



NOVA SCOTIA
FEDERATION OF
MUNICIPALITIES

NSFM RESOLUTIONS POLICY September 2018

Background:

The purpose of the NSFM Resolutions is to present a request for action which the majority of NSFM members support as a priority. Resolutions are normally aimed at the provincial and federal governments, and sometimes other organizations that can assist in addressing municipal priorities.

The NSFM resolutions process was revised based on observations that the process where every Council was enabled to present a resolution to the membership was not achieving the desired results. Some 20-40 resolutions were being adopted, on a variety of topics. The resolutions tended to be very general, and lacked sufficient background to explain the issue being identified and why the requested action was appropriate. The resolutions process was revised for the 2016 annual conference and continues to evolve.

The process is intended to result in 3-5 resolutions aimed at the province being passed by the membership, focussed on those matters which are most significant to municipalities. The intention is to have a greater impact on provincial or federal policy, regulation, and legislation, through a well thought out analysis and a clear demonstration the membership supports these as the most important.

Municipalities are experts in delivering services to their communities. They are most knowledgeable and accountable for ensuring their decisions reflect the needs and desires of their communities. The Municipal Government Act specifies the areas in which they may operate. As such, the resolutions should focus on those areas first, and should clearly identify the issue, how it is impacting municipalities, the options for addressing the issues, and a recommendation on how best to resolve the issue.

In addition, the municipalities have shared responsibilities with the province and the federal government. The resolution process embraces these as well. Statements of Provincial Interest are intended to be a forum for significant issues not included in the final list of resolutions to be brought to the attention of the provincial or federal government. These are not intended to request a specific action. The intention of the Statement of Interest is to communicate community concerns to the other levels of government.

PART A: RESOLUTIONS PROCESS

A1. Goal of the NSFM Resolutions Process

The goal of the resolutions process is to create a more focussed and streamlined process in order to have a greater impact on provincial and federal policy impacting municipalities. Demonstrating significant support from the NSFM membership will enhance the credibility of the issue.

Each resolution must represent a significant issue supported by the majority of Nova Scotia municipalities. The resolution should be specific in terms of request for action, based on solid evidence, be thoroughly researched and discussed, and include clear objectives on what municipalities would like to see changed and implemented. Providing this level of detail will enhance the chance for success.

A2. Who can submit resolutions?

- a) Resolutions can only be submitted by the NSFM Board, Regions, Caucuses, or with the support from at least one-third of all member municipalities.
- b) No individual member or municipal unit can submit a resolution.

A3. How many can be submitted?

- a) All groups identified in Section A2(a) can submit up to three resolutions each on an annual basis. This will ensure a focus on the most important matters.

A4. Resolution Categories:

Resolutions would be divided into three main categories:

- a) Those requesting action from FCM or the Federal Government, following FCM resolutions policy for submitting resolutions.
- b) Those requesting action from the Province should specifically address municipal issues or concerns that fall within provincial jurisdiction and are province-wide in significance (references to specific municipalities are not to be included). The resolution must outline the reasons for the resolution, and clearly state a specific proposal for action. Background information should show how the issue is impacting municipalities and how the resolution is expected to address the issue. There will be no more than 5 resolutions sent to the province.

- c) Those requesting action from NSFAM. These will be in addition to the 3-5 resolutions to be submitted to the other levels of government.

A5. Steps to Submit Resolutions

- a) One or more municipal units may bring an issue to a caucus or regional meeting for discussion. Each issue should be researched prior to being added to the meeting agenda and should clearly identify the issue and the impact it is having on municipalities.
- b) The caucus or region will determine if the issue goes forward as a resolution based on level of significance and ample research.
- c) If both of these conditions are met, the resolution will be forwarded to the NSFAM Executive for consideration.
- d) If the issue is determined not to be significant for a large number of units, the resolution does not move forward to the NSFAM Executive.
- e) Each resolution prior to submission must be researched by the group submitting it. This would include providing relevant background information, outlining the issue, what it means to municipalities, how to resolve it, and a process for achieving the desired outcome. **A research template is provided as Appendix A.**
- f) If the issue is determined significant, but requires more research, the issue will be forwarded to NSFAM staff who will work with the Association of Municipal Administrators (AMA) and other municipalities to conduct further research. Following this, the issue will be sent back to the relevant caucus or region for further discussion and decision.

A6. Resolutions Review Committee

- a) The NSFAM Executive shall serve as the Resolutions Review Committee. Its role is to approve or reject all submitted resolutions.
- b) All resolutions must fall within the mandate of municipalities.
- c) Priority will be given to those resolutions addressing issues identified within the NSFAM priorities which are set annually at the NSFAM Fall Conference, or significant emerging issues impacting the majority of municipal units.
- d) Rejected resolutions would not be brought forward for debate at the Fall Conference but may continue to be explored through other means. Rejected resolutions will still be included in an appendix to the resolutions report.
- e) All approved resolutions will be brought forward at the Fall Conference for further discussion and action. Those attending the conference will vote on the top resolutions during their caucus meetings.

- f) The NSFM Executive has the authority to accept resolutions which do not fall within the priority areas if the submitter of the resolution can provide strong evidence as to why NSFM should pursue the particular issue identified.
- g) The NSFM Executive has the authority to identify one or two resolutions to be included in the package of resolutions going forward to the Province. This authority recognizes the Executive's responsibility to represent the best interests of all municipalities as a whole. In exercising this authority, the Executive will seek feedback from all members on the Interim Resolution Report.

A7. Emergency Resolutions

Given the objective of being transparent to the membership and allowing time for thoughtful consideration of the proposed resolutions, timelines need to be established. It is recognized that on occasion unanticipated issues may emerge. Should this occur, an emergency resolution could be brought to the NSFM Board shortly before the Fall conference. The resolution as drafted must have support from at least three member units. The Board will determine if the issue brought forward should be deemed an emergency. If approved, it would go forward for debate and decision at the Annual Conference.

A8. Formal Approval Process

During the NSFM Fall conference, time will be allocated for the membership to debate and vote on each resolution.

Part B: Statements of Interest

B1: Purpose of Statements of Interest

The purpose of the statement of interest would be to inform the Province of significant matters being expressed at the community level. Sending the statements through the NSFM should be a signal to the Province that these are serious issues for a number of communities. Because they involve issues outside of municipal jurisdiction, the submissions would not include clear direction or solutions but would require provincial expertise to resolve.

B2: Who Can Submit a Statement of Interest?

Any municipality can bring forward a proposal for a statement of interest to a regional or caucus meeting for discussion. If supported, the Region or Caucus would submit the statement of interest to the NSFM office. The NSFM Board may also submit statements of interest.

B3: How many can be submitted?

There would not be no limit on the number of statements of interest.

B4: Formal Approval Process

- a) The proposed Statements of Interest would be brought to the NSFM Fall conference as a block.
- b) Each proposed Statement of Interest would be read at the meeting.
- c) After all have been read, the membership would be asked to indicate their support of the block of statements.
- d) Statements of Interest shall not be debated.
- e) The NSFM would send the approved statements to the Province for consideration.

Part C: Role of Individual Municipalities:

- a) The NSFM recommends that those municipalities with unique issues address them directly with their own MLA or through the applicable provincial department.
- b) An individual unit has the opportunity to bring forward an issue for consideration to their respective region or caucus. The issue would need to be researched and determined by the region or caucus if the issue impacts multiple units. The region or caucus would determine if it goes forward as a resolution. Alternatively, the region or caucus may recommend the issue go forward as a Statement of Interest.

Part D: Timelines

- a) Potential areas for resolutions will be identified in the winter and spring preceding the fall conference through regional meetings, caucus meetings or by written notice from a group of municipalities.
- b) An Interim Resolution Report will be sent to all members before the end of the first week in September. This report will provide background information on the issue and suggested responses, which may or may not include a resolution.

- c) Members will be invited to provide feedback on the Interim Resolution Report, in either written form or through attendance at a Resolutions Meeting. NSFM will hold these meeting in September and early October
- d) Any additional resolution considered by the Resolutions Committee shall be forwarded to the NSFM office by a caucus or region within forty (40) days of the Annual Conference.
- e) Resolutions received within the 40-day time period shall be reviewed by the Resolutions Committee. All approved resolutions will be forwarded to member units at least **fourteen (14) days** prior to the Annual Conference.
- f) Emergency resolutions should be submitted to the NSFM Board no later than one week prior to the start of the Annual Conference.
- g) Statements of Interest should be submitted to the NSFM office by a Caucus or Region within 20 days (20) days prior to the start of the Annual Conference.
- h) The NSFM Board of Directors or NSFM Executive Committee may, on its own motion, adjust the timelines if necessary, and present any matter to the Annual Conference without notice.

Part E: Evaluation of the Process:

It is recommended that initially the newly introduced resolutions/statement of interest process be evaluated annually to determine its effectiveness.

Appendix A - Resolution Research Template

The following template should be used when researching resolutions:

1. Outline the issue
2. Provide relevant background information
3. Outline how the issue is currently impacting municipalities and/or any potential impacts
4. Outline proposed solution(s) to resolve the issue.
5. Provide any other steps as appropriate to enhance the success of the resolution which could include engaging other stakeholder groups or further research.