

NOVA SCOTIA FEDERATION
OF MUNICIPALITIES

NSFM 2022 Organizational Change Outline

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Opening Explanation

On November 30th and December 1st, the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM) Board of Directors met to participate in a facilitated discussion. The purpose of this discussion was to reflect on how NSFM can more effectively accomplish its core goals. The following is an outline of the organizational changes that the Board developed by consensus in this facilitated session. This outline includes the purpose of these changes and next steps for NSFM staff.

A vote by the members on the proposed changes is expected to take place in late May/early June, prior to the start of the current resolution process. A vote would take place in a Special Meeting of the Members. A timeline graphic is provided in Appendix A.

This outline is meant to ensure that members are sufficiently informed so that they can be part of this change and participate in the new organizational structure.

This outline is also meant to continue the process of gathering feedback on these proposed changes from members. Membership feedback is currently being gathered and accounted for in staff recommendations. **To submit feedback, please email info@nsfm.ca.**

Creation of Guiding Principles

Purpose: The Board agreed that the development of Guiding Principles will help to establish a common understanding of what NSFM stands for. Guiding Principles will clarify the values and priorities of NSFM for the membership, other orders of government, the general public, and assist in internal decisions.

Tentatively suggested Guiding Principles include Equity & Inclusion, Transparency & Accountability, Defending Municipal Autonomy, Sustainability & Responding to Climate Change, and Planning.

Next steps: Guiding Principles need to be selected and established. NSFM staff will propose Guiding Principles to the Board following a review of the principles that were discussed in the facilitated session and a review of other organizations for insights.

Goal: To clearly establish the priority values of our organization.

Recognition of Municipal Units as Members

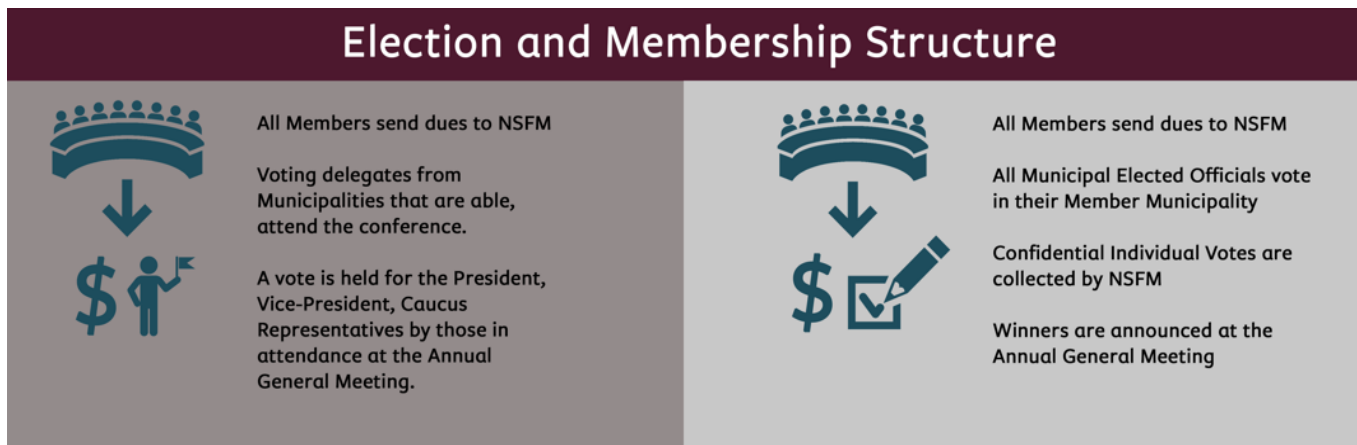
Purpose: The Board agreed that recognizing municipal units as members will lead to better coordination and consistency regarding where NSFM stands on specific issues and priorities. Municipal Units are already counted as Member Units in the existing by-laws, but individual elected officials are often treated as though they are the members themselves. This proposed change will reaffirm that all municipal units, and not individual councillors, mayors, or wardens, are the membership of NSFM.

However, a role for individuals will be maintained for the purpose of electing representatives to the NSFM Board of Directors. **(See Infographic #1)** The voting process will be further explained in the section on the New Election Process.

Next steps: NSFM staff will identify all by-law and policy amendments that are necessary to reaffirm municipal units as members of NSFM and compile them as an omnibus motion to be discussed by the membership. Staff will develop clear guides on how new procedures will work so that members are fully informed and ready to take part.

Goal: To engage with our entire membership more effectively.

Infographic #1: Current Process (left) and Proposed Process (right)



Departure from Caucuses

Purpose: Upon reviewing the caucus structure in terms of membership engagement and building relationships between them, the Board agreed that NSFM can do better. The more unified NSFM is, the stronger and more effective our voice is in calling for change. Caucuses can have a silo effect that divides the membership more than it brings us together and creates some unnecessary distinctions that do not support collaboration on commonly felt issues.

Moving away from our current caucus structure will have implication for representation on the Board. Representation of members across the province will be ensured by the creation of regional electoral boundaries (see next section). Responsiveness to membership concerns from all municipal unit types will be supported by the creation of Advisory Committees on Areas of Municipal Interest (see section further below).

Next steps: NSFM staff will identify all necessary by-law and policy amendments and prepare them as motions to be presented to the membership.

Goal: To foster collaboration between all municipal unit types and build collective capacity.

New Election Process

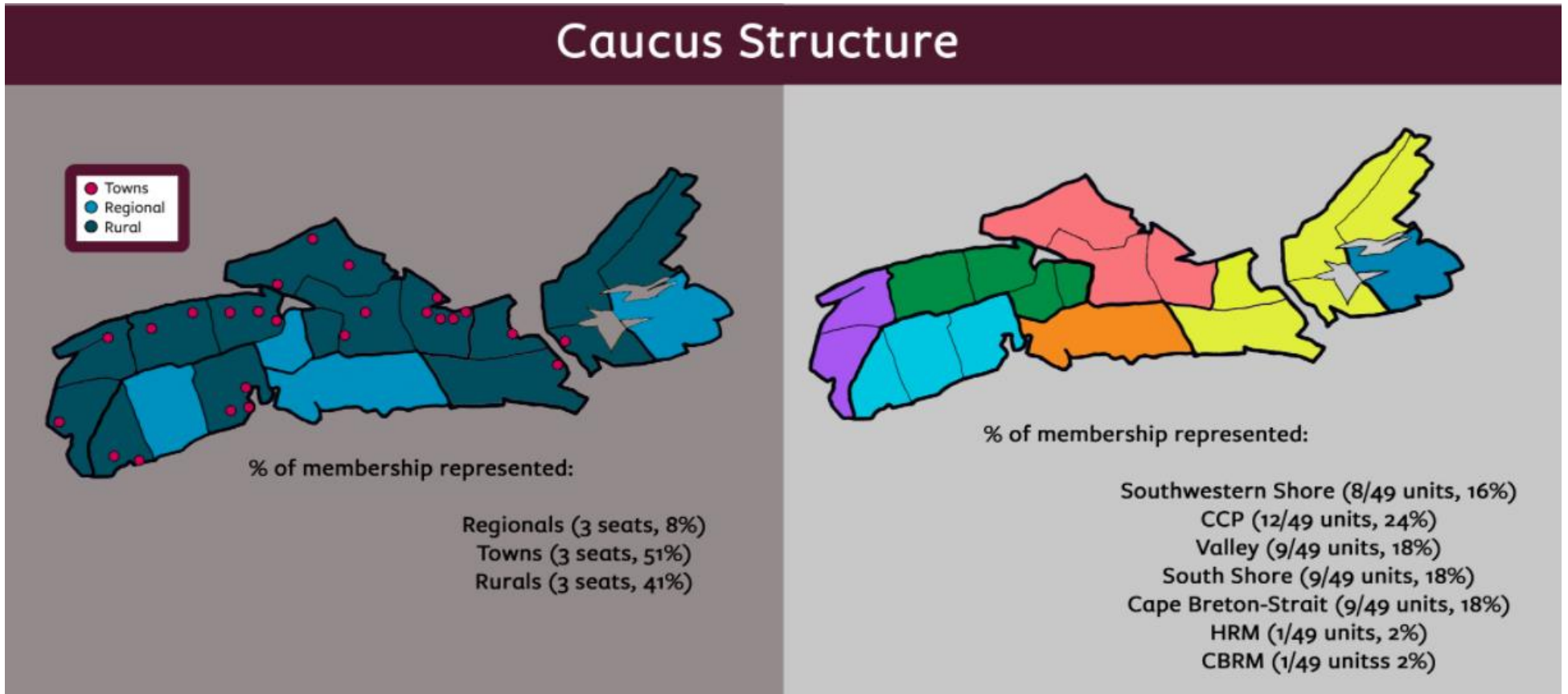
Purpose: The Board is proposing the creation of regional electoral boundaries to ensure better representation of members across the province on the NSFM Board (**See Infographics #2 and #3**). As shown in Infographics #2, each regional group features between 16%-24% of the membership.

The Board also agreed that HRM and CBRM should be guaranteed seats on the Board of Directors. The Board felt that this was appropriate since HRM contributes approximately 33% of the dues that finance NSFM, and CBRM similarly contributes a large amount of our dues relative to other members.

Next steps: Based on feedback, NSFM staff are reviewing NSFM's existing regional boundaries. Staff will identify all necessary by-law and policy changes and compile them as motions. Staff will also outline the new procedure for elections in a brief report to ensure members are ready to participate.

Goal: To ensure province-wide representation on the Board of Directors.

Infographic #2: Current Caucuses (left) and Proposed Regions (right)



Infographic #3: Current Board Structure (left) and Proposed Board Structure (right)

Board Layout

President	Past President	Towns Caucus Chair	Towns Caucus Rep	Regional Caucus Rep	Rural Caucus Rep	
Vice President	Rural Caucus Chair	Regional Caucus Chair	Towns Caucus Rep	Regional Caucus Rep	Rural Caucus Rep	AMANS Rep

Board Composition: Election of President and Vice-President currently conducted at-large at annual general meeting.

President	Valley	Southwestern Shore	South Shore	CCP	Cape Breton Strait	HRM	AMANS Rep	Past President
Vice President	Valley	Southwestern Shore	South Shore	CCP	Cape Breton Strait	HRM	CBRM	

Board Composition: Election of President and Vice-President will be held at-large, based on votes from individual elected officials.

Making Progress Beyond Resolutions

Purpose: The Board agreed that fixed resolutions do not support effective advocacy and do not provide a comprehensive measure of progress. While resolutions have been used to develop clear and commonly held priorities with the input of our membership, there are other ways that this can be done. Progress has been made on each of the existing resolutions, however, a significant amount of other work is not unaccounted for. There are numerous opportunities to represent and support our members based on emergent issues or priorities expressed by the Province. By removing Resolutions as the process by which NSFM prioritizes advocacy, we will be better situated, and mandated, to respond to these issues and opportunities. Therefore, establishing NSFM priorities with static resolutions should be rethought.

The Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) discontinued the practice of being a resolution-driven organization over ten years ago for similar reasons.

Current resolutions will be assigned to an advisory committee along with all other issues that NSFM is working on. While some may not remain a priority area of focus at this time, they will be retained for future use when it is determined we can make meaningful progress.

Resolutions are not mentioned in our by-laws, but current policy states that the process for developing the 2022-2025 Resolutions is to begin in June. The current resolutions are up for review and so this is an advantageous and appropriate time to rethink this process.

Next steps: This change would require the Resolutions Policy to be repealed.

Goals: To better align the work and resources of NSFM to be most effective in representing our members.

Standing Advisory Committees and Statements of Municipal Interest

Purpose: The Board is proposing standing advisory committees to respond to membership concerns (e.g.: Public Safety and Community Wellness, Environment and Climate Change, Infrastructure, Municipal Finance). Each committee will develop and be guided by Statements of Municipal Interest that outline goals and necessary improvements from the municipal perspective regarding their respective areas. Once these advisory committees are struck, they will determine the best course of action for issues brought forward by the membership.

As shown in **Infographic #4**, members will be able to send requests for support or investigation of an issue to NSFM. Once received, the Board or staff will delegate membership requests to the appropriate advisory committee. The Board will also consider emerging issues that do not fit under any of the existing categories and strike ad hoc committees if necessary.

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The appropriate advisory committee will investigate the issue and produce a response including findings and recommendations. There are three possible responses that can result from the advisory committee review: 1) the issue will become an ongoing priority of NSFM, 2) the issue will continue to be monitored by the advisory committee, and 3) the issue is found to be unique to that specific member and not a priority for NSFM. Responses will be determined using the NSFM Advocacy Identification and Prioritization Policy Screening Process. All membership requests and responses will be added to an NSFM Library of Municipal Interest to build an index of issues and requests. **(See Infographic #4)**

All advisory committees will report to the NSFM Board. The Statements of Municipal Interest produced by these advisory committees will be reviewed by the membership at a regular interval (e.g.: every five years).

This approach will accumulate a library of concerns from members and enable a membership-driven approach to recognizing and responding to both long-running and emergent issues. Current resolutions will be assigned to an advisory committee along with all other issues that NSFM is working on.

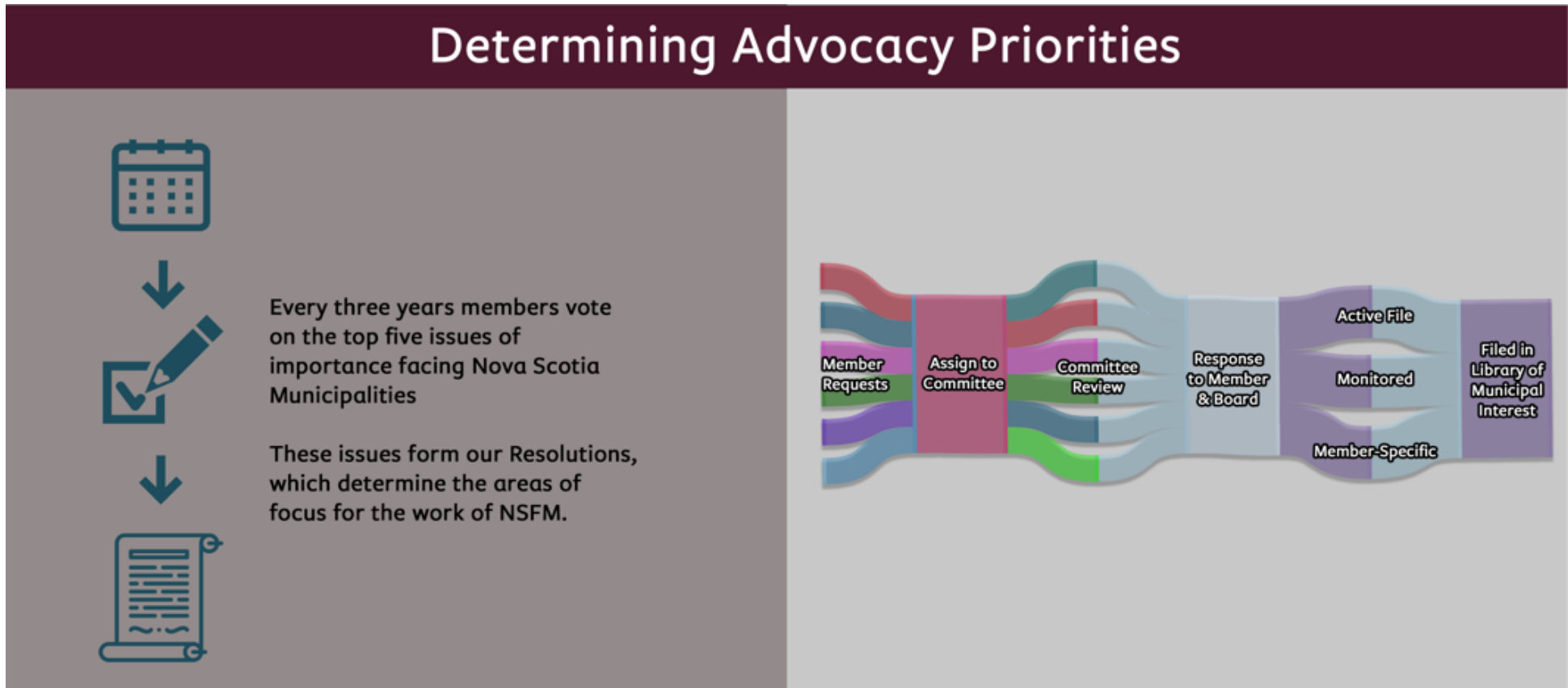
Next steps: These changes will be established in a new policy and call for a review of the Advocacy Policy, and the Advocacy Identification and Prioritization Policy. These changes should be approved before the Resolutions process begins in June. NSFM staff will coordinate a subcommittee struck by the Board to determine committee composition, selection of the initial areas of municipal interest, and policies outlining this new procedure.

Goal: To make NSFM’s advocacy more responsive to membership concerns by creating an active conversation between the membership, advisory committees, and the Board.

Conclusion

Together, these organizational changes will strengthen NSFM’s capacity to fulfill its core functions of advocacy, education, and collaboration. Municipalities are on the frontlines of an increasingly complex world. Associations like NSFM must be equipped to make decisive progress in the face of new challenges. The Board of Directors seeks to work with all members in mounting this formidable challenge. Please see the Timeline in Appendix A for the timeline being proposed.

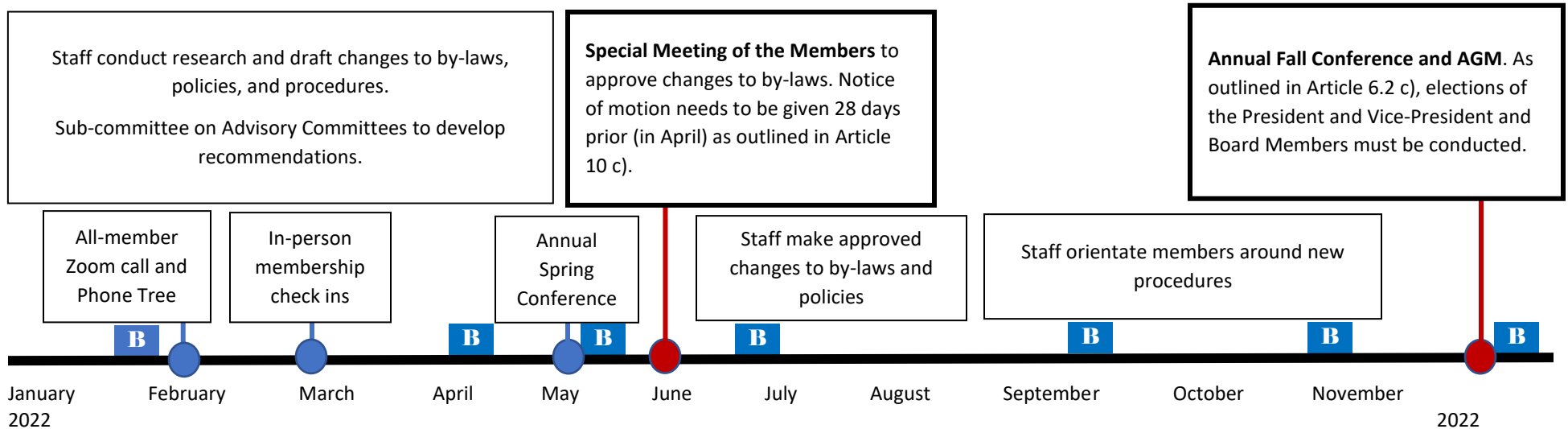
Infographic #4: Current Resolutions Process (left) and Proposed Statement of Advisory Committee Process



Appendix A

NSFM 2022 Timeline

B scheduled Board meeting



Important Steps to Organizational Change:

- Proposed changes arising from the Facilitated Session should be announced to the members in January/February.
- Explanation of changes can take place in a more direct fashion through in-person check ins with each member municipal council.
- Staff will map out the specific changes to by-laws and policies that will be presented as part of a motion to make these changes.
- Notice of motion to change the by-laws must be sent to the membership 28 days in advance.
- Following the annual Spring Conference, a Special Meeting of the Members will be called to make a series of motions to approve the proposed changes.
- If these changes are approved, NSFM staff will implement them and identify next steps of new procedure.
- Time will be required to orientate members around new procedures so that they will be prepared to participate in the election of the Board of Directors in the fall.