

1. *See municipalities as a partner in serving communities and work with them as another order of government?*

Municipal governments are essential partners when it comes to serving the people of Nova Scotia. However, over the past number of years, successive governments have broken faith with municipalities. One significant example is how the NDP government handled relations when they decided to unilaterally end the MOU with municipalities on service delivery. A Liberal government will make it a priority to repair relations with municipalities and will work together with municipal leaders to move forward on associated files.

2. *Work with the UNSM to develop a long term strategy for municipalities?*

The UNSM has an important role in advancing the concerns of municipal units. It is essential that the UNSM is a partner in exploring the future of municipal governance in the province, any long term strategy for municipalities would have to be developed in partnership with municipalities and the UNSM.

3. *Work with the UNSM and other stakeholders to support an independent study on an appropriate municipal taxation model?*

The Liberal Party of Nova Scotia has committed to a comprehensive review of our taxation system. Addressing the state of municipal taxation and exploring options for models would have to be done in concert with the UNSM, municipal units, and other stakeholders if it is to be effective.

4. *Ensure direct negotiation with municipalities when contemplating new provincial regulations?*

As stated in the first question, a Liberal government will make it a priority to work together with municipal leaders to move forward on associated files. A Liberal government will be a willing partner with municipalities when it comes to the development and implementation of provincial regulations effecting municipal units. This means bringing in municipalities early on in the process of development and working with them throughout the process.

5. *Ensure federal infrastructure programs are focussed on municipal infrastructure and address the community's highest priorities?*

Federal infrastructure projects are often tied to funding commitments by the province and municipality, often in equal parts. This means that municipalities and the province must be partners in directing these projects to where they will make the greatest impact for the money spent

6. *Be willing to make difficult decisions in the long term interest of communities?*

Governing is about making choices, and it is generally the rule, rather than the exception, that these choices are going to be difficult. But, decisions must be made with the best interests of Nova Scotians in mind, balancing the need for fiscal prudence.

7. *Create a separate municipal program to tackle wastewater regulations?*

On balance, wastewater regulations are federally developed. However, they are also addressed in the provincial *Environment Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act*. We will work with municipalities to develop the best way to address funding shortfalls. We will also continue discussions with the federal government to identify funding opportunities for wastewater management projects.

8. *Eliminate or at least limit mandatory education payments to school boards, corrections and housing?*

When the NDP government cancelled the municipal MOU that related to school boards, corrections and housing, they did so unilaterally. A Liberal government will make it a priority to repair relations with municipalities and will work together with municipal leaders to move forward on all associated files, including those which were abandoned by the NDP

9. *Provide more support for roads while exploring new revenue sources such as municipal fuel tax?*

The Liberal Party understands the need to maintain infrastructure, such as roads. As stated above, our priority is to work with municipalities to understand their needs and explore suggestions for future improvements.

*10. Implement a province-wide asset management plan?*

We must always ensure that taxpayer funded assets are providing the best return on investment and are being utilized most efficiently. Taking a broader, holistic view of government infrastructure and asset needs is important to optimizing resource allocation.

*11. Undertake a review of the Municipal Government Act, Halifax Charter, and Municipal Elections Act?*

Legislation and their associated regulatory pieces should be reviewed on a regular basis. This way we can ensure that the legislation continues to meet the stated objections and intentions. The HRM Charter is a recent piece of legislation, but consistent with the intention of this piece of legislation, any review of the HRM Charter should be done in partnership with HRM.

*12. Create a standalone Municipal Affairs Department?*

This is an interesting suggestion, and something which could be reviewed at a future date.