

# NSFM Regional Meeting Minutes - Draft

South Shore – HRM Region

Thursday, April 18, 2019

1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

St. Margaret's Centre, 12 Westwood Blvd., Upper Tantallon, NS

## In Attendance:

**Town of Bridgewater:** Deputy Mayor Andrew Tanner

**Town of Lunenburg:** Deputy Mayor John McGee?

**Town of Mahone Bay:** Mayor David Devenne, CAO Dylan Heide

**District of Chester:** Councillor Danielle Barkhouse, Councillor Sharon Church, Councillor Tina Connors, CAO Dan McDougall

**District of Lunenburg:** Mayor Carolyn Bolivar-Getson, Councillor Eric Hustvedt, Councillor Martin Bell, Deputy Mayor Cathy Moore, Councillor Reid Arthur Whynot, CAO Kevin Malloy, Deputy CAO Alex Dumaresq

**District of Shelburne:** Warden Penny Smith,

**HRM:** Councillor Russ Walker, Councillor Dave Hendsbee

**Region of Queens:** Mayor David Dagley, Councillor Susan MacLeod, Councillor Jack Fancy, Deputy Mayor Heather Kelly

**NSFM:** Councillor Waye Mason (President) Juanita Spencer (Chief Executive Officer), Will Brooke (Policy Advisor), Debbie Nielsen (Infrastructure & Sustainability Officer)

---

### 1. Welcome from Host Unit

Councillor Russell Walker welcomed everyone to the meeting and to HRM.

### 2. Greetings from NSFM

NSFM President, Councillor Waye Mason, provided greetings on behalf of NSFM.

### 3. Priorities & Resolutions Process

Chief Executive Officer, Juanita Spencer, gave an overview of NSFM's revised resolutions process, which was introduced a few years ago. She noted that the process will continue to evolve as NSFM looks for opportunities to improve it. She also noted that NSFM is taking on a more active, advocacy approach to addressing important municipal issues.

NSFM staff provided the following updates on the five resolutions submitted to the Province in 2018:

1. **CAP:** Since the November Conference, NSFM, AMA, PVSC and members have formed a steering committee to strategically work towards a solution. Meetings have been held with the Minister of Municipal Affairs and his staff on several occasions, stakeholders, and preparations are in place to meet with the three provincial political caucuses.
2. **EPR:** After the November Conference the Province asked NSFM staff to consult Nova Scotian businesses on our EPR proposal. The consultation is now complete, and the production of the final proposal is anticipated in a few months' time.
3. **Municipal Funding:** The Province recently announced a new name for the Equalization Grant – Municipal Financial Capacity Grant. NSFM has made a submission in support of the change to legislation at Law Amendments. NSFM took the opportunity of coverage in the media to note that while this change in name provides clarity, our request for an increase in funding to the Municipal Financial Capacity Grant (of \$20M over three years) remains unaddressed.
4. **Municipal Modernization:** At the November Conference our members voted to request that the Province help facilitate municipal cooperation. \$578,000 has since been set aside in the 2019 provincial budget for a Municipal Innovation Program to support municipalities. While this is not an immense amount of money, we are taking this as a signal that the Province has heard us and understand that this is an issue for municipalities. There are no details on how this funding is to be used, but we are waiting on a meeting with DMA to see what they are thinking. The funds may be used to support pilot programs, or to document the Windsor/West Hants consolidation.
5. **Roads:** At the November conference it was hoped that a new funding agreement for roads would be in place by June 2019. A joint municipal-provincial roads committee is now underway. The committee has nearly finalized its work plan, and although a new funding agreement is part of that work plan, it is not anticipated that an agreement will be complete by this June. More updates will be provided on this as they become available.

NSFM staff also provided an update on the following Statements of Concern:

- Municipal Responsibilities
- Policing

- Surplus Schools
- Sustainability and Infrastructure Funding

#### 4. NSFM Updates

The agenda package included updates on NSFM initiatives, including the Gas Tax Fund and asset management planning in Nova Scotia.

#### 5. Round Table Discussion & Regional Issues

President Mason led a roundtable discussion on regional issues. Members in the room seemed to agree that the best course of action would be to keep working at the same five resolutions chosen in 2018 until they have been resolved. Comments from this discussion included:

- If a new and emerging issue comes up, it is important to identify it and consider adding it to the list to be voted on by NSFM's members.
- It is important to focus on current resolutions and try to resolve them in as timely a manner as possible.
- It is important to keep municipalities informed on progress with resolutions and recognize that they have an important role to play in the process.
- It is important to identify and prioritize other key resolutions, which could be bumped up to the top five as current ones become resolved.
- Two other important issues that need to be resolved to ensure the sustainability of municipalities are 1) broadband and 2) doctor recruitment. Even though there is funding at both the federal and provincial levels, these issues have not been resolved.

President Mason also spoke about NSFM's 1-year presidency term. The option of extending it to 2 years has been discussed in the past. However, at the time, there were concerns expressed that a 2-year term was not a viable option for 2 main reasons: 1) as the position is demanding, those acting as NSFM's president who also have other full-time commitments/jobs might need to take a significant amount of time off in order to fulfill the role of president, and 2) it would require a minimum commitment of 6 years on the NSFM's Board of Directors (2 years as caucus representative/chair, 2 years as VP and 2 years as president). President Mason suggested the option of changing one of the two member-at-large positions on FCM's Board of Directors to a NSFM VP position (currently there are four Nova Scotia representatives on FCM's Board: 2 members-at-large, 1 representative from Halifax and NSFM's president). Having the VP act as a table officer at FCM before taking over as NSFM's president would give them more time to learn about the workings of FCM's Board. This idea would have to be ratified by NSFM's members at its fall conference, as it would require a change in our bylaws. If successfully passed, it would then require a change in FCM's bylaws.

## Other Items Discussed

- The District of Shelburne has written to the Doctors Nova Scotia, College of Registered Nurses of Nova Scotia, Nova Scotia Nurses Union and Nurse Practitioners of Nova Scotia asking them to partner with the Municipality in seeking to have the Hospital Act changed to allow nurse practitioners to admit patients. Currently, they are only allowed to discharge patients. In the District of Shelburne's local hospital, the main reason for Emergency Department closure is the absence of a physician to admit patients. The District of Shelburne will send a letter to NSF's Board of Directors for consideration.
- To increase the chance of a municipality having access to a minister on a particular issue, it was suggested the municipality contact their deputy first and also reach out to their constituency office.
- Municipalities are impacted by issues that are not within their jurisdiction, such as Northern Pulp, hydraulic fracturing and aquaculture. Although municipalities are not necessarily subject experts on these complex issues, it is important to determine if/how to respond to them and the best approach to raise/address them with the Province.

## 6. Evaluation and Adjournment

Following completion of evaluation forms, the meeting adjourned at 3:33 pm.