee to hear about their assessment process
- The NSFM Board of Directors approved a motion to continue monitoring the development of offshore wind via the Infrastructure Committee
- The Committee considered the outstanding 2019 Roads Resolution in context of the Service Exchange Renegotiation and Municipal Government Act Review (SERMGAR) MOU and presented a recommendation to the NSFM Board of Directors
- The approved recommendation states that the Infrastructure Committee will support pending SERMGAR "Schedule A" negotiations relating to roads

Municipal Autonomy

- The Board of Directors delegated the past resolution of Municipal Modernization to the Municipal Autonomy Committee
- Municipal Modernization has been defined in past advocacy efforts as including updating the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA) to allow municipalities to engage in modern challenges and opportunities, supporting regional collaboration between municipalities, and updating financial resources such as the Municipal Financial Capacity Grant and other grants
- With these challenges still being active today, the Municipal Autonomy Committee recommended that Municipal Modernization remain an advocacy priority for NSFM. The Board of Directors accepted this recommendation and NSFM is seeking all opportunities to move forward with this priority with a focus on Service Exchange Renegotiation and MGA Review

Keep up to date with these Advisory Committees and how they work by visiting: <https://nsfm.ca/advocacy.html>

Policing

- NSFM has participated in meetings of the Provincial Policing Review Engagement Advisory Committee to help set a course for an effective review process
- NSFM distributed a survey to the eleven municipalities that receive their services. This survey asked questions about challenges, desired solutions, and opportunities to improve interoperability with other agencies (including the RCMP). This survey research builds on that conducted with the general membership in 2023. NSFM staff presented highlights of survey findings as part of a panel on policing at the fall conference
- Staff participated on the nation-wide RCMP Contract Management Committee as a Municipal Associate Member

Public Safety

- After conducting research and discussing how Vulnerable Persons Registries could most effectively ensure appropriate responses to those most in need during emergencies, the Public Safety Committee recommended that the creation of VPRs for all municipalities become an advocacy priority. The Board accepted this recommendation and agreed to work toward the creation of VPRs in collaboration with the Province as is explained further below in updates on the new Department of Emergency Management
- The call to improve rural cellular service was received by this committee around the same time that the Province and Build Nova Scotia were beginning to invest substantially in filling gaps in cellular coverage (with a focus on civic addresses). The Public Safety Committee took advantage of this alignment and invited Build Nova Scotia to make a presentation on its phased cellular expansion plan and suggested what role municipalities play to help move this plan forward
- Following discussion on this important matter, the Public Safety Committee recommended that Rural Cellular Coverage for Emergency Preparedness become an advocacy priority, and the Board of Directors accepted this recommendation
- NSFM is staying up to date with Build Nova Scotia's phased plan and has sent correspondence to the Minister of Emergency Management calling for the proclamation of Bill 198, which would establish cellular service providers as critical service providers with emergency planning responsibilities

Fund Administration

Sustainable Communities Challenge Fund (SCCF)

The Sustainable Communities Challenge Fund (SCCF) is a \$30 million provincial grant program for local action on climate change. It is administered by the NSFM and supports community efforts to reduce or remove greenhouse gas emissions or to prepare for and respond to the impacts of a changing climate. A wide range of projects are eligible for funding, ranging from renewable energy to public outreach initiatives, to coastal restoration. The goal is to help communities implement the climate action they have decided is important to them.

In 2024, SCCF staff built on the momentum from Round 1 and Round 2. Key highlights included:

- Held a consensus meeting with a review committee of 29 experts to deliberate over 105 applications, representing a total funding request of \$37,347,295. The review committee made recommendations for funding to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change
- Supported grant recipients, including the six from Round 2 that have been formally announced, with a total funding of \$1,299,211
- Concluded three projects from Round 1, with the remaining projects expected to complete final reporting in early 2025
- View the full list of Round 1 recipients on the SCCF website: <https://nschallengefund.ca/successful-applicants/>
- Collaborated closely with the Province of Nova Scotia to coordinate funding announcements and implement program improvements in preparation for Round 3
- Expanded the SCCF team to four full-time staff members with the hiring of an additional Grant Coordinator

Round 2 recipient announcements were briefly delayed by the provincial election. Most successful projects from Round 2 will be announced in early 2025. To stay up to date on Round 3 announcements and other program developments, please join our mailing list at www.nschallengefund.ca/contact



Night Sky, Rural Nova Scotia - Photo by Diana McKay

Canada Community-Building Fund (CCBF) & Provincial Infrastructure Funds

The Canada Community-Building Fund Agreement was renewed for an additional 10 years in July 2024. Nova Scotia will receive over \$318 million over the next five years. Further funding levels will reflect the 2026 census. This fund is an important source of revenue for municipalities to use as they see fit in alignment with the wide range of eligible expenditures. NSFM provided member feedback during the federal-provincial renegotiation process.

Municipal Infrastructure Funding

NSFM consistently called for municipal infrastructure funding necessary to sustain public services and support housing development. The Province has responded to this call with the creation of the Growth and Renewal Infrastructure Development (GRID) Program and the Sustainable Service Growth Fund, along with other continuing infrastructure funding programs.

Funding Navigation

In its second year, the Fund Navigation program continued to see success, with the Municipal Funding Database driving high traffic to its page on the NSFM website.

The database was updated multiple times per month with new funding opportunities and calls for proposals on existing programs. Weekly and monthly funding updates were distributed widely to the membership, ensuring municipalities remained informed of available opportunities in a timely manner.

In February 2024, NSFM finalized the survey report *Improving Application-Based Infrastructure Funding for Municipalities in Nova Scotia*, which highlighted the barriers to application-based funding. Based on these findings, the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing implemented two key changes for the current fiscal year: shifting to predictable annual intakes and adjusting some program timelines to better align with the construction season. NSFM will continue advocating for similar improvements across other departments and funding programs.

At NSFM’s Fall Conference, the Fund Navigator presented on strategies for finding funding opportunities and provided practical tips for successful applications.

NSFM will continue to support municipalities in navigating funding opportunities and advocating for further improvements to the application process.

Coastal Land Use Planning & Flood Adaptation

Funded by the province, NSFM established the Coastal Land Use Planning Coordinator role in August 2024.

Through a series of meetings with stakeholders and a survey of municipalities, a needs assessment was completed, and an initial action list was developed for review by the Board of Directors in early 2025. Supports required by municipalities wishing to act in this space are being compiled. NSFM advocated for funding and action by the province to provide appropriate tools and resources to the municipalities.

NSFM supported the province’s effort to develop sample Municipal Planning Strategy policies and Land Use By-law text that could be adapted by municipalities. The NSFM met regularly with the province to advocate on behalf of municipalities, to press for the implementation of all actions in the provincial action plan, and to ensure coordination of activities to provide maximum support to municipalities.

Service Exchange

Service Exchange Agreement MOU was signed to secure value for municipalities. This new MOU accomplished the following:

- Discontinued mandatory contributions to corrections and public housing for a cumulative estimated savings of \$16.6 million

- Removed the requirement under the *Corrections Act* for municipalities to make an annual contribution towards corrections
- Unlocked roads maintenance cost-sharing for Towns
- Investment in new infrastructure funding, which led to the creation of Growth and Renewal Infrastructure Development Program
- Discontinued the downloading of surplus schools while establishing a first right of offer for municipalities interested in taking on these properties
- Updated Municipal Financial Capacity Grant to include more types of unitized expenditures, including Recreation, Environmental Development Services, and Public Transit

Following member feedback to the proposed MOU, the NSFM Board issued correspondence to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing stating that continued negotiation is necessary regarding maintenance costs and ownership of roads in municipal counties and districts. NSFM also supported Cape Breton Regional Municipality’s call for their own municipal charter, similar to Halifax Regional Municipality.

“Schedule A” of the Service Exchange MOU includes many important parts of provincial municipal services exchange that will be the subject of further negotiation in the year ahead.



Red Fox - Photo by Diana McKay

Federal Government Engagement

- NSFM staff attended a session organized by Public Safety Canada to identify ways to increase civilian emergency response capacity. Along with other attendees, NSFM emphasized the importance of financial support rather than relying solely on existing volunteer resources, and that municipalities play a key role in coordinating preparation, response, and recovery
- NSFM staff continued to support the President and Board of Directors through active engagement in regular meetings with Canada-wide municipal associations, organized by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities
- Staff had an initial meeting with external experts on preparing for transitions in government at the federal level
- NSFM continued to work with Atlantic municipal associations on shared priorities at the federal level, including an engagement plan for the next federal election



Sunrise, Rural Nova Scotia - Photo by Diana McKay



Sunset, Rural Nova Scotia - Photo by Diana McKay

Membership Engagement & Communications

Strengthening connections with our members remained a cornerstone of NSFM's work in 2024. Dynamic communication channels and regular engagement opportunities ensured that municipal leaders had timely access to information and platforms to share their perspectives. Key tools like the *Monday Memo*, *Municipal Observer*, *Atlantic Municipal Magazine*, webinars, and conferences facilitated knowledge exchange and addressed emerging municipal priorities.

Spring & Fall Conferences

NSFM offered two conferences designed to provide networking opportunities, professional development, and information sharing to members.

- **The Spring Conference** attracted 135 delegates and was held at Inverary Inn in Baddeck on May 9-10. The conference theme was *Future-Focused Municipalities: Pioneering Solutions* and the Keynote Speaker was Olympic Gold Medalist and curler Brad Gushue

- **The Fall Conference** was held at The Westin Halifax on November 26-29. The conference theme was *Leading with Integrity and Vision*, and the Keynote Speaker was Olympic Gold Medalist and *Amazing Race Canada* TV show host Jon Montgomery. The conference, which hosted over 25 sessions/activities, featured 240 delegates, sponsors, and presenters

At the Fall Conference, we also piloted a new initiative to spotlight our municipal leaders. We hosted a series of podcast interviews conducted by our partners at Municipal World (MW). The interviews were hosted by Sean Meyer and featured ten mayors/wardens from across Nova Scotia. This innovative initiative aims to amplify the voices of municipal leaders, fostering inspiration and collaboration among our membership. These podcasts allowed the featured mayors/wardens to convey why attending conferences is important as a leader and enabled them to share insights and discuss their municipality's achievements. Members are encouraged to stay tuned

for these engaging conversations, which will be shared as part of our 2025 communication strategy. These podcasts not only serve as a leadership spotlight but also provide valuable takeaways for those unable to attend in person.

Monday Memo

The *Monday Memo* continued to be a vital resource for members, achieving an average open rate of 63% and growing click-through engagement in Q4. Highlights included:

- March 11: A 69% open rate, the highest of the year
- October 14: Over 40% click-through rate, driven by the *New Compensation Hub* Launched content in the New & Noteworthy section

The newsletter fostered member connection with NSFM while sharing relevant news and updates.

Municipal Observer

Published biannually, the *Municipal Observer* informed, advertised opportunities, and celebrated member successes. In 2024, the featured issues were:

- **Summer Issue:** Topics ranged from *Managing Water and Sewer Infrastructure Costs Amidst “Rising Rates”* to *Leveraging Grant Funding to Combat the Rising Costs of Municipal Infrastructure*
- **Winter Issue:** Post-election reflections included *Profiles in Leadership: Veteran Municipal Officials* and *Their Legacy* and *Driving the Labour Market Forward with Youth in Mind*

Atlantic Municipal Magazine

Published twice in 2024, this magazine explored regional governance challenges and innovations:

- **Spring/Summer Edition:** Articles included *Revitalizing Communities: A Collaborative Approach to Rural Housing Development* and *Innovative Housing Solutions in Nova Scotia*
- **Fall/Winter Edition:** Featured pieces such as *Fountain of Youth: Attracting Young Islanders to Municipal Government* and *Community Centres: Vital Hubs in Nova Scotia*

NSFM Website

The NSFM website had solid visitor numbers from search engines and direct visits, with a year-end spike in traffic from social media. A refreshed seasonal photo gallery featured over 30 impactful member-submitted images from a fall contest, enhancing the site’s visual appeal and community connection.

NSFM Social Channels

Our social media channels actively engaged members and delivered impactful messaging. Key initiatives included:

- Advocacy Awareness Campaigns
- Board of Directors Elections
- Promotion of Spring and Fall Conferences
- Importance of Voting Campaigns
- Municipal Code of Conduct Training Sessions
- Launch of Committee Opportunities 2025

Media Engagement

In 2024, NSFM averaged 15 media requests per quarter and generated 81 stories, reflecting growing media interest. By amplifying member priorities, NSFM strengthened the profile of municipalities in Nova Scotia.

Media Highlights

- **Television:** Coverage included *Global News* (Feb 5: Province requests federal aid after ‘massive’ snowfall) and *CTV Atlantic* (Aug 14: Nova Scotia government’s \$2.3 million municipal funding)
- **Print:** Notable stories ranged from *CBC News* (Jan 4: Shelburne water project backed by Elliot Page) to *Saltwire* (May 16: Pictou County forms North Shore Cohort to combat climate change)
- **Radio:** Highlights included *989 XFM* (Jan 10: Why tent cities are becoming more permanent) and *CKBW* (Nov 29: Yarmouth Mayor Pam Mood re-elected as NSFM President)
- **Online:** Stories included *Nova Scotia Government News* (Mar 6: Physician Incentive Programs Expand) and *Cross Border Network* (Oct 19: Double Leadership Shakeup for Municipal Federations)
- **YouTube:** Video content totaled 718 views, with average view durations growing from 5:07 to 6:35 minutes and a click-through rate improvement from 1.7% to 3.1%

NSFM’s proactive outreach and consistent messaging effectively highlighted municipal concerns and strengthened the voice of Nova Scotia’s municipalities, driving meaningful change for communities and the province.

Programs & Services

NSFM offers value-added benefits for members through several programs and services. These initiatives enhance our service offerings to the membership, offer participating organizations cost-effective services, and generate revenue for the organization to support the broader mission of NSFM.

Councillor, Employee, & Family Assistance Program

All NSFM members are eligible to access the Employee & Family Assistance Program (EFAP) provided by Telus Health. The EFAP is a voluntary, confidential, short-term counselling and advisory service that connects individuals and their immediate family members to a network of dedicated counselling professionals available to help 24 hours a day. The program also offers support and resources on a variety of lifestyle topics. Types of counselling services include:

- Concerns impacting your work, health, or life
- Family support
- Financial Support and Financial Planning
- Fitness Support
- Health Coaching
- Healthy Relationships
- Legal Support
- Naturopathic Services
- Nutrition Support
- Separation and Divorce
- Smoking Cessation
- Stress Coach

Group Benefits Program

NSFM has a group benefits plan with approximately 2,300 members. Members can take advantage of plan options tailored to the needs and preferences of their workplaces. The Health & Benefits Committee, which includes staff representatives from NSFM and AMANS, regularly meets with the plan consultants to administer the plan and works to ensure the plan meets expectations of plan participants and offers high value for members. Premiums for the program exceed \$12 million per year and several insurance carriers are engaged to provide a range of benefits, including:

- Accidental Death & Dismemberment
- Claims Payment
- Disability
- Emergency Travel
- Employee Assistance Program
- Health & Dental
- Life
- Long Term Disability
- Long Term Disability Early Assistance
- Virtual Health Care

The NSFM program is a comprehensive, cost-effective group employee benefits plan for member municipalities. The plan is designed and managed to meet the objectives for attraction, support, retention, and wellbeing of its elected officials, employees, and families. The NSFM benefits program leverages the collective base of municipal employees to provide enhanced benefits, while maintaining lower costs for employees and employers. The Health & Benefits Committee provides oversight of the program, and the program consultants are HUB International Atlantic Ltd. In 2024, three Committee meetings were held.



Winter in East Hants, Municipality of East Hants

Program webinars offered in 2024:

- Telus Health EAP Information Session (2)
- Telus Health EAP Information Session for People Leaders (2)
- Telus Health EAP Information Session for Elected Leaders (2)

In addition, two in-person events were held this year:

- June 11: NSFM Group Benefits Road Show (Truro)
- June 19: NSFM Group Benefits Road Show (Bridgewater)

Group Purchasing & Procurement Program

Through a partnership with [Canoe Procurement](#), NSFM members access the following benefits when purchasing materials, office supplies, equipment, and more:

- Access to premium brands through Sourcewell partnership
- Additional procurement tools which are non-binding and no obligation to purchase
- Members can self-select vendors to use

- Members can purchase/place any orders through the vendor and pay the vendor directly
- Vendor delivers the product and is responsible for applicable warranties
- Procurement is compliant with existing trade agreement legislation

The program collaborates with local retailers for supply, service, and support.

Program webinars offered in 2024:

- Ask Canoe Anything!
- Construction Procurement
- Disaster Contingency Planning
- Introduction to Canoe Procurement and Grainger Industrial Supply
- Leveraging Stakeholder Relationships for Procurement Success
- Public Procurement
- The Canoe Way
- Unlock Funding for EV Infrastructure with ZEVIP

HST Offset Program

In 1998, NSFM negotiated the HST Offset Program with the province. The program is intended to lessen the financial impact on municipalities paying the Harmonized Sales Tax. Over the past two decades, the program has provided approximately \$145 million to municipalities with \$6 million distributed to municipalities annually. Payments are based on municipal expenditures in the previous year.

Municipal Group Insurance Program

NSFM offers a comprehensive and flexible commercial, D&O, and liability insurance program to ensure that municipal units can effectively meet the needs of their citizens. Benefits of the program include:

- Continued evaluation around the quality of the broker services (annual survey) and acting on the results received from participants
- Education and awareness around risk management issues, including inspections which contain hazard recommendations, building valuations, and contract reviews
- Guiding participants to control claims by mitigating risks in advance
- Local claims management
- Insurance products specifically aimed at municipal units and the expertise of the service team
- Leveraging the strength of the relationships within the program (insurer, brokers, program sponsor)
- Stability within an unstable landscape
- Strength in numbers

The Municipal Group Insurance Oversight Committee, with staff representatives from NSFM and AMANS, was established to provide oversight to the program. In 2024, 51 organizations within Nova Scotia participated in the program. Annual premiums for the program are approximately \$8.3 million per year. Intact Public Entities underwrites the commercial and D&O insurance policies and CFC Underwriting Limited sponsors the cyber policy. The brokers providing the interface between the insurers and the participating organizations are Arthur J. Gallagher Canada and BrokerLink Inc. In 2024, six Committee meetings were held throughout the year.

Program webinars offered in 2024:

- An Introduction to Contract and Procurement Fraud
- Cellular Exposure: The Next Gateway for Hackers and AI
- Climate-Resilient Stormwater Management
- Crossing Safety: Strategies for Pedestrian Safety
- Documents & Disconnects: Creating Evidence for Better Claims Management
- Driving Success Through Telematics: Using Technology to Improve Your Fleet
- Earthquake Early Warning in Canada
- Effectively Leading Your Community: What Elected Officials Need to Know
- Excellence in Insurance Single Site Risk Assessment
- Flood Risks, Challenges, Investments, & Goals
- Forecast 2024: Hurricane Season
- Forecast 2024: Wildfire Season
- Impacts of Damaging Hail Events in Canada
- Insurance Single Site Risk Assessment
- Jasper Wildfire Complex Initial Observations
- Legal Liability for Cyber Incidents and Privacy Breaches
- Multi-Use Paths: User Expectations vs. Behaviour
- National Flood Insurance Program
- Navigating Claims & Challenges: Insights for Building Officials in Today's Development Landscape
- Navigating Police Liability Claims: Trends & Insights
- Roofing and Siding Tales
- Securing Safe Roads and Trails
- Seismic Hazard Mapping
- Staying on Track: Compliance for Optimal Fleet Safety
- Strategic Communications Preparedness for Cyber Attacks: Building an Effective Response Plan
- Tackling Flooding Together: A Municipal Flood Risk Check-Up
- Test Case from Alabama - Fortified Housing Increases Home Resale Values
- Successful Special Events
- Wind-Proof & Tornado-Proof Homes in Canada

Park’N Fly Discount Program

The Park’N Fly Discount Program launched in 2024 and is available for elected municipal leaders and municipal staff within the broader municipal sector in Nova Scotia. Under this program, an exclusive discount is available on the services of [Park’N Fly](#) for business or leisure travel at their Halifax Stanfield International Airport location and at six other locations across Canada.

Personal Home & Auto Insurance Program

NSFM offers elected municipal leaders and municipal staff an exclusive insurance discount benefit for [personal home and auto insurance](#) through BrokerLink’s group insurance program. BrokerLink provides quality insurance products, expertise, and solutions to the municipal sector. Their dedicated group insurance advisors will compare coverage options designed to provide the most comprehensive coverage at the best value. A webinar to launch the program was held on February 28.

Eligibility:

- Municipal leaders
- Municipal staff
- Eligible family members
- Retirees

Other coverages available:

- Business
- Farm
- Identity theft
- Motorcycles
- Pet
- Recreational vehicles
- Seasonal property
- Tenant and condo



Blue Jay - Photo by Diana McKay

Wellness Program

The Municipal Wellness Program encourages municipalities to create healthy workplace environments and promote positive health and wellbeing for all municipal employees and elected officials. The [Municipal Wellness Program](#) offers activities, challenges, fitness membership discounts, and workshops to allow municipal employees and elected officials in the province’s municipalities to get involved in creating healthier workplace cultures.

The program was established in 2014 through a partnership between NSFM and AMANS to help define effective ways to create healthy municipalities. The program motivates change and transforms municipal environments for improved health and wellness. The [Mental Health Toolkit](#) is an important feature of the program. The five priority areas of the program are:

- Financial Health
- Mental Health
- Physical Health
- Workplace Health
- Social Connections

Financial Overview

NSFM’s revenue sources include membership fees, program contributions, and conference proceeds.

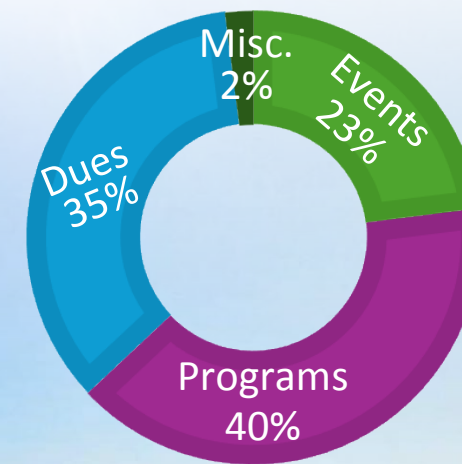
This report is based on the fiscal year ending December 31, 2024, with figures drawn from the 2024 budget. Full-year financial results will be included in the audited financial statements, which will be made available at the Annual General Meeting.

NSFM will be transitioning to a financial year ending March 31. As part of this transition, there will be a stub year covering January 1 to March 31, 2025. The first full financial year under this new framework will run from April 1, 2025, to March 31, 2026.

For additional information or clarification on the content provided, please contact the NSFM Office.

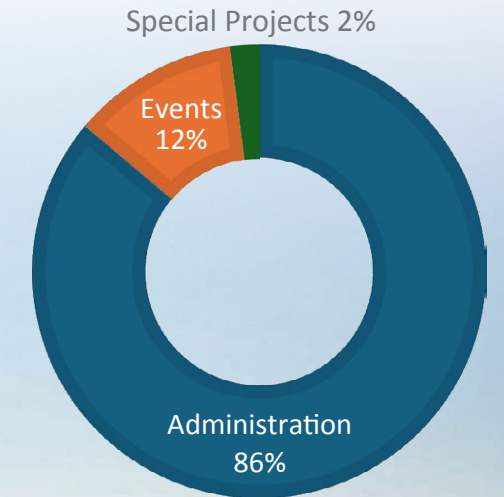
REVENUE

- Events
- Programs
- Dues
- Misc.

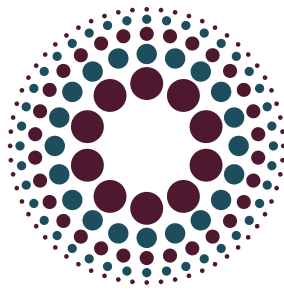


EXPENSES

- Administration
- Events
- Special Projects



Stoney Island Beach, Municipality of Barrington - Photo by Brandon Blades



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