



**Municipal Affairs and Housing
Office of the Minister**

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May 31, 2020

Ms. Pam Mood
President, NSFM
VIA E-MAIL: communications@nsfm.ca

Dear President Mood:

As Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Premier has asked that I respond, on his behalf, to your e-mail of May 20, 2020, regarding the proceeding of municipal elections in October.

I agree that consultation between our organizations is of the utmost importance. As such, the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing (DMAH) has committed to formalizing a working group comprised of members from DMAH, the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM), the Association of Municipal Administrators of Nova Scotia (AMANS), and the Department of Health and Wellness, to assist municipalities in planning for an election during the current pandemic. The purpose of this working group is to provide expert advice on how to conduct a safe election in this environment. Amongst other issues, this group will be tasked with addressing the concerns you have raised in your letter.

Additionally, our Municipal Elections Officer is developing training materials for Returning Officers. We currently plan to offer three regional training sessions in mid-June. We will also be launching the *Local DecisioNS* program designed by Springtide Collective, which is designed to help candidates and their teams with resources relevant to campaigning. We are working to ensure that these materials take into account the various public health orders and respect the current rules regarding social distancing. This training will assist new candidates and incumbents as they look for new and innovative ways to engage with the public in this context.

We encourage anyone with questions with respect to the election planning process to contact us at our newly established email address: municipalelections@novascotia.ca.

During these unprecedented times, businesses, organizations and all levels of government have been exploring innovative solutions to overcome impediments resulting from the pandemic. We are confident that, if we all work together, municipalities will be able to conduct a safe, fair and democratic election in October.

Thank you for raising the concerns of your membership. We appreciate the hard work that your organization is doing to support municipalities across the Province and to bring their issues to the forefront.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chuck Porter".

Chuck Porter
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

c: Honourable Stephen McNeil, Premier (PNS-10320-R0H8F8 CRM:0049277)
Juanita Spencer, CEO, NSFM (jspencer@nsfm.ca)