



NOVA SCOTIA FEDERATION
OF MUNICIPALITIES

Resolutions Report

NSFM Annual Conference Report, Nov 3rd-4th, 2021



Table of Contents

Title	Page#
Update on Resolutions	2

Update on Resolutions

NSFM is now working on the priorities of our membership with the newly elected Progressive Conservative (PC) government. Former PC governments have demonstrated a notable willingness to collaborate with NSFM. When the PC Party was in the position of official opposition, NSFM made sure to share information on current work and priorities with them. That Premier Houston himself, prior to the election, communicated directly with NSFM regarding the issue of housing, is further indication of a viable relationship between the current government and NSFM. Going forward, our focus is to seize further collaborative opportunities and sustain advocacy on our resolutions and other goals. A progress update on each of our top 5 priorities can be found below.

1. Funding for Roads

Mandate Letters given to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Minister of Public Works make clear **that funding for the Gravel Road Reconstruction Program and the Rural Impact Mitigation Fund will be doubled this year**. More permanent funding arrangements will be determined by the mandated renegotiation of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and review of the Municipal Government Act (MGA). As presented at the spring conference, the provincial/municipal Roads Committee has been meeting since 2018 and has produced a **Municipal-Provincial Roads Handbook** and **new funding proposals** to reformulate current cost-sharing arrangements. The work of this committee will support informed and forward-thinking proposals in the aforementioned renegotiation and review.

2. Municipal Funding

Along with additional funding for roads, the Premier has also mandated the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing **to double the equalization payments to municipalities** while the MOU renegotiation take place. Due to our efforts to reconcile expenditure responsibilities with necessary revenue raising capacities to avoid downloading, new funding for municipalities may arise from this renegotiation. The PC government has proposed a new deed transfer tax and a levy on assessed property value for property owners who do not pay taxes in Nova Scotia. In their election campaign, the PC party stated that the proceeds resulting from this tax and levy would be a point of consideration in MOU renegotiation.

NSFM has requested provincial support in the form of a **50/50 cost share** for all municipal projects required to comply with the Accessibility Act. We continue to work closely with the Accessibility Directorate to ensure our membership is consulted on emerging legislation and directives, such as the Built Environment Standards.

3. Modernization

Municipal Modernization is a broad concept that includes i) flexible funding from the province to allow for regional planning, ii) modernizing the MGA and the HRM Charter to account for today's municipal challenges, and iii) equipping municipalities with the discretion necessary to collaborate in response to common challenges and opportunities. Three developments that indicate progress on this resolution are the **Municipal Code of Conduct Committee** drafting its Terms of Reference in September, the **mandated MOU renegotiation**, and the **review of the MGA**. Together, these developments provide an opportunity for positive and comprehensive change in the interest of municipalities.

4. Extended Producer Responsibility for Printed Paper and Packing (EPR for PPP)

The PC government plans to pursue federal funding programs that will enhance environmental and economic sustainability in partnership with municipalities. While there is no clear indication that EPR for PPP will be included among reforms aimed at environmental and economic sustainability, NSFM's well-researched case for EPR sets us up well to push the envelope on this issue. A bill on EPR for PPP has been introduced in the Nova Scotian Legislature by a member of the opposition party and EPR for PPP legislation has recently been passed in New Brunswick. These developments call for attention to the important work done by NSFM in the interest of allocating expenditure responsibilities appropriately in the important matter of sustainable waste management.

5. Capped Assessment Program (CAP)

A review of the CAP was acknowledged in the partnership agreement of the former Liberal government. Though the need for review is less acknowledged by the current PC government, Premier Houston was a member of the all-party committee that recently reviewed NSFM's proposal to eliminate the CAP. In order to ensure that this resolution is given due attention, this issue has already been raised in communication with the current government.

Conclusion

There are clear signs that NSFM priorities are on the radar of the new government. **As this government sets out to make a positive impact on Nova Scotia as whole, NSFM is already directing attention to how our priorities are a necessary part of this process.** The big conversations ahead, regarding the MOU and MGA, hold promise of collaborative responses to long-running concerns. NSFM will continue to advocate, facilitate, and collaborate in the interest of all municipalities as these conversations unfold.