

NSFM Rules of Order Policy

1. Purpose:

This Policy establishes rules of procedure and standards of conduct for meetings of the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM). Unless otherwise noted in the NSFM By-laws, this Policy shall apply to all meetings of the NSFM.

2. Definitions:

In this Policy:

“Board” means the Board of Directors of the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities.

“Chief Executive Officer” or “CEO” means the person acting as the NSFM lead administration official. The CEO or a staff designate shall execute the traditional duties of the Secretary/Treasurer position.

“Elected Municipal Official” means a person who holds an elected office in a Member Unit.

Definition of “Hybrid Meeting”: a Member Meeting taking place with a combination of in- person and virtual attendance, as set out in section 6.5 a) of the NSFM By-laws.

“Meeting Attendee” means any person participating in an NSFM meeting including Elected Municipal Officials, municipal staff, or other guests.

“Presiding Officer” means:

- a) The President when present at any meetings of the NSFM;
- b) The Vice President at a meeting in the absence of the President; and
- c) Such other Elected Municipal Official appointed by the membership in the absence of the President or Vice President;
- d) The Chair of a meeting as established in the NSFM By-laws or a committee’s Terms of Reference.

Definition of “Speaker’s List Assistant” is a person designated by the Presiding Officer to provide assistance pursuant to section 4.2 of this policy.

3. Principles of Order and Conduct:

- a) It is a priority of NSFM to conduct orderly, fair, and productive meetings;
- b) All Elected Municipal Officials should feel that they are able to speak and be listened to in all NSFM meetings that they are entitled to attend as designated in the NSFM By- laws;
- c) Unless otherwise stated in a committee or board’s Terms of Reference, Elected Municipal Officials shall acknowledge that they attend NSFM meetings by virtue of representing an NSFM Member Unit and should, to the best of their abilities, attempt to accurately represent the views of that Member Unit’s elected council;
- d) All Meeting Attendees must respect the rules of order and procedure outlined in this policy.

4. Duties of Presiding Officer:

4.1 The Presiding Officer shall:

- a) Open all meetings and preside by taking the role of Chair and calling attendees to order;

~ Amended by Resolution of the Board of NSFM on October 3, 2025 ~

- b) Read the prescribed Acknowledgement Statement as follows:
We would like to begin by acknowledging that we are in Mi'kma'ki , the ancestral territory of the Mi'kmaq people. We also recognize the enduring presence of people of African descent, who have been part of Nova Scotia for over 400 years. We honour and offer gratitude to those ancestors of African descent who came before us and shaped the history of this land;
- c) Receive and submit, properly formulated and presented motions from Elected Municipal Officials;
- d) Facilitate a vote on motions, or which arise in the course of the proceedings and announce the result of the vote;
- e) Decline to facilitate a vote on a motion which infringes upon the rules of procedure (i.e. motions which lack proper notice or motions deemed out of order);
- f) Enforce the observance of order and decorum;
- g) Make decisions on all points of order that arise during debate. Such decisions are subject to appeal by a mover and seconder. The Presiding Officer may speak to Points of Order in preference to other Points of Order. The Presiding Officer may invite discussion on a point if he or she has doubts on the subject. Where the Presiding Officer permits discussion on a point, no Meeting Attendee may speak more than twice;
- h) Assign the floor and when two Meeting Attendees seek the floor at the same time to determines speaking order;
- i) Ensure that the use of artificial intelligence (AI) for notetaking or recording at meetings is prohibited, with the exemption of accessibility and accommodation requirements, in accordance with the *Human Rights Act*. In the case of an exemption, AI will only be used as a tool for the user in their work and the contents of meetings will be held in confidence and shared only with those persons with authorization. Otherwise, meeting participants are expected to rely on traditional or non-digital methods of notetaking to ensure the confidentiality and security of the discussion. If necessary, the Presiding Officer will remind participants of this requirement at the beginning of each meeting to ensure compliance.

4.2 The Presiding Officer may request assistance in keeping track of the speaker's list for both in-person and virtual attendees. This Speakers List Assistant shall keep track of all Meeting Attendees seeking to obtain the floor.

5. Censure and Removal from Meetings

5.1 The Presiding Officer may censure any person who:

- a) While speaking, impeaches the motives of another person;
- b) While speaking, treats another person disrespectfully;
- c) Behaves in such a way as to interrupt the person speaking or the proceedings in general;
- d) Uses unbecoming or profane language; or
- e) Willfully violates any other rule or principle in this policy or the NSFM Event Code of Conduct;
- f) Uses unbecoming or profane language; or
- g) Willfully violates any other rule or principle in this policy or the NSFM Event Code of Conduct.

5.2 The Presiding Officer may require a Meeting Attendee to be removed from a meeting on the following grounds:

- a) No person may bring any sign, poster, placard or banner or any like device of a political nature into a meeting room without the permission of the voting attendees;
- b) If any person as described in subsection 5 a) in attendance at a meeting is disrupting proceedings, the Presiding Officer may order such person to leave the meeting. The Presiding Officer may

request the presence of police as deemed necessary to take appropriate steps to carry out the order;

- c) If the disruption is being caused by an Elected Municipal Official, the Presiding Officer's decision to dismiss them can be appealed to the other Elected Municipal Officials present;
- d) Grounds provided by section 9 b).

6. Minutes:

- a) NSFM staff shall keep minutes of the proceedings of every NSFM meeting;
- b) The Minutes shall:
 - i. Contain all resolutions and motions passed. Mover and seconder names do not have to be recorded;
 - ii. Mention reports, petitions and other submitted papers submitted to a meeting, by their title only or by brief description (only accepted reports shall be entered at length);
 - iii. Not be verbatim but may include bulleted summarized accounts (at the discretion of the CEO) of the major points for and against an issue from the debate; and
 - iv. Have a collective focus based on the Parliamentary Principle that recording what was done is more important than what was said during debate;
- c) NSFM staff are authorized to record meetings through electronic means to assist with the preparation of draft minutes. However, the "official record" of the proceedings of NSFM meetings shall be the written approved minutes that are drafted shortly after completion of a meeting and brought forward to a subsequent meeting for formal acceptance.

7. Speakers and Time Limits:

- a) Meeting Attendees must be recognized and called on by the Presiding Officer before obtaining the floor;
- b) By virtue of being a Member Representative, Elected Municipal Officials may receive preference from the Presiding Officer and may be recognized to speak prior to other Meeting Attendees;
- c) No Meeting Attendee shall speak more than twice on any motion except to explain a misconception of their remarks;
- d) The mover of a substantive motion shall have the right to reply or close the debate;
- e) No Meeting Attendee shall speak for more than five minutes on any matter at one time without permission of the Presiding Officer, who may extend the total allotted time for an additional five minutes;
- f) No Meeting Attendee shall stand, speak, or behave so as to interrupt any person who is speaking unless it is to raise a Point of Order, a Point of Information, or to ask the Presiding Officer for permission to address a misconception;
- g) When a Meeting Attendee wishes to explain a misconception, they shall ask permission of the Presiding Officer without further comment and, if so permitted, can address the misunderstanding of their comments;
- h) When an Elected Municipal Official calls for a Point of Order, the question of order shall be decided before the matter under discussion is proceeded with and when any person is called to order he/she shall be seated and/or silent until the Point of Order is responded to;
- i) Any Elected Municipal Official who feels aggrieved or rebuked by the Presiding Officer may appeal from such rebuke or censure to the other Elected Municipal Officials present.

8. Motions and Voting:

- a) Only Elected Municipal Officials may move, second, and vote on motions;

- b) Elected Municipal Officials may not vote by proxy;
- c) All substantive motions shall be moved, seconded, and read aloud by the Presiding Officer before being debated and opened for debate;
- d) All questions arising during any meeting shall be decided by a majority of the votes cast, unless otherwise stated in the NSFM By-laws. In the event of a tied vote, the motion is defeated;
- e) Every motion involving the expenditure of NSFM funds shall require one (1) days' notice to all eligible voters in writing;
- f) The *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act* applies to all Federation meetings. No Elected Municipal Official is entitled to vote or be present at the portion of a meeting where matters being discussed or presented (as the case may be) may create a conflict of interest for that Elected Municipal Official. If such a matter arises, the affected person shall immediately declare a conflict. A conflict of interest shall be as described in the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*;
- g) When a decision on any question is called for by the Presiding Officer, those voting in the affirmative will be called to indicate their vote, then those voting in the negative will be called to indicate their vote, and then those abstaining from the vote will be called to indicate their abstention. The Presiding Officer shall then declare the result of the vote;
- h) If the Presiding Officer is in doubt as to the result, they may call for a standing vote;
- i) The Presiding Officer shall immediately call for a standing vote if any Elected Municipal Official calls for a standing vote;
- j) When a majority of the Elected Municipal Officials present so require, the vote shall be by ballot and the Presiding Officer shall appoint sufficient Elected Municipal Officials or staff to act as scrutineers.

9. Hybrid Meetings:

9.1 Hybrid meetings require the following additional points of procedure in order to ensure that these meetings are inclusive, productive, and orderly:

- a) At the beginning of the meeting, meeting Attendees shall have their camera turned on with the meeting attendee clearly in view for the purposes of verification;
- b) At any point during the meeting, the Presiding Officer may cause a Meeting Attendee to be removed from a meeting if they do not comply with requests that the Meeting Attendee turn their camera on;
- c) Meeting attendees who attend a meeting virtually shall have their microphone muted until the Presiding Officer assigns the floor to them;
- d) Meetings Attendees who attend a Hybrid Meeting in person shall speak into a microphone when the Presiding Officer assigns the floor to them;
- e) At the Presiding Officer's discretion, the assignment of the floor shall alternate between in-person and virtual attendees;
- f) Pursuant to the NSFM By Law 6.5 a) and section 3 b) of the Rules of Order Policy, a virtual meeting attendee is due all standards of treatment and recognition as in-person attendees and can participate in the meeting on the basis of Robert's Rules of Order and the Presiding Officer's discretion;
- g) Speaking limits stated in section 7 of this Policy apply to both in person and virtual Meeting Attendees.

9.2 If a vote is necessary to answer the question of a motion in a hybrid meeting and the vote does not need to be anonymous:

- a) Meetings attendees attending in person shall hold their voting cards up for as long as the Presiding

- Officer requires for the vote to be taken; and
- b) Meeting Attendees attending virtually shall, at the request of the Presiding Officer:
 - i. indicate their vote by raising their hand in clear view of the camera for as long as the Presiding Officer requires; or
 - ii. indicate their vote using the online platform group chat option.

9.3 If a vote does need to be anonymous:

- a) In-person meeting attendees shall use a ballot box; and
- b) Virtual Meeting Attendees shall use voting software provided.

10. Rules of Procedure:

As per Article 9 of the NSFM By-laws, in all cases not specifically addressed in this Policy, the rules contained in the 12th edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (RONR) shall govern NSFM proceedings.

11. Endorsing Documents:

When a report, by-law, petition or other document is read to the meeting, the Presiding Officer will endorse upon it a note of the reading, the date, and the manner in which it was disposed of.

12. Suspending Rules:

Elected Municipal Officials present may, by two-thirds (2/3) vote in any session, suspend any rule of order provided in this policy.

13. Petitions and Correspondence:

- a) Every petition or written application made at the meeting shall be legibly written or printed and shall be signed by every person required to sign;
- b) When a person presents a petition to the meeting, he or she shall acquaint the meeting with its contents and ask permission of the meeting for it to be read;
- c) Every petition or written application presented to the meeting shall have endorsed upon it the name of one or more of the petitioners or applicants and the substance of the matter contained in it;
- d) Elected Municipal Officials may resolve to hear the endorsement on a petition or written application in lieu of hearing read the petition or written application.

Date(s) of Approval:

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