

NSFM JUNE 2026 BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING



Date: June 26, 2026

Chair: Mayor David Mitchell, NSFM President

On June 26, the NSFM Board of Directors met by online video conference, where it advanced several advocacy, governance, and member communication files. The Board approved new advocacy direction on library funding, continued work on proposed *Municipal Government Act* amendments, and received updates on programs and services that affect municipalities across Nova Scotia.

ADVOCACY AT THE BOARD TABLE

Library Funding: Library funding remains a priority advocacy file. Acting on a recommendation from the Equity and Community Wellbeing Committee, the Board directed NSFM to advocate for:

- meaningful, adequate, and immediate bridge funding for regional libraries
- release of findings and updates from the 2024 Library Funding Formula Review, and
- long-term library funding model that is sustainable and reflective of all municipal contributions to public libraries

Property tax relief for homes rebuilt after disasters. NSFM, AMANS, and the Property Valuation Services Corporation have developed a draft model policy to guide municipalities in reducing taxes on homes rebuilt following natural disasters. The Department of Municipal Affairs has indicated support for amending Section 69B of the *Municipal Government Act* to enable a more uniform approach across the province. The Board directed the working group to continue, with a focus on developing proposed legislative amendments to Section 69B, in collaboration with the Department.

A new Traffic Safety Act: The Board received an overview of the Province's planned transition from the *Motor Vehicle Act* to the *Traffic Safety Act*, with proclamation anticipated in Fall 2026. The change includes several provisions affecting municipal traffic authorities. The Board emphasized the need for a significant education campaign before proclamation, particularly for smaller municipalities that may not have designated traffic authority expertise. NSFM will continue to follow the file on behalf of members.

FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO

From the President. President David Mitchell reported that NSFM has been working with its Atlantic provincial and territorial association counterparts to organize an Atlantic session and to explore advocacy opportunities the region can pursue as a group.



From the CEO. CEO Juanita Spencer reported on attendance at the Atlantic PTA retreat and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Annual Conference and AGM, along with continued engagement with provincial and federal partners, member organizations, and other stakeholders. The CEO noted that staff continue to advance a significant number of projects and reporting commitments.

NSFM ON THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE

The Board approved the CEO's participation in the International Network of Michelin Cities conference in Fall 2026, where Nova Scotia municipalities will share best practices with peer communities around the world.

NSFM is working with the FCM to explore potential participation in the Viet Nam Climate Resilient Municipalities Project, an international initiative focused on coastal erosion. The project is funded through Global Affairs Canada.

SUPPORTING MEMBERS: EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION

Report to Membership and Fact Sheets. The Board received an overview of two new member communication tools. A Board meeting summary report will be prepared after each Board meeting, shared with Regional Representatives for distribution to members, and posted on the NSFM website.

NSFM has begun developing plain-language fact sheets on priority advocacy and policy issues. The draft examples presented to the Board set out the background, why the issue matters, NSFM's advocacy to date, and next steps. Once finalized, the fact sheets will be posted in a dedicated section of the NSFM website and updated as issues progress.

REPORT TO MEMBERSHIP & FACT SHEET

REPORT TO MEMBERSHIP

May 26, 2026

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, which sets the organization's direction for the next four years. The plan is based on five pillars:

STRATEGIC PILLARS

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

FACT SHEET

June 2026

RURAL CELLULAR COVERAGE
FOR EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS



BACKGROUND INFO

Cellular coverage is a longstanding concern for rural municipalities as economic opportunities and quality of life can be diminished by poor coverage. A study commissioned by Develop Nova Scotia (which has now been renamed Build Nova Scotia) was completed by FarrPoint to identify the large swaths of provincial highways and civic addresses that exist in areas of poor cellular coverage. The report was submitted in July 2022 and demonstrated that in some rural areas up to 35% of civic addresses have no cellular coverage.

NSFM received letters from 6 municipalities across the province calling for the provincial government to address poor cellular coverage in rural areas. This issue was reviewed by the Public Safety Advisory Committee and was approved as an Advocacy Priority by the Board of Directors on September 6, 2024.

Based on the findings of the FarrPoint study, the provincial government initially invested \$47.3 million for Build Nova Scotia to work with telecommunications providers, existing infrastructure, and untraditional infrastructure to fill gaps in cellular service across the province.

Following Hurricane Fiona, the Minister of Municipal Affairs made amendments to the *Emergency*

Prevention Academy 2026: The Board approved the appointment of four elected leaders to Cohort #2 of Prevention Academy Canada, a learning opportunity for elected municipal leaders:

- Councillor Christina Sappington, Municipality of the County of Kings
- Councillor Danielle Fraser, Town of Westville
- Councillor Katherine McCarron, Town of Mahone Bay
- Mayor Amery Boyer, Town of Annapolis Royal

EDIA training recommendations. The Board approved the staff report on implementing EDIA training recommendations developed by the Equity and Community Well-Being Committee. The approved approach includes promoting existing training opportunities, integrating EDIA considerations into conference planning, and exploring partnership opportunities for future video materials featuring municipal leaders.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Health & Benefits: The Board received an update on the Health & Benefits Program, which remains in a strong financial position. Participating organizations and plan members in the program's Pool "A" will receive a one-time one-month premium holiday in October 2026. Participation now stands at 37 municipal units in Pool "A" and 15 in Pool "B."

Municipal Wellness Program. The Board received an update on the transition of the Municipal Wellness Program from AMANS to NSFM administration, scheduled to take effect at the end of November 2026. Staff have met with AMANS to identify transition topics and timelines. A draft job description and work plan for the Program Coordinator position have been prepared, with the job posting expected near the end of July. Financial review and transition planning are ongoing.

AMANS Report. AMANS has received the report on the Municipal Website Venture Program from its consultants and is reviewing modernization of the platform. The AMANS Spring Conference was also reported to be successful.

Fund Navigator. Survey results and strong interest from outside the municipal sector point to growing demand for the Fund Navigator and Funding Portal. NSFM will discuss with the Department of Municipal Affairs whether the program's reach might be expanded, along with the resources that would be required.

GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS

Appointments to the Property Valuation Services Corporation Board. The Board appointed Cheryl Hodder, King's Counsel, Jerry Blackwood, Chief Financial Officer of the Halifax Regional Municipality, and Earlene MacMullin, Councillor with the Cape Breton Regional Municipality, to the Property Valuation Services Corporation Board for a four-year term beginning January 1, 2027.

Nominations Committee and Board vacancy. The President appointed Mayor Amery Boyer, Councillor Alison Smith, and Councillor Sam Austin to the Nominations Committee. The Committee will support the regular fall Board election process and any related nomination matters that may arise.

Proposed by-law changes. The Board reviewed proposed by-law changes for discussion in advance of the Annual General Meeting in November. No decisions were made at this meeting. The proposed changes relate to filling Board vacancies, e-voting notice periods, committee mandates, the by-law treatment of the organization's objectives, and Board composition. The Board supported bringing the proposed changes back for consideration at the next meeting.

NSFM Listserv. Uptake of the NSFM listserv continues to grow, with roughly 140 individuals signed up and about 45 of the province's 49 municipalities represented. The next phase of outreach, in July, will focus on elected officials. The listserv is a direct channel for sharing information across the municipal sector, at no cost to members.

