

Who We Are

The Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities (UNSM) is a non-profit organization that has represented the Provincial interests of municipal governments across Nova Scotia since 1906. Total membership is 412 elected officials representing all 54 municipalities.

Municipal interests are represented through three caucuses: a Regional Caucus, Rural Caucus and Towns Caucus. The Board of Directors is comprised of twelve municipal elected officials and one member from the Association of Municipal Administrators.

The Executive is comprised of the President, Vice-President, Immediate Past President and Chairs from the Rural, Town and Regional Caucuses. A staff of five works on behalf of the Board of Directors and general membership.

The UNSM hosts an Annual Conference to give its members an opportunity to present issues of concern through resolutions and to provide training opportunities through various workshops and seminars. An annual Spring Workshop is also held to provide additional training and opportunities for municipal elected officials to share information and ideas.

Priority Areas

- Municipal viability
- Infrastructure support
- Fair taxation and elimination of the Capped Assessment program
- Economic Development
- Environmental sustainability

UNSM Fiscal Reality Check

It is important for provincial Members of the Legislature to understand the role municipalities play in communities around the province and to be willing to partner with us to serve the interests of all Nova Scotians.

Municipalities are being asked to provide numerous services: police, fire, roads, garbage, recreation, parks, community facilities, streetlights, sidewalks, water, sewer, emergency response, climate change mitigation/. In addition, the Province municipal property tax to pay for their services. In spite of the pressures to increase service, municipal expenditures have increased less than provincial expenditures in recent years.

- Only 8 cents of every tax dollar collected goes to municipalities
- 65% of the infrastructure in Canada is owned by municipalities
- Close to 18% of municipal budgets pay for provincial services of education, housing and corrections
- New federal and provincial regulations will require more than \$1 billion from municipal taxpayers
- Service costs are escalating
- Province's Capped Assessment Program hurts new home buyers, seniors downsizing and low assessed property owners
- Declining populations will cause local services to spiral downward

Provincial Election Check List - Will your Party:

- ✓ See municipalities as a partner in serving communities and work with them as another order of government?
- ✓ Work with the UNSM to develop a long term strategy for municipalities?
- ✓ Work with the UNSM and other stakeholders to support an independent study on an appropriate municipal taxation model?
- ✓ Ensure direct negotiation with municipalities when contemplating new provincial regulations?
- ✓ Ensure federal infrastructure programs focus on municipal infrastructure and address the community's highest priorities?
- ✓ Be willing to make difficult decisions in the long term interest of communities?
- ✓ Create a separate municipal program to tackle wastewater regulations?
- ✓ Eliminate or at least limit mandatory education payments to school boards, corrections and housing?
- ✓ Provide more support for roads while exploring new revenue sources such as a municipal fuel tax?
- ✓ Implement a province wide asset management plan?
- ✓ Undertake a review of the MGA, Halifax Charter and Municipal Elections Act?
- ✓ Create a standalone Municipal Affairs department?

UNSM Board of Directors

- **Councillor Russell Walker**, Halifax Regional Municipality, President
- **Mayor David Corkum**, Town of Kentville, Vice President
- **Deputy Warden Jimmy MacAlpine**, District of Digby, Immediate Past President
- **Councillor Claire Detheridge**, Cape Breton Regional Municipality, Regional Caucus Chair
- **Warden Keith Hunter**, County of Cumberland, Rural Caucus Chair
- **Deputy Mayor Laurie Murley**, Town of Windsor, Town Caucus Chair
- **Councillor Clarence Prince**, Cape Breton Regional Municipality, Regional Caucus
- **Councillor Lorelei Nicoll**, Halifax Regional Municipality, Regional Caucus
- **Mayor Bob Taylor**, County of Colchester, Rural Caucus
- **Warden Bruce Morrison**, County of Victoria, Rural Caucus
- **Mayor Carl Chisholm**, Town of Antigonish, Town Caucus
- **Deputy Mayor Greg MacArthur**, Town of Truro, Town Caucus
- **CAO Louis Coutinho**, Town of Windsor, AMA Representative

UNSM Staff

- Betty MacDonald, Executive Director
- Lyle Goldberg, Policy Analyst
- Debbie Nielsen, Municipal Sustainability Coordinator
- Judy Webber, Event Planner/Financial Officer
- Tracy Verbeke, Secretary/Receptionist

Further Information

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UNSM Fiscal Reality Check:

Key Questions for Political Parties During Provincial Election Campaign

