



NOVA SCOTIA FEDERATION
OF MUNICIPALITIES

INTERIM RESOLUTIONS REPORT

September 8, 2021

Feedback Welcome

Deadline for written feedback: October 1, 2021

Meetings to discuss Resolutions:

September 27, 2021, 10:00am – 12:00pm, Virtual Meeting via Zoom

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INTRODUCTION

What is a Resolution?

- Resolutions are matters of importance to NS municipalities. They include, but are not limited to the following:
 - ✓ Requesting new or increased funding
 - ✓ Cost-sharing for services and infrastructure
 - ✓ Changes in provincial legislation
 - ✓ Creating or formalizing partnerships
- NSFM advocates to federal and provincial levels of government to ensure municipal priorities put forward as resolutions are considered and actioned.

History of Current Resolutions

- In recent years, NSFM decided to focus its advocacy efforts by limiting the number of resolutions to five (5).
- Recognizing that progress with the provincial and federal government takes time, NSFM policy states that resolutions will remain active for up to three **(3) years**.
- The NSFM Board may request the renewal of a resolution about to meet its 3-year expiry.
- In **2019** the following resolutions were approved or extended by the membership for the three (3) year period of **2020-2022**:
 1. **Removing the CAP** on property assessment, while continuing to protect low-income homeowners.
 2. Implementing **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)** for printed paper and packaging.
 3. Addressing inadequacies in funding levels and formulas for **Municipal Funding**.
 4. Enabling **Municipal Modernization**, including support for new governance and collaboration models
 5. **Funding for Roads**, including equitable distribution to towns and former towns for shared arterial and collector roads.

For a full description and background information, please see the [Our Resolutions](#) section of the NSFM website.

- In **2020**, NSFM shifted its focus to responding to the demands of the Covid-19 pandemic. Advocacy on the above resolutions continued while several pandemic-related research and advocacy projects were also completed.
- In **2022**, the NSFM membership will have the opportunity to propose additional resolutions to the Resolutions Review Committee. For information on this process, please see Appendix A.

Resolutions Update:

- Between April 4- April 16, NSFM staff provided a progress update on resolutions via 5 Regional meetings.
- This report provides an additional update to reflect progress made since that time.

Statements of Concern:

- Statements of concern are additional issues that NSFM may advocate to the province about.
- When a resolution is resolved or phased out, a statement of concern may take its place. As our membership responded to the demands of the pandemic, no new statements of concern were brought forward in 2020.
- Our current Statements of Concern include the following:
 - 1. Sustainability and Infrastructure Funding**
 - 2. Climate Change**
 - 3. Policing**
 - 4. Municipal Responsibilities**
 - 5. Surplus Schools**
- To read an in-depth description of the above issues, visit [Our Resolutions](#) on the NSFM website.

Next Steps:

- Members are asked to review the Interim Resolution Report and provide feedback, either written or through attendance at the following virtual meeting:
 - **September 27, 2021, 10:00 – 12:00, Zoom**
- Feedback will be summarized and presented to the NSFM Executive.
- A final Resolutions Report will be sent to members in advance of the Fall Conference.
- Resolutions and Statements of Concern will be reviewed but not debated at the 2021 AGM.

Feedback and Resolutions Meeting

Written feedback can be submitted to NSFM via info@nsfm.ca. The deadline to submit feedback is **October 1, 2021**.

If you did not receive the Zoom link for the Resolutions Meeting, please contact the email above.

Resolutions 2019/20-2022

As a result of the 2021 provincial elections, NSFM will be working with a new government on the priorities of our membership. As an organization, we have previously engaged with the PC Party of Nova Scotia when they held opposition party status. This included sharing information on the work of NSFM. Our focus will now turn to creating collaboration opportunities and sustaining advocacy on our resolutions.

A progress update on each of our top 5 priorities can be found below.

1. MUNICIPAL FUNDING

Current Progress:

NSFM has requested provincial support in the form of a **50/50 cost share** for all municipal projects required to comply with the Accessibility Act. We continue to work closely with the Accessibility Directorate to ensure our membership is consulted on emerging legislation and directives such as the Built Environment Standards.

At our Spring Conference, we asked the Minister of Municipal Affairs and party critics whether they would commit to providing municipalities with a **share of related tax revenue from the sale of Cannabis**. During the provincial election campaign, we posed the question again to party leaders. The PC Party of Nova Scotia indicated they will be renegotiating the federal Memorandum of Understanding with the province, and they would 'expect all parties to come to the table with their asks.'

The government has committed to **doubling the Municipal Financial Capacity Grant**, for one year, while a new MOU is established with municipalities. NSFM has requested that increased funding remain in place until the new MOU takes effect.

2. ROADS

Current Progress:

A provincial/municipal Roads Committee has been meeting since 2018. The two main outputs this year are a **Municipal-Provincial Roads Handbook** that will guide annual discussions between the Department of Transportation and Active Transit and relevant senior municipal staff on achieving efficiencies, and a **new funding proposal** to repurpose the current J-class cost-sharing formula. The funding proposal was presented by committee members to DMA and TAT in early April 2021.

3. CAPPED ASSESSMENT PROGRAM (CAP)

Current Progress:

The CAP is a significant issue for municipalities as it unfairly distorts the property tax system. NSFM will be reviewing and revising a **recently completed CAP-phase out proposal** to reflect the current circumstances of the Nova Scotia housing market. NSFM will be advocating to the new government for the **re-establishment of the All-Party CAP Committee** implement an alternative to CAP.

NSFM will also be engaging in a **communications strategy** to provide messaging to key target audiences on the benefits of alternatives to CAP.

4. MUNICIPAL MODERNIZATION

Current Progress:

Municipal Modernization is a broad concept that includes some of the following:

- Flexible funding from the province to allow for regional planning
- Modernizing the Municipal Government Act and the HRM Charter
- Allowing for virtual council meetings and other legislation that enables municipal decision-making.

In addition to the above, NSFM worked closely with DMA to ensure legislation regarding municipal **codes of conduct** was strengthened. Two NSFM Board members will be part of committee that will draft regulations around code of conduct for consultation with the membership.

5. EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY FOR PRINTED PAPER AND PACKAGING (EPR for PPP)

Current Update:

Together with the Municipal-Provincial Solid Waste Resource Priorities Working Group, NSFM delivered a formal EPR proposal to the Minister of Environment in June 2019.

An independent, third-party report on the efficiency and effectiveness of the solid waste resource management system in Nova Scotia, which included recommendations to bring an EPR model to Nova Scotia, was presented to the Minister of Environment in 2019. NSFM also continues participation on Divert NS Board.

With the new government, NSFM is committed to **ensuring a review of the extensive research and stakeholder engagement** that has previously been completed on EPR.

The previous government included EPR in the mandate letters of both the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and the Minister of Municipal Affairs. NSFM will be working with the new government to **ensure EPR is included in new mandate letters.**

Appendix A

What kind of issues can become resolutions?

NSFM policy provides guidance on what qualifies an issue to become a resolution:

- It's of major importance to a large number of municipalities
- The issue is correctly identified and well-researched, including a recommended solution in the form of a resolution.
- The issue is within the municipal mandate

How is a resolution proposed?

The resolutions process is as follows:

1. Resolutions can only be submitted Regions, Caucuses, or with the support of at least one-third of all municipalities.
2. The final opportunity to submit a resolution is within forty (40) days of the annual Fall Conference.
3. The NSFM Executive serves annually as the Resolutions Review Committee.
4. This NSFM Executive may also identify a resolution and will seek feedback from the membership via the Interim Resolutions Report.
5. The Interim Resolutions Report contains resolutions that have been identified, and/or approved by the Committee. The Report is forwarded to the membership in early September.
6. NSFM staff facilitates a meeting(s) with the membership to facilitate input and feedback on the Interim Resolution Report.
7. The membership will have an opportunity to review the Final Resolutions Report fourteen (14) days prior to the annual conference.
8. Members vote on proposed resolutions and statements of concern at the AGM.

