

## NSFM APRIL 2026 BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING



**Date:** April 29, 2026

**Chair:** Mayor David Mitchell, NSFM President

On April 29, the NSFM Board of Directors met in Yarmouth, where it approved the organization's Strategic Plan, heard from leadership, and acted on items that affect every municipality in the province.

### NSFM STRATEGIC PLAN 2026–2030

The Board of Directors approved the NSFM Strategic Plan 2026–2030, NSFM's first Strategic Plan in many years. It sets the organization's direction for the next four years. The plan is built on five pillars:

#### STRATEGIC PILLARS

- Strengthen Advocacy
- Invest in Education, Training & Mentorship
- Expand Programs & Fund Administration
- Know & Reach Our Members
- Strengthen the Organization (foundational pillar)

The Plan is deliberately focused. It does not try to do everything. It identifies where NSFM can make the greatest difference for Nova Scotia's municipalities over the next four years, and where the organization is uniquely positioned to deliver value that no other organization in this province can.

The Plan was shaped by a comprehensive scan of peer organizations across Canada and beyond, a visioning exercise with the Board and Senior Management Team, and sustained collaboration among staff. It will be implemented through NSFM's annual Business and Operations Plan, which translates strategic directions into operational priorities each year.

### FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO

**From the President.** President David Mitchell reported on a busy quarter of provincial and federal engagement, including attendance at FCM Board meetings in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador; meetings with several Deputy Ministers; a meeting with Hon. Scott Armstrong, Minister of Justice; and continued engagement with the Province on a coordinated rollout of the fire services review. The President is preparing for the FCM Annual Conference and AGM in Edmonton in June.



## NSFM ON INTERNATIONAL STAGE

President Mitchell will represent FCM at a summit in France held immediately before the G7 Summit, bringing the voice of Canadian municipalities to international policy discussions.

**From the CEO.** CEO Juanita Spencer reported on attendance at the FCM Board meeting and Atlantic PTA meeting in St. John's, and at the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association (SUMA) Conference in Regina. The CEO noted the significant role of formal partnerships in SUMA's work and the high level of engagement between SUMA and the Saskatchewan provincial government. Other recent engagements include meetings with Nova Scotia Power, the Department of Growth and Development on housing, participation in the Environment and Climate Change Minister's Round Table on Environment and Sustainability, and continued meetings with senior officials at the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

## ACTIVE FILES AT THE BOARD TABLE

**Library funding remains a live advocacy file.** The Board received an update on regional library funding and reviewed materials supporting NSFMs' continued advocacy with the Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism, and Heritage. Of particular concern: the discontinuation of temporary bridge funding in the 2026–2027 provincial budget, and the continued financial pressure on municipalities, which support libraries through mandated contributions, additional operating and small capital contributions, voluntary supplementary contributions, and capital expenses. NSFMs will continue to press the case on members' behalf.

**Joint Rural Roads Committee.** NSFMs has confirmed four voting members on the new Joint Rural Roads Committee, which is expected to complete its work by the end of August 2026. The Committee will clarify responsibilities and make recommendations on the fair distribution of responsibilities and resources related to rural roads. NSFMs' participation ensures that municipal perspectives are represented at the table.

## A NEW OPPORTUNITY FOR MEMBERS: PREVENTION ACADEMY 2026

NSFM has been invited to participate in Cohort #2 of Prevention Academy Canada, a learning opportunity for elected municipal leaders. The program runs from June 2026 to March 2027, with no cost to participate.

The Board approved a motion to advertise, promote, and solicit expressions of interest from the membership for five elected leaders to participate in the program.

Councillor Christina Sappington, who participated in Cohort #1, provided comments on her experience with the program. Members interested in participating should watch for the expression of interest call through the Monday Memo and NSFMs' regular communication channels.

## PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

**Health & Benefits: \$14.7 million in premiums, no rate increase for 2026.** The Health & Benefits Committee reported on the 2026 rate renewal. There are no changes to health and dental rates for any of the six option classes in the program's main pool. The secondary pool's reserves have improved, with no participating

municipalities currently in a negative reserve position. Participation in the program continues to grow, and total premiums exceed \$14.7 million.

**Municipal Insurance Committee.** The Committee reviewed its broker survey, communications and professional development workplan, and the RFP debrief questionnaire.

**AMANS Report.** A full review of the Municipal Website Venture Program is underway. Education offerings continue, including procurement, leadership, harm reduction, and records management. The Marketing Levy Project is expected to begin in July. It was also noted that AMANS received NSFM's correspondence regarding the Municipal Wellness Program and expressed readiness to work with NSFM on a smooth transition.

## **GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS**

**Two appointments to the Municipal Insurance Committee.** The Board appointed Sarah Kucharski, Deputy CAO of the Municipality of the County of Annapolis, and Scott Fraser, Director of Corporate Services for the Municipality of Colchester, to serve on the Municipal Insurance Committee.

**Sponsorship and advertising policy.** The Board directed staff to develop policies, subject to Board approval, that protect NSFM's right to approve all advertising in its publications and sponsorships at its events, and that clarify NSFM does not necessarily share the viewpoints or positions of its sponsors.

**A new Board document management system.** The Board reviewed a new Microsoft Teams-based system designed to centralize Board agendas, correspondence, documents, minutes, and reference materials in one location. The system is intended to simplify how Board members access and work with meeting materials.

**NSFM Listserv: A new direct communication channel for members.** The Board received an overview of the NSFM listserv, a new tool for direct communication with the municipal sector, with no fee for members and no maintenance cost. The Executive Committee had previously endorsed the concept at its April 22 meeting and directed staff to proceed with implementation.

**Advisory Committees.** All five NSFM Advisory Committees — Climate Change, Equity & Community Wellbeing, Municipal Autonomy, Municipal Infrastructure, and Public Safety — reported on their recent work.

**Correspondence in brief.** The Board reviewed correspondence on library funding, fire services modernization, power rates, capped assessment, and several other live files. Notable among the items received: the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing approved three grants requested by NSFM for work on the Code of Conduct, mandatory orientation for newly elected councillors, and water conservation activities.

