
NOVA SCOTIA JOINT MUNICIPAL FIRE SERVICES COMMITTEE

Phase I

Draft Terms of Reference

October 2017

Authority:

Fire services are important for all Nova Scotians. Municipalities, fire services and the province agree that all partners must work together to address challenges and seize opportunities to strengthen this important emergency service.

Supporting the fire services review is a priority in the Partnership Framework between the Province of NS and UNSM.

Consequently, a joint committee is established by the Department of Municipal Affairs, the Association of Municipal Administrators Nova Scotia (AMANS), and the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities (UNSM), and the Fire Services Association.

Background:

A review of issues around Fire Services was completed by POMAX Consulting Inc in 2017. The review identified a number of issues from the perspectives of fire fighters and municipalities which pointed to the need for action. The report recognized the shared responsibilities for fire services in the province and recommended a joint committee be formed with the responsible organizations to address the issues.

The findings of the report need to be considered, and an action plan developed to begin to address the issues identified.

Mandate:

- To review the findings of the report and to prioritize the issues to be addressed in the short term and in the longer term; and
- To develop an action plan, with responsibilities and timelines assigned.

Committee Objectives:

The committee will carry out its mandate for Phase 1 by:

1. Review the report, undertake further research as required
2. Assess the issues to determine which should be addressed in the short term and long term
3. Identify necessary actions and assess resources required to address the issues
4. Seek commitment to undertake the actions, including the organizations to be tasked with the actions
5. Present the report to the Deputy Minister, Municipal Affairs, President, UNSM, President, AMANS and President Fire Services Association.

Committee Composition:

The Committee is a joint committee and each organization shall appoint their members in accordance with their respective committee selection policies. A committee chair will be chosen by the Committee Members.

The joint committee shall be comprised of:

- 2 AMANS members
- 2 UNSM members
- 2 Department of Municipal Affairs members, including one from the Fire Marshal's office
- 2 representatives of the Fire Services Association
- 1 representative from the Fire Services Coordinators' Group
- The AMANS Executive Director and the UNSM Executive Director will both serve as non-voting ex-officio members.

Note: From time to time the Committee may invite subject experts and specialized resources to aid the committee in meeting its mandate. Persons other than Committee members may, with permission of the Committee, attend any meeting for the purpose of providing information, making a submission or providing feedback. Such persons may, with the permission of the Chair, speak on an issue but are not involved in the decision process.

Committee Duration

- This is an ad hoc committee; once the work is completed the term of office expires.

Meetings:

- Every attempt will be made to schedule meetings at least 7 days in advance, meetings shall be as required.

A face-to-face meeting can be cancelled by the meeting Chair if:

- All issues on the agenda can be addressed by phone, fax, or e-mail consultations.
- The meeting is purely for information sharing with no consensus building or decision-making necessary and the same result can be achieved by sending e-mails to everyone.
- Many people, especially key decision makers, are not available for the meeting.
- Bad weather or other unforeseen circumstances

Attendance at Meetings:

- If Committee members are unable to attend, they must notify the Chair.
- A member of the Committee who, without leave of the Committee, is absent from three consecutive regular meetings of the Committee may be requested by the Committee to vacate his/her position.

Quorum:

A quorum shall be 50 percent of voting members plus one committee member.

Role of Committee Chair:

- Ensure that the work of the Committee is in keeping with the mandate as outlined in the Terms of Reference;
- Chair the meetings of the Committee;
- Set the agenda for each meeting;
- Assign work to Committee members;
- Delegate work to Committee members;
- Report the findings and recommendations to the Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs, Presidents of AMANS, UNSM and the Fire Services Association and other stakeholders;
- Ensure that all members at meetings have an opportunity to participate in discussions; and
- Respect and support Committee actions through a unified voice, once the Committee has made its report for Phase 1

Role of Committee Members:

Once appointed, committee members will be expected to:

- regularly attend meetings
- stay informed about committee matters, be prepared for all meetings and review minutes, agenda and supporting materials;
- actively participate in a respectful and engaged manner;
- be committed to the work and mandate of the Committee;
- Volunteer for and willingly accepts assignments and completes them thoroughly and on time;
- Respect and support Committee actions through a unified voice, once the Committee has made its report.
- Act as spokesperson
- Hiring and oversight of any external resources needed.

Decision Making

The members of the Committee shall make every effort to come to consensus regarding the preparation of the Report. The Committee will use consensus decision making through:

- including the input of all Committee members;
- including and respecting all parties, and generating as much agreement as possible;
- setting the stage for greater cooperation in implementing the resulting decisions; and
- promoting atmosphere that fosters group cohesion and interpersonal connection.
- When the Committee members cannot reach an agreement, the Committee may have a motion put forth which requires a vote to be taken.

Communications and Information Sharing

- The Chair of the Committee will act as spokesperson
- When the Chair is not available, the Vice-Chair will act as spokesperson
- Public or media communications will be developed together with consensus. There will be times when it may be more appropriate for one organization to send out information, however, this will only be done upon agreement of all three organizations.
- Confidentiality of information will be maintained until the Committee has agreed that it be shared.