

Resolutions 2017

The UNSM has passed 6 Resolutions for the 2017 year. These resolution topics include:

1. CAP Assessment Program
2. Municipal Funding Formula
3. Connectivity and High Speed Internet
4. Doctor Recruitment
5. Roads
6. PVSC Governance

Resolution 1

CAPPED ASSESSMENT PROGRAM (CAP) (PASSED)

WHEREAS the CAP was introduced by the province in 2005 to protect property owners from dramatically rising assessments, particularly along waterfront areas; and

WHEREAS concerns were raised regarding long standing property owners who were struggling to pay their property taxes; and

WHEREAS the cap went from 15 per cent, when first introduced, to the Consumer Price Index, resulting in the majority of residential properties being capped; and

WHEREAS this has resulted in significant variations in property taxes for similar houses on the same street, which undermines the key principles of fair market taxation; and

WHEREAS the cap over time can negatively impact certain segments of the population including seniors who may be reluctant to downsize for fear of paying more property taxes on an uncapped property and first-time home buyers who are unable to afford the taxes once the cap is removed; and

WHEREAS this can have a negative impact on economic development in our communities when people refrain from buying new homes; and

WHEREAS it is no longer clear if the program is helping those who need it the most; and

WHEREAS many home owners perceive they are benefitting from the cap when in fact they may be paying higher taxes than they would without the cap due to a lower tax rate; and

WHEREAS municipalities do not want to see people forced out of their homes due to their inability to pay their property taxes and recognize the need for adequate tax relief programs to ensure this does not happen should the CAP be phased out or eliminated; and

WHEREAS there are better alternatives available;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the UNSM write the Province requesting the formation of a municipal-provincial committee who would review the issues associated with the CAP and make recommendations on proposed solutions.

Issue Identification:

Property values in the late 1990's and early 2000's were rising dramatically, especially waterfront properties. Concerns were raised that long-standing property

owners were no longer able to pay their property taxes. The CAP was legislated by the province ten years ago, as a means to protect these home owners. Since then, the program has resulted in variations in property taxes for similar houses on the same street. This breaks one of the principles of fair taxation. To raise the same level of revenue with the CAP, it is clear that for every dollar one taxpayer saves, another taxpayer pays more. We are hearing stories of young families not being able to afford the property tax when buying their first home, seniors not able to downsize without paying more in property taxes on the smaller home, and economic development being stymied as people refrain from buying new homes. It is not clear if the program is helping those who need it the most. A review of the program is needed to explore the issues and to find better solutions.

Background Information:

Property tax is the primary source of municipal revenues. Most academics point to a market based assessment as the fairest system. Market values reflect government services and amenities in the area. Those with higher valued homes should pay more in property taxes than those with lower values. The CAP distorts the market based system.

It is not clear if the current program is helping those who need it most. The program benefits those who stay in their homes for a longer period of time, and those whose assessments are rising more rapidly. Depending on market conditions, there is some analysis that suggests the ones with higher valued homes are benefitting more than those of lower value homes.

Public understanding of the issue is complicated. Many perceive they are benefitting but in actuality are paying more in taxes than they would without the CAP. There is general distrust with government among the public, causing some to conclude the removal of the CAP is simply a means for municipalities to raise revenues.

Impact on Municipalities:

Municipalities set their tax rates to raise revenues needed to provide services communities want. The difference between market assessed values and capped values varies depending on the market conditions in the municipality. The impact on new housing developments is not clear, but there are stories about new homes not being built. There are stories about people not moving into more suitable housing because the new property taxes are higher than what they are paying now – particularly with seniors and young families. There are also stories about some municipalities not raising tax rates, even though the revenues are needed, because they know the impact on some taxpayers will be harsher than it would be if there was no CAP. Municipalities do not want to see people forced out of their homes from their inability to pay property taxes. To address this, there would need to be programs in place to ensure this does not happen should the CAP be phased out or eliminated.

As the duration of the program lengthens, the impacts increase and become more

complicated to resolve. This needs to be dealt with now.

Proposed Solution:

UNSM has raised this issue with the province consistently over the last several years. Because the CAP was introduced by an all-party committee of the legislature, UNSM wrote to the province two years ago requesting an all-party committee review the program. The UNSM received a letter from the Minister at that time agreeing to the all-party committee. Further discussions with the province revealed challenges with this approach. UNSM's plea to the province was to form a working committee to review the program.

There are at least a few possible solutions that need to be explored:

- Complete phasing out over a period of 8-10 years (this was done successfully with the business occupancy tax), with a new tax relief program for low income property owners
- Applying the CAP only to situations where increases in property values are significant (e.g. over 15%), and allowing time for these higher property values to be phased in
- Providing municipalities with more tools to assist those struggling to pay their property taxes, and letting municipalities choose how they want to handle it.

At this time, UNSM should not recommend one solution, but should encourage the review to explore and consult on the appropriate solution. Other interested parties should also be consulted.

UNSM has recently written to the province once again requesting a review of the program.

Response from:
Department of Municipal Affairs

RESPONSE:

The Department of Municipal Affairs (DMA) acknowledges the request to move to a working committee on the CAP rather than an all-party committee and will take the request under advisement as we set our priorities for the coming fiscal year.

A formal review of, and possible changes to, the CAP Program requires extensive research and policy work. Moreover, extensive public education would be necessary to ensure property taxpayers are aware of any potential impacts a change in the CAP program would have on property tax bills.

DMA and the UNSM both agree that, with the property taxpayer at the centre of our focus, any phase-out approach or removal of the CAP would require corresponding commitments from municipalities on potential changes to tax rates, as well as low-income/vulnerable sector relief programs, to ensure taxpayer protection.

DMA recognizes the UNSM's ongoing commitment to educating the public on the impacts of the CAP and hopes this commitment will continue moving forward.

Resolution 2

MUNICIPAL FUNDING FORMULA (PASSED)

WHEREAS the current operating grant has been frozen for a number of years; and

WHEREAS the 2014 Fiscal Review Report identified that the current provincial operating grant was not assisting those municipalities who need it most in terms of being able to provide core services with a reasonable tax burden; and

WHEREAS the Fiscal Review Committee explored alternative formulas but recognized that any change in the formula would create “winners and losers;” and

WHEREAS any change in the current formula needs to take into consideration increasing the viability of municipalities through such mechanisms as structural change, infrastructure funding, and shared service delivery; and

WHEREAS other factors need to be considered including declining and/or aging infrastructure and population, economic growth, varying levels of service and public expectations;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the UNSM write the province requesting the formation of a working group consisting of members from UNSM, AMANS and the Department of Municipal Affairs who would, in consultation with municipalities, review the challenges with the existing formulas, the major financial needs of the municipalities, and propose solutions to support a clear policy objective of ensuring all Nova Scotians pay a reasonable tax for reasonable municipal services.

Issue Identification:

The Fiscal Review report pointed out that the current provincial operating grant was questionable in terms of helping home owners who need it the most and those municipalities struggling to provide core services with a reasonable tax burden. This issue has not been resolved, and the operating grant has been frozen for a number of years.

Background Information:

This is a complex issue. There is evidence to suggest the current formula is unfair and the funding level for the program insufficient. The Fiscal Review committee explored a number of alternative formulas, but recognized that any

change in the formula would create “winners and losers.” The formula needs to be looked at in the context of other means of increasing the viability of municipalities, including structural change, infrastructure funding and shared service delivery. As well, it needs to be looked at in the context of declining and/or aging populations, economic growth, varying levels of service, and public expectations.

Impact on Municipalities:

The current formula leads to some municipalities experiencing further and further deterioration in the ability to provide the services necessary for their residents. It means some are not able to upgrade, replace or add new infrastructure. It means some will find it difficult to meet new regulations. It means some taxpayers are paying a larger proportion of their incomes on municipal services than others. It means some taxpayers could be paying less than they should for municipal services. It means some municipalities may be spending more on services than they would if they were not receiving provincial funding.

Changing the formula is challenging as some may receive less than they are currently. There needs to be sufficient transition support, and other financial programs may be able to assist. Otherwise the municipality would have to recoup the monies elsewhere, find new efficiencies or decrease services. Again, not an easy task.

There are also questions about municipal structure. For some services, economies of scale can be realized, which would reduce the tax burden on property owners. These economies of scale could be achieved through structural change or shared service delivery. Any funding program should not serve as a disincentive to achieving these economies of scale, nor to hindering structural change.

Proposed Solution:

The Fiscal Review Committee recommended further consultation with municipalities on the provincial operating grants program. The consultations should be undertaken with focus on the purpose of the program, the options for achieving the purpose, and should recognize the overall needs of municipalities and their abilities to fulfill their responsibilities and community expectations.

Response from:
Department of Municipal Affairs

RESPONSE:

The Department of Municipal Affairs recognizes the need for further consultation

with municipalities on the provincial operating grants program.

DMA is committed to working collaboratively with our partners at the UNSM and AMANS in pursuit of a clear and effective funding structure for operating grants that supports shared municipal and provincial priorities.

Resolution 3

CONNECTIVITY AND HIGH-SPEED INTERNET (PASSED)

WHEREAS access to cell phones and high-speed internet are essential services in today's world; and

WHEREAS the private sector business model does not ensure all communities have adequate access to appropriate services, which impact economic development, education and health outcomes; and

WHEREAS there does not appear to be a province-wide strategy to provide adequate connectivity; and

WHEREAS many municipalities, concerned about the viability of their communities, are being asked to provide solutions;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that UNSM:

- Request that the province release a province-wide strategy with timelines and a funding plan to ensure all communities are able to access high-speed internet connections to support economic development, education and health outcomes
- Request that the province collaborate with municipalities to identify the appropriate role for municipalities to support solutions to the connectivity issues in their communities
- Host a workshop to help municipalities understand the provincial strategy, the role municipalities are and could be playing to ensure their communities are connected and not disadvantaged due to their connectivity challenges
- Write to the federal government requesting stable, multi-year funding to ensure all Nova Scotia municipalities have access to connectivity and high-speed internet.

Issue Identification:

Access to fast internet speeds in rural Nova Scotia is problematic and inconsistent across the province. In today's world instant communication via Internet connectivity is essential to promote business development, tourism, and education. It is also an essential service required to attract and retain residents and businesses to rural communities.

Background Information:

Rural high-speed internet was identified by the UNSM membership as a top priority over the past year. In 2016, the UNSM by resolution requested that the Province continue to work with the UNSM and municipalities to ensure high quality and affordable rural broadband across the province and to support innovative projects with municipalities and community groups.

While the Province is in the process of developing a strategy to address this issue, municipalities need access to better broadband speeds now. Although broadband is not a municipal responsibility, a number of municipalities have recognized their communities' concerns and are working together to provide their own broadband solutions. While many of these strategies may prove successful, in the absence of a provincial strategy, it may result in different and inconsistent networks across the province.

Other municipalities, also sensitive to the needs of their communities, have considered the issue and are deliberately choosing not to become involved.

Impact on Municipalities:

Rural municipalities with weak Internet connectivity will be unable to attract or retain residents and businesses to their local communities. This should be considered an essential service necessary in promoting vibrant and prosperous communities. However, the implications of municipalities becoming involved in the solution needs to be clearly understood. The province has indicated it is taking a leadership role in this issue and is developing a strategy.

Proposed Solution:

The province is working on a province-wide strategy but has not yet been released. It is important municipalities understand what the province is willing to do and, equally important, what they are not willing to do. In the meantime, municipalities are being pressured by their citizens to solve the problem, and most municipalities do not have the resources or expertise to do so. Municipalities need to be able to assure their citizens the issue will be resolved.

It is recommended that UNSM organize a one-day municipal workshop on rural broadband to discuss the role municipalities could or should play in providing internet service, the various municipal strategies already taking place and the challenges in providing consistent and high- quality Internet access across the province. The session should include municipalities who have chosen not to participate in the solution and to share their concerns. Representatives from the Province would also be invited to provide an update on their strategy. Other expertise may be asked to present.

Cell phone coverage also remains an issue.

Response from:
Department of Business

RESPONSE:

The Department of Business (DoB) is committed to ensuring more communities and businesses have access to better Internet service. To accomplish this, DoB is working with partners to develop a long-term strategy to improve Internet infrastructure and service.

For the longer-term strategy, the project team is mapping existing infrastructure, identifying Internet bandwidth demand and gaps, developing costing models, and providing models to improve and manage rural internet service in Nova Scotia. Engagement sessions were held throughout the Province with municipalities to help inform this process, and there will be further opportunity for municipal input throughout the first quarter of 2018.

While this work is underway, in the near term we are working with partners to support the implementation of local solutions.

In the Fall of 2016, DoB launched the Municipal and Community Group Rural High-Speed Internet Funding Program and is taking steps to improve service in the shorter term. This program is helping local groups partner with Internet service providers to make immediate improvements to communities across Nova Scotia. There was a strong response to this program and successful projects are underway.

DoB also issued a Request for Information to Internet service providers seeking solutions to improve rural Internet connections in the shorter term. The response was positive. We are currently reviewing this initiative to align with the federal Connect to Innovate program before confirming next steps.

Feedback on the Connect to Innovate and CRTC funding has been provided on behalf of the Province indicating that the funds are appreciated, but not sufficient. We will continue to work with the Federal Government as a strategic partner to help further progress for Nova Scotia.

Government recognizes that improving high-speed Internet service in rural areas will take time and ongoing investment. The approach we are taking will ensure that we have a long-term, sustainable plan that will meet future needs, while also creating more opportunities to improve service now and taking full advantage of the support available to Nova Scotia through federal Internet programs.

Resolution 4

DOCTOR RECRUITMENT RESOLUTION (PASSED)

WHEREAS access to primary health care is essential for communities to be viable; and

WHEREAS municipal officials are hearing constantly from citizens unable to find a family doctor, or suffering long wait times for necessary diagnosis and treatment; and

WHEREAS municipalities are willing to work with the province to attract and retain physicians;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that UNSM:

- Ask the province to clarify and support municipal involvement in attracting and retaining physicians
- Host a one-day workshop to identify what municipalities can do to support recruitment efforts.

Issue Identification:

Without family doctors, communities are less attractive as places to live, work and play, and may result in out-migration of residents. In many areas of the province there is a shortage of both family doctors and specialists. As doctors leave communities, replacements are not automatically found.

Background Information:

The issue of too few doctors has been a challenge over the last number of years, beginning before the province moved to consolidate regional health districts into two. The challenge of attracting and retaining doctors is a not unique to Nova Scotia, and the province recently announced changes in how it will work to establish more doctors in communities.

Healthcare is a primary provincial responsibility and is accountable for their results. The Province has recognized it does not have the right mix of family doctors and specialists, and believes the geographic distribution is uneven and does not align with population need. They have been attempting to address this, but problems remain.

Municipalities do not have expertise in the health care system, and determining the best action to attract and retain doctors is complicated. Physicians are looking for work/life balance and need realistic healthy call

schedules, access to their peers and to specialists. A presentation by the NS Health Authority at the UNSM Spring Workshop identified a number of steps being taken. The province has a strategy being refined, including incentive programs such as site visits, relocation allowances, tuition relief, bursaries, debt assistance programs, etc. Work is underway with Dalhousie, Quebec, UK, Ireland, along with other marketing initiatives.

The NSHA presentation also provided a number of suggestions as to how municipalities could support doctor recruitment and retention such as promoting the reasons to live and work here; providing community mentorships; and assisting spouses and children in feeling welcome. Some municipalities have been actively recruiting doctors for their areas; some have established clinics for them to work in.

Impact on Municipalities:

This is a major issue for many municipalities, if not all, and for some it is the most critical issue. Without access to adequate health care, people will not remain in communities. Full service health care in every community is not a practical goal; a balance will need to be struck.

The Region of Queens has submitted the following Statement of Municipal Concern.

Region of Queens Municipality Statement of Community Concern to UNSM regarding Doctor Shortage and Recruitment

Residents of the Region of Queens are served by the Queens General Hospital, an acute care community hospital with a 22-bed combined Medical and Surgical Unit as well as a Day Surgery Unit. It also includes an integrated Collaborative Care Centre. The North Queens Medical Centre in Caledonia serves the health needs of citizens in North Queens and surrounding areas, providing accessible primary care services in a Collaborative Care setting. While existing doctors are providing a high level of medical care in the Region of Queens, in October of 2017 there is presently a shortage of two doctors in South Queens, a pending retirement which will require two additional doctors in South Queens, and a potential future retirement in North Queens which will result in one additional doctor vacancy.

Visitors to the outpatients/emergency department at Queens General Hospital are presently encountering longer wait times due to several factors. The physician shortage has required residents without a family doctor to visit outpatients for prescription renewal needs, as well as their regular medical care. Numerous outpatient/emergency closures at Roseway Hospital in Shelburne has caused Shelburne residents to choose Yarmouth or Liverpool for health care, with Liverpool being closer to many Shelburne County

citizens. Bridgewater is a busy hospital, and some Lunenburg County patients also choose to visit Queens General for faster service.

This heavy work load is taxing all remaining doctors in Queens. Nurse Practitioners may help ease some of the burden, as would long-range planning for future anticipated physician vacancies.

The Region of Queens is privileged to have the Queens General Hospital Foundation, which was created in 1988, supporting the Queens General Hospital and community health organizations within Queens County. The Foundation is comprised of medical practitioners, local business individuals, and citizens who share a passion for high quality health care being provided in the Region of Queens. They are a Charitable Foundation and were a major funder of the modernization of Queens General Hospital, which was completed in 2014, by providing over \$7 million. The long list of contributions by the Foundation over the years to purchase medically related equipment has been significant.

Since inception, this Foundation has recruited doctors to Queens with much success. The Foundation has a great working relationship with all health-related providers in Queens. Members of this Foundation have the expertise, funding, and the ambition to recruit doctors to the Region of Queens. They are also willing to work collaboratively with the Nova Scotia Health Authority to accomplish success in recruiting good doctors to locate in the Region of Queens; however, time is of the essence to mitigate present and future physician shortages.

The Region of Queens is also supportive of this collaborative effort being embraced by the UNSM and the Nova Scotia Health Authority at the earliest opportunity.

Proposed Solution:

The prime responsibility for this remains with the province. Municipal officials are constantly hearing from citizens about the problems with the current system. Municipal officials need to add their collective voice to impress upon the province that more needs to be done.

Municipalities may play a role in physician recruitment. They need to understand what the province is doing and to explore how best to support recruitment and retention. Municipalities are willing to work on solutions with the province to ensure access to health care is sufficient. UNSM could hold a one-day workshop, inviting experts in health care and physician recruitment to identify what municipalities could do to support recruitment efforts. UNSM would seek to partner with organizations such as Doctors Nova Scotia, and individuals

Response from:
Department of Health and Wellness

RESPONSE:

Physician recruitment and retention is a priority for government and for the Nova Scotia Health Authority and IWK. In cooperation with our partners, the Department of Health and Wellness (DHW) is making every effort to attract and retain more doctors in communities across the Province. We are seeing progress -- more than 100 doctors have been hired since April 2017, and work continues to keep that number growing.

Existing incentive programs are helping to attract and retain new doctors, and we are reviewing all of these programs to ensure they are as efficient and effective as possible.

While the health authorities have the formal responsibility for recruitment, we can all play a role in bringing doctors to our Province, particularly at the community level. Cape Breton, Digby and Guysborough are good examples of how communities have come together to support recruitment efforts and showcase what their areas have to offer.

Resolution 5

ROADS (PASSED)

WHEREAS the October 1994 Provincial-Municipal Service Exchange agreement determined how roads were to be funded between municipalities and the province; and

WHEREAS there are a number of complicated issues arising from this arrangement, including different impacts on towns and rural municipalities; and

WHEREAS the Fiscal Review recommendations around roads did not result in a consensus on how to resolve these issues, and

WHEREAS there does not appear to be a strategic approach to the construction and maintenance of the road infrastructure, which is essential to economic development and continued viability of communities;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the UNSM request that the province work with municipalities to clarify the existing funding arrangements for roads compared to the service exchange agreement and to identify options for ensuring an appropriate road network throughout the province with appropriate funding.

Issue Identification:

The Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal is approaching rural municipalities to cost-share roads, as it struggles to maintain road infrastructure throughout the province. At the same time, towns are struggling to maintain their roads, for which they pay the full cost. There is a perception that the department is not following the Service Exchange agreement. In the meantime, the state of roads throughout the province is deteriorating.

Background Information:

Service Exchange specified “J” Class roads and suburban subdivision roads would be transferred to rural municipalities, and that rural municipalities would pay a fee per km of local road, to be adjusted by CPI each year. The amount of the fee in 2014 paid by rural municipalities was \$3.7 million, and does not go to TIR directly. The number of kms used to calculate the fee was fixed. Local roads built after April 1, 1995, are maintained by the rural municipality.

Local roads constructed pre-April 1, 1995 are maintained by the province. The

amount TIR spent to maintain local roads in rural municipalities in 2014 was \$86 million. TIR is responsible for 81% of the local roads in the province. Questions have been raised about TIR's cost-sharing program, and about the priorities assigned to rebuild roads and maintenance work. The perception is that there has been a change in TIR's approach.

Towns own and maintain all the roads within their boundaries, some 827 kms of local roads. In addition, there are 251 kms of collector and arterial roads which towns maintain. Service Exchange also noted the province should contribute to arterial and collector roads in urban areas, recognizing they are dual purpose roads for local access and through traffic, however there is currently no provincial grants to towns to offset maintenance costs.

Both towns and rural municipalities cost share on the surface components of bridges, but TIR is responsible for all the substructure components.

Fiscal Review raised the road issue, explored some options and posed a solution that saw rural municipalities increase the amount they were paying to the province for rural roads. Reaction was mixed, and depended on other aspects of Fiscal Review being implemented. The issue is complicated, as the current situation was negotiated under Service Exchange many years ago. Many aspects of Service Exchange have now changed.

Impact on Municipalities:

Roads are essential to ensure the flow of people and goods. The current state of the roads is placing increasing pressure on the province and municipalities.

Proposed Solution:

There is a need for discussion between TIR, Municipal Affairs and municipalities on the issue of roads. It is clear the current arrangement is presenting challenges to all, and finding a solution without increased funding is a challenge.

Response from:

Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal

RESPONSE:

The Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal (TIR) has begun talks with the UNSM regarding this topic. TIR will create a working group to address road concerns from both UNSM and TIR. TIR will be able to give a more fulsome update once these meetings are underway.

PVSC GOVERNANCE CHANGES: MOTION TO SUPPORT

Issue Identification:

Challenges have emerged around the governance of the Property Valuation Services Corporation (PVSC). The legislation establishing the PVSC lays out requirements for Board composition that have created problems for the organization. In particular, the legislation requires elected and staff membership from each of the three municipal caucuses, and despite a number of requests, the ability to recruit members has been difficult and time consuming. The election cycle has further exacerbated the issue. More flexibility in appointing board members is required.

Since these changes require legislative changes, a full review of the PVSC governance model was undertaken, which has identified additional changes that would enhance PVSC's ability to provide services to municipalities.

The Department of Municipal Affairs is willing to support changes in legislation if the majority of municipalities agrees with the suggested changes.

Background Information:

The PVSC was previously a department within the provincial government. When the province decided to have municipalities pay for assessment services, the PVSC was established as a not-for-profit entity to provide assessment and related property information services for municipalities and the province. It is responsible for the assessment of all properties that are required under the Assessment Act to be assessed. Having assessments undertaken independent from municipal councils, in a consistent and fair manner across the province, ensures the integrity of the municipal property tax system.

Under the current Act, municipalities are identified as members of the Corporation, but there is no further wording in the Act as to the role of municipalities nor the accountability of PVSC to municipalities, other than a requirement to submit an annual report at the UNSM annual meeting. The UNSM is required to appoint members to the Board, specifically two elected members and one administrative person from each of the rural, regional and town caucuses. Following the last municipal election, four PVSC Board members needed to be replaced; in the interim, the ability for the PVSC Board to reach quorum was difficult. To avoid this issue in the future, a review of the PVSC governance was undertaken and a number of recommendations requiring legislative change have been identified.

Impact on Municipalities

The recommended changes to the PVSC governance model will clarify and protect the municipal interests in ensuring quality, independent assessment services, and provide the necessary flexibility to ensure the PVSC Board is able to function appropriately. An MOU between PVSC and UNSM will spell out responsibilities and accountabilities in ensuring

municipal needs are addressed by the PVSC. In addition, PVSC would work with each municipality to formalize an agreement regarding PVSC services to the municipality.

Proposed Solution:

The recommended governance changes are being proposed:

- All Board members would be appointed by an independent recruitment and appointment committee comprised of the chair/president and vice-chair/vice president of UNSM, AMANS and PVSC. Recruitment would be based on competencies and municipal experience (could be current or past elected or administrative), not on current municipal caucus structure. Should an elected board member or a current municipal administrator cease to be so, they could remain on the Board for a period up to six months while a replacement was recruited.
- The Board would include 9-11 members; likely 5-6 directors with municipal experience, and 4-5 independent members. At least 3 will be currently serving municipal elected officials. Consideration would be given to diversity, gender, and geography. Competencies would align with the PVSC strategic plan.
- The CEO of PVSC and the Executive Director of UNSM would both be ex-officio, non-voting members.
- Length of term of any director would be 4 years, with the possibility of re-appointment. The maximum length of time one could serve on the Board would be 8 consecutive years.

An accountability framework would be established through an MOU between PVSC, UNSM and AMANS, plus service level agreements with each municipality to:

- Define the relationship between PVSC and municipalities
- Create more awareness and confidence about maintaining high service levels
- Recognize the UNSM and municipalities as a significant stakeholder group
- Formalize communication and reporting, and provide a mechanism through which municipalities could express concerns

MOTION: PVSC GOVERNANCE CHANGES

That the proposed changes to the PVSC Governance model, as described in this document, be forwarded to the Province of Nova Scotia with a request to amend the legislation to achieve the intended changes.