

April 20, 2018

TO: Mayors, Wardens, Clerks, All Units

CC: UNSM Membership

FR: Geoff Stewart, President, Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities

RE: UNSM BOARD REPORT—APRIL 13, 2018

I am pleased to send you the UNSM Board Report from our April 13, 2018, meeting. We ask that you include this report on your Council Agenda. We would be pleased to answer any questions that may arise, or hear any comments and/or suggestions.

Also attached is the update on our initiatives report.

1. **Extended Producer Responsibility:** The Board endorses EPR proposal as presented by Solid Waste Regional Chairs, in principle. The Board also directed the President and Staff to continue to work with the Regional Chairs on the Extended Producer Responsibility issue.
2. **2019 Spring Workshop Location:** The Board approved Truro, Nova Scotia, as the location for the 2019 Spring Workshop. It will be co-hosted by Town of Truro and County of Colchester.
3. **PVSC Memorandum of Understanding:** The governance changes to the PVSC Legislation were tabled recently at the spring sitting of the Legislation. The Board will approve the PVSC Memorandum of Understanding with the provision that the majority of Board Members will have municipal experience.
4. **Municipal Modernization:** The UNSM/DMA Partnership Framework commits to developing a joint strategic workplan. The Workplan will identify the areas there is joint agreement to work together. Municipal modernization will likely be a big part of the Partnership Framework along with the UNSM resolutions. It is unlikely everything UNSM has requested will be included – for those that aren't, UNSM will need to determine how to best move forward in other ways.

Work is underway to develop a framework and work plan to support municipal modernization.

5. **Ministers' Response to Resolutions:** The UNSM received responses to the 2017 UNSM Resolutions from Minister Mombourquette on March 28. The responses are uploaded on the website, but here is a recap of the individual responses:
 - a. **CAP:** Province will consider a working committee as part of their priority-setting. Notes extensive public education is necessary. Also notes any changes need to ensure the low-income/vulnerable sector receives relief and that commitments on municipal tax rates would be expected.
 - b. **Municipal Funding:** Province recognizes need to deal with the provincial operating grant program (equalization). It is being discussed under the municipal modernization program.

- c. **Roads:** TIR is willing to work with UNSM on a joint committee. Staff met with TIR to discuss the terms of reference for the joint committee. It will be a longer term project.
 - d. **Dr. Recruitment:** Provincial response is that they are working on it. UNSM has been invited to serve on an advisory committee for the Nova Scotia Health Authority with respect to doctor recruitment.
 - e. **Connectivity:** The province points to the development of a long-term strategy and short term local solutions. The province recently released a report and the new federal/NS infrastructure agreement includes funds for broadband initiatives.
6. **Cannabis Legalization Implications:** The province has now established the manner in which legalization will occur. Sales are restricted to NSLC sites and online. Public consumption is similar to smoking. Concerns remain. The Chiefs of Police have expressed their concern with this, both from with concern over the normalization of cannabis, the impairment aspect and the cost of policing. The Board agreed that a letter and a Press Release be sent out, in agreement with the Police Chiefs concerns: that the Legislation should be consistent with the *Liquor Control* and *Smoke Free Places Acts*. The Board will also continue to push for a share of the cannabis revenue as intended by the federal government.
7. **Federal Infrastructure Program:** President Geoff Stewart represented UNSM at the recent announcement of the Canada Nova Scotia Bilateral Agreement for Investing in Canada Infrastructure. \$828.5 million dollars over ten years will be available for use in four areas:
●Public Transit; ●Green Infrastructure; Community, ●Culture and Recreation Infrastructure; and ●Rural and Northern Communities Infrastructure.
8. **Ministers' Roundtable:** A meeting is scheduled for May 2, 2018. UNSM Executive will use this meeting to advance the following key points: CAP; Cannabis; EPR Municipal Modernization.

UNSM Initiatives Report – April 13, 2018

UNSM Vision: *Effective local government and strong, sustainable communities*

UNSM Mission: *To enable effective local government for Nova Scotia's communities by facilitating strategic advocacy, education and collaboration*

Initiatives

1. Partnership Framework

Description/Update

The Ministers Roundtable approved three documents, which are being distributed to UNSM membership:

- the terms of reference for the Roundtable were revised, integrating the UNSM resolutions process into the schedule of meetings and establishing the Roundtable as the forum to monitor progress under the Partnership Framework.
- A consultation guide for the development of new legislation and regulations impacting municipalities was agreed to with Municipal Affairs,
- A progress report of the Partnership Framework.

Work is underway on a joint strategic plan.

2. Resolutions and Statements of Municipal Concern

Description/Update

UNSM has received a response from the Province on the five approved at the UNSM Fall Conference: CAP; Connectivity; Doctor Shortages; Municipal Funding; and Roads. In addition, UNSM has received a response from the Minister for Housing regarding the Statement of Municipal Concern. These letters are posted on the UNSM website. Legislative changes to the PVSC Act were tabled in the provincial legislature in March. With respect to the Statement of Municipal Concern on deer, the Department of Natural Resources recently met with a group of interested municipalities and work will continue. Town of Truro is taking the lead on this issue.

UNSM is currently planning workshops on physician recruitment for the spring, June 25 and one on connectivity in the fall.

Discussions are underway to establish joint provincial/municipal committees on roads. The Department of Transportation and Infrastructural Renewal will present at the UNSM Spring Workshop.

Work to develop a joint committee on housing is underway.

UNSM is participating in an agricultural land use committee under the Federation of Agriculture.

Other topics were identified through the resolutions process last year, and UNSM is monitoring a number of these.

- Libraries: The Province is providing extra funding for libraries this coming year. A letter from the Minister of to Warden Jimmy MacAlpine confirming the funding is available on the UNSM website/
- Seniors: Work continues on the development of a memorandum of understanding with the Department of Seniors.
- Forestry: The Department of Natural Resources had allowed an extension to the work by Professor William Lahey. The report is not expected for another two months, the end of April.

3. Cannabis Legalization

Description/Update

The province has tabled two relevant pieces of legislation, one dealing with the sale of cannabis through the NS Liquor Stores, and one amending the Smoke Free Places Act to include the smoking of cannabis.

The UNSM/AMA Municipal Cannabis Working Group has been meeting to discuss the implications to NS municipalities. Municipalities will be able to enact further restrictions for public consumption through by laws. Concerns remain around public safety, enforcement and costs. There will be a presentation at the UNSM Spring Workshop with up-to-date implications and suggested actions.

UNSM has supported FCM financially in the development of a guide for municipalities, and this guide should be released in mid to late April. It deals with planning and other issues, but not directly with policing. It is anticipated the province will table legislation in the spring sitting, and more will be known at that time.

4. Fire Services Review

Description/Update

The Board approved appointments to the NS Joint Municipal Fire Services Committee Phase I. Those appointed to represent UNSM are: Councillor Jennifer Daniels, District of West Hants, and Councillor Wayne Thorburne, Bridgewater. All committee members have now been appointed, and the first meeting was held February 28th, 2018.

5. Accessibility Act

Description/Update

Municipalities will need to implement the requirements under the new Act. A Joint Provincial/Municipal Committee is being formed to assist municipalities in fulfilling their requirements under the Act. The UNSM Board appointed Councillor Laurie Cranton, County of Inverness, Mayor Jeff Cantwell, Town of Wolfville, and Councillor George MacDonald, CBRM, to

the committee. Work is underway to develop tools for municipalities in developing their advisory committees and action plans. For now, municipalities are encouraged to begin documenting their existing assets for accessibility. For those looking for guidance on standards, the Accessibility Directorate refers you to the Rick Hansen Foundation website.

6. Parental Accommodations Committee

The province has introduced legislation for parental accommodations. Amendments to section 18 of the Municipal Government Act, section 39 of the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter and section 2 and section 18 of the Municipal Elections Act will:

- define parental accommodation which would encompass pregnancy, birth and the adoption of a child
- allow those who are pregnant or have recently become a parent to miss three council meetings without risk of losing their seat and without financial penalty for up to a maximum of 52 weeks
- allow any elected official who is absent due to parental leave to return to committees on which they previously served.

7. Asset Management

UNSM continues to support municipalities with asset management planning, as a requirement of the 2014-24 Gas Tax Fund Agreement. UNSM recently submitted its Progress Report for the funding it received from FCM from the [Municipal Asset Management Program](#) to provide basic training and skill development resources to Nova Scotia municipalities. The Progress Report was approved by FCM and it will disburse \$33,480.77 to UNSM for the work completed to date, which represent approximately 40% of the total funding. UNSM completed its 6 training courses at the later part of 2017 and is currently developing an online course for elected officials on the basics of asset management. The final initiative UNSM will produce with the FCM funding is an online module based on the Province of Nova's asset management pilot project "how to" guide for collecting data and completing condition assessments for linear assets.

8. Upcoming Events

- UNSM Regional Meetings:
 - April 23
 - April 27
 - April 30
- Atlantic Mayors Congress: April 25 – 27, Windsor, NS
- [UNSM Spring Workshop](#) - May 10–12, 2018, Mariners Centre, Yarmouth, NS
- [The Atlantic Active Transportation Summit](#) - May 23-24, 2018, Halifax Central Library, Halifax, NS
- [FCM Conference](#) - May 31 - June 3, 2018, Halifax Convention Centre, Halifax, NS--We encourage you to take advantage of the Halifax location and attend the Conference. It is a wonderful learning opportunity. also watch for an e-mail regarding the opportunity to showcase your community and successes to the over 3,000 delegates, companions and exhibitors expected to attend.