

NSFM SEPTEMBER 2026 BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS



Date: September 4, 2026 (regular meeting)

Date: September 17, 2026 (special meeting)

Chair: Mayor David Mitchell, NSFM President

On September 4 and September 17, the NSFM Board of Directors met by online video conference, where it approved proposed By-laws amendments for member units to decide at the 2026 Annual General Meeting (AGM) and adopted a new Governance Policy that takes effect once the related amendments come into force. The Board also considered municipal advocacy priorities and directed further exploration of an expanded NSFM role in fund administration.

STRENGTHENING NSFM'S GOVERNANCE

At a special meeting on September 17, the Board approved a coordinated package of governance and policy changes designed to clarify responsibilities, strengthen accountability, and improve consistency among NSFM's governing documents. The package includes a new Governance Policy, related Board policy amendments, and proposed By-laws amendments that require approval by Member Units at the AGM.

A new Governance Policy. The Governance Policy brings together the roles, authority, and accountabilities of the Board, Executive Committee, President, and Chief Executive Officer. It clarifies the Board's responsibility for setting direction and overseeing organizational performance, the Executive Committee's authority between Board meetings, the President's leadership role, and the CEO's responsibility for managing operations within Board direction.

The Policy identifies decisions reserved to the Board, including approval of strategic plans, budgets and Board policies, and evaluation of the CEO's performance.

WHAT MEMBER UNITS WILL BE ASKED TO DECIDE

- Governance framework
- Board composition
- Board vacancies
- Other proposed By-laws changes

WHERE THE GOVERNANCE POLICY SITS

NSFM's governing and policy instruments, in order of precedence:

- 1 . The Act of incorporation (1981)
- 2 . The By-laws
- 3 . The Governance Policy
- 4 . Policies adopted by the Board
- 5 . Operational documents

Where they conflict, the higher instrument prevails.



Proposed By-laws amendments. The Board approved amendments for advancement to member units that would align the By-laws with the new governance framework, clarify responsibilities and contract-signing authority, and revise Board composition to address issues identified through the governance review. The proposals concerning Board composition and vacancies were informed by legal advice.

A clearer process for Board vacancies. The proposed amendments would remove the By-laws provision allowing the Board to appoint replacement Directors. They would introduce a six-month threshold that determines whether a vacancy is filled by by-election or remains vacant until the next regular election. The amendments would also move existing political resignation requirements from NSFM's Political Activity Policy into the By-laws. These require a Board member to resign upon being nominated for federal or provincial office or declaring an intention to seek the leadership of a provincial political party.

Board approval and AGM decisions. The Governance Policy has been adopted by the Board but will take effect only when the related By-laws amendments concerning the governance framework and Board composition are approved by member units at the Annual General Meeting on November 4 and come into force.

The Board also approved related changes to committee reporting, elections, and meeting procedures, together with the repeal of the separate Chief Executive Officer and Political Activity policies. These changes have effective dates tied to the relevant By-law amendments and, where applicable, the Governance Policy.

Real-time voting process. The Board also approved additional amendments to the Rules of Order Policy that would permit anonymous voting, by ballot or through a real-time voting system.

Member education before the AGM. Staff were directed to proceed with communication and member education before the AGM concerning the governance package and real-time voting process. The Board also emphasized the importance of on-site support when the system is introduced.

FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO

From the President. President David Mitchell reported on continued engagement with provincial Ministers and plans for joint advocacy meetings in Ottawa involving NSFM and provincial representatives. Provincial Ministers have expressed interest in participating in the proposed meetings.

From the CEO. CEO Juanita Spencer reported on continued engagement with provincial departments, federal representatives, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, and Atlantic municipal associations on shared municipal priorities. Her written report also confirmed that an Atlantic Local Government Ministers' Roundtable is scheduled for October 22. NSFM has coordinated the session with its Atlantic municipal association counterparts and the Nova Scotia Department of Municipal Affairs to provide a forum for discussion of shared issues across the region.

ADVOCACY AT THE BOARD TABLE

Policing billing model. The Board discussed concerns about the new policing billing model, particularly the requirement for municipalities to reinvest savings in public safety. Initial discussions with the Department of Justice have been constructive and the Department has indicated a willingness to provide further clarification. NSFM is working to arrange a meeting for Mayors, Wardens, and CAOs to discuss the model directly with the Department.

Property tax relief following natural disasters. Work continues on approaches to providing property tax relief for homes rebuilt after natural disasters under Section 69B of the *Municipal Government Act*. The working group of NSFM, AMANS, and the Property Valuation Services Corporation (PVSC) will reconvene to align on a recommended approach. That will happen before the matter returns to the Board and before any recommendation goes to the Department of Municipal Affairs.

Library funding. At the request of the Equity and Community Wellbeing Advisory Committee, NSFM will follow up with the Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism, and Heritage on library funding. Staff will continue efforts to secure a meeting on library funding.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Build Communities Strong Fund. The Board directed staff to continue exploring opportunities for NSFM to take on a larger administrative role in the Community Stream of the Build Communities Strong Fund. Staff have reviewed administration models used by municipal associations in Ontario and British Columbia and identified potential opportunities for further exploration.

Sustainable Communities Challenge Fund. Round 4 has moved from intake into evaluation, with 129 applications proceeding through completeness review and into the evaluation process. Administration and reporting work also continues for projects funded through earlier rounds.

Municipal flood adaptation resources. Two resources are approaching completion. Content and design for the FloodAdaptNS website are nearly complete, with launch anticipated in fall. The website is intended to provide municipalities with dedicated flood adaptation information and resources.

The final draft of the *Stormwater Management in African Nova Scotian Communities* guidance document is also under review by NSFM senior management and the Department of Municipal Affairs. The resource is intended to support municipal staff working on infrastructure planning and equity.

BOARD AND COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

Appointments:

- Councillor John Young, Halifax Regional Municipality, to the Audit Committee as a Board representative, for a two-year term
- Councillor Belle Hatfield, Town of Yarmouth, to the Audit Committee as member-at-large, for a two-year term
- Rachel Hiltz, Payroll and Benefits Administrator, Municipality of the District of Lunenburg, reappointed to the Health and Benefits Committee, for a three-year term
- Tara Maguire, CAO of the Municipality of the District of Chester, reappointed to a second four-year term on the PVSC Board of Directors, beginning September 1, 2026
- The appointment of Cathie O'Toole to the PVSC Board of Directors was changed from municipal representative to independent.

