



## Overview on Membership Feedback to Proposed Changes

**Feb 22, 2022**

Following the presentation on proposed organizational changes to the NSFM membership on February 2, the NSFM Board of Directors followed up with mayors and wardens of member units by phone. This direct contact helped to further explain the changes being proposed, gather feedback back from a representative of each member unit, and extend the offer for a presentation to their council.

The notes below provide an overview of trends in the feedback received from these phone calls.

Feedback was by and large positive. Many elected officials contacted have expressed that they are supportive of replacing resolutions with a more dynamic way of mandating the work of NSFM. Positive feedback has also included support for recognizing municipal units (and their councils) as the members of NSFM. At the same time, not all contacted elected officials were fully in support of treating municipal units as members.

There were reoccurring concerns, or negative responses, to the regional electoral boundaries. With the added significance of existing regional groups being involved in elections and representation on the board, members expressed some issues that need to be considered. These issues include:

- Proportion of membership contained within each regional group. Feedback has included suggestions to investigate population numbers and number of elected officials in each.
- Those in the relatively larger Colchester, Cumberland, East Hants, Pictou region have been most likely to express concern.
- Feedback from the Colchester, Cumberland, East Hants, Pictou region have consistently mentioned that East Hants should be a part of another regional group. This sentiment was held within East Hants itself. Many see East Hants as having more in common with Halifax Regional Municipality.
- The Mayor of the Town of Shelburne has expressed that it would make more sense for Shelburne to be part of the Southwestern Shore region.
- There was also a suggestion that coastal municipal units should be a designated portion of the membership.

There was also consistent concern with municipal units being recognized as decision-making members.

- Many contacted elected officials found the new election process to be unclear or confusing.
- The Warden of the District of Yarmouth questioned how issue specific decisions made by the membership will account for minority views on specific councils.

Report backs from board members suggest that there is still a need to consider the significant differences between towns, regionals, and rural districts/counties.

Occasionally, contacted elected officials would suggest a two-year term for the position of President and Vice-President.

NSFM staff have arranged council-specific presentations for several municipalities and are continuing to offer and organized such presentations.

**Conclusion**

It appears that what members desire most is further explanation on the reason for these changes and how the new procedures will work in the interest of all members. Therefore, how voting and elections will take place and how the new approach presents a fairer and more equitable option should be made crystal clear in rollout materials.

There have been some specific requests to rethink the regional groups and preliminary analysis has shown that the requested changes can be accommodated.