



UNSM Member Handbook

January 2017

**Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities
Suite 1304, 1809 Barrington Street
Halifax NS B3J 3K8**

Tel: 902-423-8331

Fax: 902-425-5592

info@unsm.ca

www.unsm.ca

President's Welcome

Congratulations on being elected to municipal office!

For those elected for the first time you have a wonderful journey ahead of you—both challenging and rewarding. For those incumbents—myself included—we all recognize that holding municipal office represents a continuum of life-long learning. The municipal world is becoming more complex as residents' expectations for more and improved services continues to grow.

As a member-based organization of municipal elected officials, the UNSM advances key municipal priorities to the Province. We also provide—through our fall conference and spring workshop—opportunities to bring together elected officials to share best practices and discuss current issues and opportunities. Throughout the year we provide additional workshops and training opportunities on topics of current interest.

The following orientation package has been prepared to explain who UNSM is, what we do, the importance of being a member, and how your involvement can make a difference in advancing the municipal mandate.

We hope you find this package useful as you set out on your journey as a newly elected municipal official. Please visit our website at www.unsm.ca for further information.

All members will be given a Login ID to access password protected resources. Please contact info@unsm.ca for your Login ID.

Should you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact myself, UNSM staff or other board members. Our contact information is provided at the back of the handbook.

I look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Murley', written in a cursive style.

Deputy Mayor Laurie Murley
UNSM President

Table of Contents

1. Who We Are.....	5
2. Membership and Dues.....	5
3. How Your Membership Can Help Shape the Municipal Agenda.....	5
4. UNSM's Strategic Direction.....	6
4.1 Create stronger, effective municipalities and communities through:.....	6
4.2 Renew UNSM in the following ways:.....	6
4.3 Serve as an expert in municipal matters in the following ways:.....	7
4.4 Serve as an advocate to advance key municipal issues through:.....	7
4.5 Engage members through:.....	7
5. Partnership Framework.....	8
6. Resolutions Adopted at 2016 AGM.....	10
7. Governance.....	14
7.1 Board of Directors.....	14
7.2 Officers.....	15
7.3 Powers and Duties of Officers.....	15
7.4 Executive Committee.....	15
7.5 Caucuses.....	15
7.6 Regions.....	16
7.7 Staff.....	17
8. Benefits of Belonging to UNSM.....	17
8.1 Ensuring Municipal Issues are Communicated to the Province.....	17
8.2 Protecting the Rights of Municipalities.....	18
8.3 Sharing of Information.....	18
8.4 Partnerships.....	19
8.5 Programs and Services.....	20
Councillor Employee and Family Assistance Program.....	20
Employee Benefits.....	21
General Insurance.....	21
HST Offset Program.....	22
Home and Auto Insurance.....	22

Long Service Award Program	22
Long Service Completion Award Program	22
Preferred Courier Rate.....	22
Preferred Hotel Rate	22
9. UNSM Board of Directors 2016-17	23
10. UNSM Staff.....	24
Appendix A - Committees with UNSM Representation – 2016	25

1. Who We Are

Founded in 1906, the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities (UNSM) is a not-for-profit organization mandated to represent the interests of municipal governments across Nova Scotia. Total membership is 390 elected officials representing all 50 municipalities.

To accomplish this mandate, the UNSM gathers information from all municipalities, lobbies the provincial government on issues which impact all or a number of municipalities, and works to promote and strengthen best practices in local government. Municipal interests are often developed through three caucuses (regional, rural and town) and five regions. For more information on UNSM, visit www.unsm.ca.

To advance important policy issues, the UNSM often works in partnership with the Association of Municipal Administrators, Nova Scotia (AMANS) who represents senior municipal staff across the province. UNSM shares office space with AMANS. For more information on AMANS, visit www.amans.ca.

2. Membership and Dues

UNSM members are represented by municipal elected officials—mayors, wardens and councillors—from all 50 municipalities across the province. Member municipalities pay an annual membership fee as determined by the Board of Directors. The formula requires that each unit pay a base fee with the remaining amount funded through a combination of population and assessment. The only exception is Halifax which pays a capped fee due to its size relative to all other municipal units. The dues formula is approved at the annual general meeting each year and is then applied to the UNSM Budget as approved by the Board in December. UNSM's audited statements are presented annually at the annual general meeting.

3. How Your Membership Can Help Shape the Municipal Agenda

The UNSM offers opportunities for elected representatives to network and share experiences, initiatives, issues and opportunities. UNSM facilitates this through caucus meetings, regional meetings, conferences, workshops, surveys, requests for input, and requests to serve on municipal and provincial committees. The outcomes from these initiatives are significant; the results inform the Board who then meets with the Premier, Roundtables of Ministers, and the Minister of Municipal Affairs to discuss matters of concern to municipalities. UNSM recommendations formed through member input are sent formally to the Province for response.

UNSM's advocacy work on behalf of municipalities is important. Because we are "creatures of the Province", UNSM must represent the municipal voice to the Province. While the UNSM strives to convey the concerns of all municipalities to the province, consensus among all units is not always possible. UNSM has the most success with the Province when we have wide support from our member units. Strength in numbers is key to advancing the municipal agenda.

4. UNSM's Strategic Direction

In 2016, the UNSM Board of Directors held a strategic planning session to discuss the organization's goals and objectives to be achieved over the next number of years. In addition, caucus and regional meetings were held over the last two years where the board received excellent feedback from the membership. Based on the input from these meetings and the strategic planning session, the board came up with the following strategic directions to move the UNSM forward over the next number of years.

4.1 Create stronger, effective municipalities and communities through:

- Evidence based research on municipal priorities, issues, and opportunities
- Meeting with members to build common understanding on key issues
- Developing municipal positions and resolutions
- Sharing best practices, success stories, and tools
- Developing and implementing proactive advocacy strategies with other levels of government and with the public
- Offering workshops and conferences that will assist municipal elected officials and staff in meeting their mandate
- Partnering with AMANS, the Province, federal government and other community and stakeholder organizations on issues of mutual concern.

4.2 Renew UNSM in the following ways:

- Rename and rebrand the organization to remove the word "union"
- Be the collective, thoughtful voice of municipalities
- Serve as facilitator/leader in helping to strengthen municipalities
- Be recognized as an expert on Nova Scotia municipal matters
- Be recognized as the starting point for reaching out to municipalities.

4.3 Serve as an expert in municipal matters in the following ways:

- Host joint website with AMANS to highlight all relevant reports, studies, and articles
- Develop, promote best practices, bylaw/policy templates, council presentations
- Build new partnerships with other organizations such as universities, chambers of commerce, and business improvement districts
- Be focussed on a limited number of priorities with support from membership
- Help advance the work developed by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM).

4.4 Serve as an advocate to advance key municipal issues through:

- Regular outreach to MLAs to build awareness and support
- Inviting ministers and senior provincial staff to present to the membership
- Actively participating in the Province's legislative agenda and process
- Developing an annual state of the union address
- Building a government relations strategy.

4.5 Engage members through:

- Organizing sessions on timely topics
- Utilizing annual conference to build consensus around key issues and priorities
- Determining key asks of provincial and federal governments
- Increased networking opportunities– including alternatives to face-to-face meetings such as videoconferencing, teleconferencing and webinars–to encourage full participation
- Offering increased membership value through additional programs and services
- Providing UNSM Members Handbook.

5. Partnership Framework

On December 1, 2016, the UNSM signed a historic agreement with the Province . Signed by Municipal Affairs Minister Zach Churchill and former UNSM President Mayor Cecil Clarke, outlines how the UNSM will partner with the Province on top priorities. The Agreement commits both parties to focus on a shared vision for healthy and vibrant communities in Nova Scotia. The agreement is outlined below.

Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities/Department of Municipal Affairs Partnership Framework

Guiding Principles:

The Province of Nova Scotia and the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities (UNSM) are committed to achieving a shared vision of healthy and vibrant communities in Nova Scotia.

The Province of Nova Scotia and UNSM recognize that joint engagement in government decision making processes that impact local governments is critically important to success.

The Province of Nova Scotia and UNSM agree to work collaboratively to address issues of common interest.

This Partnership Framework formalizes our commitment to work together on joint priorities, to enhance communications, and to be accountable for outcomes.

Joint Provincial/Municipal Priorities:

1. Develop a protocol for consultation on legislative and regulatory changes that may impact municipal governments
2. Collaborate on the Joint Municipal Accountability and Transparency committee to develop a standardized regulatory framework for municipal expense policies that includes online reporting
3. Continue to review the Municipal Government Act and HRM Charter and recommend changes to modernize the legislation
4. Review municipal governance models and identify options for structural change that strengthen municipal viability
5. Continue to support the Financial Condition Index as a tool to help municipalities improve their fiscal capacity

6. Provide continued regional planning support including developing minimal planning standards
7. Continue to support the development of the Asset Management System
8. Continue to support the Regional Enterprise Network Model (REN) to enhance economic development throughout the province
9. Continue work on the Fire Services Review

Development of a Strategic Plan:

The Province and the UNSM will develop a joint strategic plan that includes a work plan to address priorities (see above). These priorities will also reflect UNSM membership priorities determined at the annual fall conference as well as provincial priorities.

For each of the items identified, a work plan will be developed that includes deliverables, identified responsibilities and timelines.

The Province and the UNSM agree to share information, research and analysis to support the development and implementation of the strategic plan.

Governance and Accountability:

The Minister and Deputy Minister of the Department of Municipal Affairs will meet with the UNSM Board regularly to discuss the progress of the priorities established in the joint strategic plan.

The Ministers' Round Table will meet two times per year to discuss the progress of the priorities established in the joint strategic plan and to identify any emerging issues.

Key Ministers and Deputies will be engaged as required based on their relationship to the strategic plan priorities.

Should issues arise that will impact on the progress of workplans, UNSM and the Province agree to work collaboratively to identify alternatives and solutions.

The strategic plan will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Province and the UNSM and both parties will agree on priorities for the following planning period.

6. Resolutions Adopted at 2016 AGM

At the 2016 AGM, the UNSM adopt a more streamlined resolutions and priority setting process that will make it easier for our members, the Province and other key stakeholder groups to have a clear understanding of UNSM's policy direction.

The five resolutions adopted at the 2016 AGM address the topics of priorities, economic development, connectivity, financial arrangements and infrastructure. These are outlined in detail below.

1. Priorities

WHEREAS the UNSM was formed to be the collective voice for municipal governments in Nova Scotia; and

WHEREAS all municipalities in Nova Scotia are members of the UNSM; and

WHEREAS many of the challenges and opportunities facing municipalities require the Province to make changes to legislation, policy or regulations or require financial assistance beyond the capacity of the property tax system; and

WHEREAS the Province relies on municipalities to contribute to many of its goals and objectives; and

WHEREAS both orders of government recognize stronger communities will make a stronger province, and a stronger province will make stronger communities; and

WHEREAS the UNSM continues to advocate for long term solutions to municipal sustainability; and

WHEREAS in order for both levels of government to succeed, both orders of government need to work in partnership on priorities; and

WHEREAS municipalities have come together to establish priorities to present to the Province, with the expectation that their priorities will be respected by the Province and responded to;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the UNSM present the following priorities to the Province of Nova Scotia:

- Economic Development;
- Rural Connectivity;
- Fiscal Arrangements (Structural Change Alternatives, CAP, financial issues); and
- Infrastructure; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that:

- an agreement be developed committing the Province and municipalities to work together on the top priorities;
- a formal protocol for collaboration be established; and
- a semi-annual report on the progress of these priorities be distributed to members.

2. Economic Development

WHEREAS all municipalities support economic development through the provision of essential services such as water, sewer, transportation, waste disposal, and protective and emergency services; and

WHEREAS the Province established Regional Enterprise Networks, which were intended to be a two-way partnership between the Province and municipalities; and

WHEREAS demographic and economic trends indicate a continued movement of people away from rural and small communities and indeed the province, indicating further challenges for municipalities in meeting their responsibilities; and

WHEREAS land use planning and regional land use planning can be tools for economic development;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the UNSM request that the Province:

- provide and share economic expertise with municipalities and the Regional Enterprise Networks;
- provide and assist in the analysis of economic development data and assist in the development of feasibility studies;
- provide incentives for regional approaches, including land use planning; and
- assist in the development of best regulatory practices.

3. Connectivity

WHEREAS Nova Scotia needs to attract and retain entrepreneurs and residents, and become more productive, innovative and competitive (as referenced in the “One Nova Scotia” Report of February 2014) especially in its rural areas; and

WHEREAS participation in the global digital economy requires access to robust and reliable Internet and cell phone service; and

WHEREAS in 2015, the UNSM passed a resolution urging the Nova Scotia Government to ensure the provision of an Internet service which provides a reliable high speed connection to all rural-based businesses and households; and

WHEREAS the 2016-2017 provincial budget allocated \$6 million to improve high-speed Internet service; and

WHEREAS the Province commissioned a report from EY, a global leader in advisory services, to evaluate the current situation and offer guidance on the way forward; which concluded that to achieve faster speeds in rural areas of the province will require a mix of technologies and require significant investment and partnerships with community groups, the private sector and all levels of government; and

WHEREAS on October 18, the Province initiated a project with Brightstar Canada and its partners to develop a strategy by March 2017 that will lead to better high-speed Internet service in more rural Nova Scotia communities; and

WHEREAS many parts of rural Nova Scotia continue to have little or no cell phone service; and

WHEREAS in today's world instant communication via cell phone and Internet connectivity is an essential service in terms of business development, tourism, education, and attracting residents to our communities; and

WHEREAS effective cellular service can also mean the difference between life and death in emergency situations; and

WHEREAS the Province is developing a strategy including financial resources to address rural broadband but has no similar strategy for cell phone connectivity;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the UNSM request that the Province:

- continue to work with the UNSM and municipalities to ensure high quality and affordable rural broadband across the province and to support innovative projects with municipalities and community groups;
- work with the UNSM and the Federal Government to develop a cell phone strategy, including providing adequate financial resources, to ensure increased cell phone coverage across the province; and
- work with the Federal Government to provide adequate funding to ensure connectivity success.

4. Financial Arrangements

WHEREAS the Towns Task Force report concluded the challenges facing municipalities were long standing and raised the question of whether the current municipal government structure, roles and responsibilities were viable in the long term; and

WHEREAS the Fiscal Review concluded the current provincial operating grant was inadequate to allow all municipalities to provide a basic level of service at a reasonable cost; that the grant-in-lieu-of taxes by NSPI was inappropriately being used by the Province; that the Province needed to financially compensate towns for provincial roads and arterials, that the Province needed to take responsibility for the disposal of schools; that the Province needed to take responsibility for mandatory payment as a provincial property tax, among other financial concerns; and

WHEREAS the Province's property cap program has distorted and increased the unfairness of the property tax, the primary revenue source of funding for municipal operations; and

WHEREAS economic growth requires municipal infrastructure and services, yet does not generate municipal revenues, as it does for the provinces through income and sales taxes; and

WHEREAS there are a number of municipalities in difficult financial situations; and

WHEREAS amalgamation has not been proven to resolve all financial issues;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the UNSM request that the Province:

- work with municipalities to explore other governance models for shared service delivery and structural change, and provide support to municipalities to explore community interest and commitment to change;
- support the tools provided in the MGA for structural change (amalgamation, annexation and dissolution) including funding in support of structural change;
- form an all party working group to develop an education and awareness campaign to inform the public and other stakeholders of the impact of the Cap Program and to engage them in a discussion of how best to support rate payers;
- consider the establishment of an innovation fund for municipalities to assist in projects aimed at increasing efficiencies; and
- respond to the recommendations of the Fiscal Review, and work with UNSM and AMA to address the financial issues, including additional provincial funding, both in the short run and the long run so that municipalities are truly able to deliver their responsibilities with a reasonable tax burden.

5. Infrastructure

WHEREAS municipalities appreciate the financial assistance provided by the federal and provincial governments for investments in infrastructure; and

WHEREAS municipalities bear the greater responsibility for operating costs, maintenance and eventual replacement; and

WHEREAS the federal and provincial governments benefit through income and sales taxes from infrastructure investments; and

WHEREAS municipal revenues do not typically benefit from these investments; and

WHEREAS municipalities are in the best position to determine their own priorities but funding from other levels of government are directed at eligible categories determined by the federal or provincial governments; and

WHEREAS municipalities are developing asset management plans to identify wise investments;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the UNSM request that the Province ensures that:

- federal funding programs are predictable and long term to ensure better planning and achieve greater efficiencies;
- the required municipal share be decreased in recognition of the full life cycle and operating costs borne by municipalities;
- funding be focussed on projects identified as priorities by municipalities; and
- their asset management program is fully implemented in three years for all municipalities.

7. Governance

7.1 Board of Directors

UNSM's Board of Directors has the important role of setting the goals, objectives and vision of the organization in order to advance the common interests of municipalities across the province. The Board develops policy positions and programs of interest to Nova Scotia's municipalities. The Board is comprised of twelve elected officials (mayors, wardens or councillors) and one appointed voting member from the Association of Municipal Administrators. The Board meets nine to eleven times annually.

7.2 Officers

UNSM's Officers are the President, Vice President and Past President. The President and Vice President are elected at large at the AGM for a one-year term. Election of the Officers rotates on an annual election cycle. During each cycle, the positions of President, Vice President and Past President will each be filled by members representing towns, rural municipalities and regional municipalities. In 2016-17, the President shall be from a town, the Vice President from a rural municipality and the Past President from a regional municipality.

7.3 Powers and Duties of Officers

The President, subject to the control and direction of the Board of Directors, has general direction of the affairs of the UNSM, chairs all meetings of the Board of Directors, Executive Committee, and special meetings, votes at all meetings and serves as an ex officio member of all UNSM committees. The President is the official spokesperson for UNSM.

The Vice President exercises the authority of the President in the absence or incapacity of the President and performs other duties as required.

The Past President serves as Chair of the Nominations Committee and performs other duties as required.

7.4 Executive Committee

UNSM's Executive Committee makes decisions on behalf of the Board of Directors in between Board meetings. Chaired by the President, it also includes the Vice President, Immediate Past President and Chairs from three caucuses. The Executive Committee meets with the Roundtable of Provincial Ministers.

7.5 Caucuses

The UNSM operates under a caucus structure where the three types of municipal units are represented—towns, rurals, and regionals. Currently there are 26 towns, 22 rurals and 2 regional municipalities. Under the UNSM Bylaws, the Region of Queens is part of the Rural Caucus. The caucuses are represented on the UNSM Board by a chair and two additional representatives. Each municipal elected official is a member of their respective caucus.

The role of each caucus is to discuss and make recommendations to the UNSM on matters of interest and concern to members of the particular caucus. Caucuses operate within the framework of the UNSM and as part of the UNSM structure. They do not have an independent

legal existence separate from the UNSM. No caucus has the authority to speak on behalf or bind the UNSM. Each caucus adopts their own procedures and terms of reference governing their operations consistent with the UNSM Bylaws. Caucuses meet at a minimum twice annually to discuss their unique issues—during the UNSM annual fall conference and spring workshop. Typically caucuses meet an additional one or two times over the course of the year.

7.6 Regions

In addition to the caucus structure, the UNSM also meets as regions usually once or twice per year to discuss local or regional issues. Regional meetings are hosted by a particular municipality on a voluntary basis. Often a town and neighbouring rural municipality will co-host a meeting.

The UNSM operates under five regions as follows:

Cape Breton-Strait Area Region - Municipality of Inverness, Municipality of Victoria, Town of Port Hawkesbury, Municipality of Richmond, Town of Mulgrave , District of Guysborough, District of St. Mary's, Town of Antigonish, Municipality of Antigonish , Cape Breton Regional Municipality

Colchester/Cumberland/Pictou/East Hants Region - Town of Truro, Town of Stewiacke, Municipality of Colchester, District of East Hants, Town of Amherst, Town of Oxford, Municipality of Cumberland , Town of New Glasgow, Town of Pictou, Town of Stellarton, Town of Trenton, Town of Westville, Municipality of Pictou

South Shore-HRM Region - Town of Bridgewater, Town of Mahone Bay, Town of Lockeport, Town of Lunenburg, Town of Shelburne , Municipality of the District of Chester, District of Lunenburg, District of Shelburne, Region of Queens, Halifax Regional Municipality

South Western Shore Region - Town of Digby , Town of Clark's Harbour, Town of Yarmouth , Municipality of Argyle, District of Barrington, District of Clare, District Digby, District of Yarmouth

Valley Region - Town of Annapolis Royal, Town of Berwick, Town of Kentville , Town of Middleton, Town of Windsor, Town of Wolfville, Municipality of Annapolis, Municipality of Kings, District of West Hants.

7.7 Staff

UNSM has a staff of five who work on behalf of the Board of Directors and general membership.

- **Executive Director:** Responsible for day-to-day operations including financial and administrative management of the organization.
- **Manager, Member Relations:** Ensures effective two-way communication between the UNSM board and the membership.
- **Infrastructure & Sustainability Officer:** Facilitates learning and capacity building for municipalities to make informed decisions related to operations, service delivery and infrastructure management.
- **Event Planner/Financial Officer:** Maintains UNSM financial records and responsible for logistics in coordinating and executing all UNSM events and seminars.
- **Secretary:** Provides administrative support to UNSM and AMANS offices and secretarial support to UNSM staff and Board.

8. Benefits of Belonging to UNSM

8.1 Ensuring Municipal Issues are Communicated to the Province

The UNSM Executive and Board of Directors works hard on your behalf to ensure important municipal issues and concerns are communicated effectively to the Province. The UNSM achieves this in a number of ways including roundtable meetings with provincial ministers at least twice annually, meetings between the UNSM President and the Premier, the UNSM President and the Minister of Municipal Affairs, and the UNSM Executive Director and Deputy Ministers from various provincial departments that impact municipalities.

In addition, the UNSM conducts Advocacy Days annually where board members meet in Halifax with as many Nova Scotia MLA's as possible. These meetings provide an opportunity to:

- build relationships between provincial and municipal elected officials;
- look at how the Province and municipalities can work together to better serve the interests of all Nova Scotians and to minimize their collective tax burden; and
- build support towards provincial-municipal partnerships on an infrastructure plan and other issues critical to communities.

UNSM members have an opportunity to participate on a number of municipal-provincial committees which impact municipal policy. *For a list of current committees, see appendix A.*

8.2 Protecting the Rights of Municipalities

The UNSM has a responsibility to protect the rights of its member units. The UNSM advocates on behalf of its members for important provincial legislative changes to ensure municipalities are able to meet their responsibilities. Moreover, the UNSM monitors provincial legislation to ensure municipal interests are addressed. From time to time, the Province will discuss potential legislation with the UNSM Board. In cases where the Board is asked not to consult with members on proposed legislation, the Board will provide feedback directly to the Province.

UNSM is also working toward the development of a consultation protocol to be followed when new provincial legislation or regulations impacting municipal operations is being developed. This will ensure the Province is aware of the implications to municipalities. It will also encourage the development of legislation and regulations that can be implemented effectively and efficiently.

A recent example occurred this past year when a developer challenged a municipality under its subdivision bylaw. The developer implied municipalities did not have the authority under the MGA. UNSM provided legal representation in support of the position put forward by the municipality. This support was a factor in the developer settling out of court. Another initiative in recent years included mandatory conversion to LED streetlights, where UNSM was successful in allowing municipalities more time to implement the provincial regulation.

8.3 Sharing of Information

Sharing of information is a priority for UNSM and one which will continue to expand. The UNSM provides a mechanism to bring elected representatives and staff together to learn from experts and each other. Information is sent to members on a variety of issues including activities of the Board, federal and provincial programs and legislative reviews, latest municipal research, and events/workshops taking place on topics of interest. Examples of recent workshops include the annual CAO/CEO forum, how to advance recommendations in the oneNS report, municipal restructuring, and forestry. Many of UNSM workshops are offered for free or at a minimal charge.

Some of the primary mechanisms UNSM uses to share information include the following:

- Timely emails on opportunities to learn, provide comment, and apply for funding programs. The subject line in the email will indicate if action is required and if there is a deadline for a response.

- Newsletters published nine or ten times a year, providing updates on Board activities and items of interest
- Municipal Voice—a quarterly publication with informative articles
- Fall Conference and Annual General Meeting, November 30 – December 2, 2016, in Halifax - the premier event for UNSM where the majority of members come together to hear from the Province about municipal issues, with an opportunity to ask the Province about matters of concern. Members choose their new Board, and provide input to the priorities for organization. Learning and networking opportunities, sharing of experiences and best practices make the event a useful investment of members' time.
- Spring Workshop— typically held in May— focuses on learning opportunities and sharing of experiences.
- UNSM Website www.unsm.ca: provides useful information about events, programs and services, relevant studies and publications, tools, member lists, and useful links.

8.4 Partnerships

AMANS: The Association of Municipal Administrators, Nova Scotia is a not for profit organization for professionals involved in the administration of municipal government in Nova Scotia. Its members include Chief Administrative Officers, Clerks and Deputies, Finance staff and other municipal professionals. AMANS is a long-time stakeholder and partner of the UNSM providing valuable objective advice on issues impacting municipal government. Not only is AMANS a strong ally of the UNSM, it acts as an educator and sounding board. It helps build capacity and knowledge by providing training and development for both staff and elected officials on many topics. In addition, it provides tools and resources such as model by-laws and best practices. AMANS is co-located with UNSM, ensuring a close working relationship. Information about AMANS is available on their website: www.amans.ca.

PVSC: Property Valuation Services Corporation (PVSC) is an independent, not-for-profit organization responsible for valuing all real property (residential, commercial and resource) in Nova Scotia, approximately 600,000 properties, on an annual basis. Each January, PVSC provides an assessment roll to municipalities, which is used to calculate property taxes, and delivers property assessment notices to every Nova Scotia property owner. To support administrative and operational efficiencies, the PVSC also provides value-added property and information services to municipalities.

PVSC adheres to mass appraisal standards set by the International Association of Assessing Officers (IAAO), and is mandated by the Nova Scotia Assessment Act and governed by the PVSC Act. The PVSC is funded by all municipalities across the province under a formula outlined in its governing legislation. The PVSC's Board of Directors is comprised of six municipal officials, three municipal administrators, three independent members, and the Executive Director of the UNSM.

If you have questions about property assessment or would like information about their value-added services for municipalities, you are encouraged to contact the PVSC. Additionally, residents of your municipality should be directed to PVSC's service centre when they have questions about their property assessment.

The PVSC can be contacted at 1-800-380-7775, Monday – Friday from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. Property information and tools and resources can also be accessed at their website, www.pvsc.ca.

FCM: The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) is the national voice of municipal government, representing 90 per cent of Canada's municipal population. Established in 1901, it includes Canada's small and urban communities, and its largest cities. FCM advocates to have the needs of municipalities and its citizens reflected in federal policies and programs. Nova Scotia has four members on the FCM Board, including the UNSM President, a member from Halifax Council and two other members from Nova Scotia municipalities. Board members are elected at the FCM annual conference, held typically in June. As well, Councillor Bill Karsten, Halifax, is a member of the FCM Executive, elected in June 2016 as third Vice President.

Federal Gas Tax Fund Communications: Since April 2015, UNSM has been providing support to the Department of Municipal Affairs to administer the 2014-24 Gas Tax Fund (GTF) Agreement, focusing its efforts on communications and asset management. This work will support municipalities in meeting GTF requirements and to assist them in fully utilizing this federal funding program. UNSM also aims to raise the profile of local GTF initiatives, making a strong case for continued (and possibly enhanced) federal support.

UNSM's GTF work includes: developing municipal project spotlights to highlight best practices and innovation in Nova Scotia, collecting information for GTF project and signage reports, creating communication and asset management resources (such as toolkits, fact sheets, and workshops), and assisting municipalities in undertaking sustainability initiatives that support the new federal GTF pillars. Resources completed to date can be found on UNSM's website, under the Gas Tax Fund tab (<http://unsm.ca/gas-tax-fund.html>).

8.5 Programs and Services

The UNSM offers a number of programs and services to its members with reduced fees or added value options in a variety of areas. These include:

Councillor Employee and Family Assistance Program - All UNSM members have access to the Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) provided by Morneau Shepell. The EFAP is a voluntary, confidential, short-term counselling and advisory service that connects individuals and their immediate family members to a network of dedicated counselling professionals who are available to provide assistance 24 hours a day. Types of counselling services include:

- Working to resolve concerns impacting your work, health or life
- Family support
- Financial Support and Financial Planning
- Health Coaching
- Healthy Relationships
- Legal Support
- Naturopathic Services
- Nutrition Support
- Fitness Support
- Stress Coach
- Separation and Divorce
- Smoking Cessation.



As part of this program, the UNSM Group Benefits Plan members also have access to the Fitness Coach Connects program. This popular program consists of a physical health assessment online, interactive online program, and one-on-one sessions with a coach.

Employee Benefits - The UNSM provides a comprehensive, cost-effective group employee benefits plan for member municipalities. The plan is designed and managed to meet municipalities' objectives for attraction and retention, and supports the wellbeing of its employees and families. The UNSM benefits program leverages the collective base of municipal employees to provide enhanced benefits, while maintaining lower costs for employees and employers. It includes medical, dental, life insurance and Long Term Disability (LTD), and other optional and complimentary benefits.

The plan is overseen by the UNSM Health & Benefits Committee, which reports directly to UNSM Board of Directors. The Benefits Consultant, Morneau Shepell, provides the consulting services for the plan, and to individual municipalities and also provides additional consulting services in support of the program.



General Insurance - The UNSM offers a general insurance program through the Atlantic Insurance Brokers Consortium. The Consortium, managed by Frank Cowan Company, consists of Arthur J. Gallagher, Fraser and Hoyt, and MCT. This program provides municipalities and associated entities (including Joint Service Boards, Care Homes, Economic Development, Utilities, Sports Facilities) with a comprehensive and stable insurance solution with local customer support and claims handling throughout Nova Scotia. The Atlantic Insurance Brokers

Consortium further supports UNSM members through unique value added services. These services are provided to members at no cost and include:

1. Contractual reviews with a focus on insurance and risk analysis
2. Liaising with municipal solicitors on complex and day to day contracts and agreements
3. Real property risk inspection and valuation services
4. Education seminars on a wide range of available topics
5. Risk management bulletins and reference materials
6. Direct assistance to municipal staff on matters including facility use agreements, construction documents, reviewing evidences of insurance, guidance and direction for outlining risk and risk avoidance for new programs or municipal initiatives including recreation and co-management agreements.

HST Offset Program - In 1998, the UNSM negotiated the HST Offset Program with the Province. It is intended to lessen the financial impact on municipalities of paying the Harmonized Sales Tax. Over the past decade, the Program has provided approximately \$78 million to municipalities with \$ 6 million distributed to municipalities annually. Payments are based on municipal expenditures in the previous year.

Home and Auto Insurance - UNSM members receive preferred group rates on home and auto insurance through TD Insurance Meloche Monnex. To join the program visit: <http://www.group.tdinsurance.com/en/home>.



Long Service Award Program - The UNSM Long Service Awards Program offers recognition beginning with those elected officials who have served on Council for a minimum of 10 years.

Long Service Completion Award Program - The UNSM Long Service Completion Awards Program offers recognition to those elected officials who are retiring—either voluntarily or as the result of municipal restructuring.

Preferred Courier Rate - The UNSM offers a preferred courier rate to municipalities through Canada Post.

Preferred Hotel Rate - UNSM members have access to a special rate at the UNSM host hotel—The Westin Nova Scotian in Halifax.



9. UNSM Board of Directors 2016-17

Deputy Mayor Laurie Murley
President
Town of Windsor
president@unsm.ca

Councillor Geoff Stewart
Vice-President
County of Colchester
gstewart@colchester.ca

Mayor Cecil Clarke
Immediate Past-President
Cape Breton Regional Municipality
cpclarke@cbrm.ns.ca

Councillor Waye Mason
Regional Caucus Chair
Halifax Regional Municipality
waye.mason@halifax.ca

Warden Jim Smith
Rural Caucus Chair
Municipality of East Hants
jdsmith@easthants.ca

Mayor Pam Mood
Towns Caucus Chair
Town of Yarmouth
mayor.mood@townofyarmouth.ca

Councillor George MacDonald
Regional Caucus Representative
Cape Breton Regional Municipality
gmmacdonald@cbrm.ns.ca

Councillor Russell Walker
Regional Caucus Representative
Halifax Regional Municipality
russell.walker@halifax.ca

Deputy Warden Linda Gregory
Rural Caucus Representative
District of Digby
lgregory@municipality.digby.ns.ca

Warden Timothy Habinski
County of Annapolis
Rural Caucus Representative
THabinski@annapoliscounty.ca

Mayor Jeff Cantwell
Towns Caucus Representative
Town of Wolfville
jcantwell@wolfville.ca

Councillor Terry Rhindress
Towns Caucus Representative
Town of Amherst
trhindress@amherst.ca

Mr. Bruce Fisher, AMANS Representative
Manager, Fiscal and Tax Policy
Halifax Regional Municipality
fisherb@halifax.ca

10. UNSM Staff

	Position	Phone	Email
Betty MacDonald	Executive Director	902-423-8331	bmacdonald@unsm.ca
Lyle Goldberg	Manager, Member Relations	902-423-8673	lgoldberg@unsm.ca
Debbie Nielsen	Infrastructure and Sustainability Officer	902-423-8312	dnielsen@unsm.ca
Judy Webber	Event Planner/ Financial Officer	902-423-7417	jwebber@unsm.ca
Tracy Verbeke	Secretary/Receptionist	902-423-8331	tverbeke@unsm.ca

Appendix A - Committees with UNSM Representation – 2017

Committee Name	Type of Committee	Municipal Representatives 2017
211 Information and Referral Service Appointment	Non-Governmental Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor Heather Kelly, Region of Queens
Accessibility Legislation Working Group	Joint Municipal Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Brian Fralic, Councillor, Region of Queens • Mr. Laughie Rutt, Corporate Diversity Consultant, Halifax Regional Municipality • Ms. Connie Saulnier, Director of Finance, Clare • Mr. David Walker, former Mayor, Bridgewater • Ms. Jennifer Watts, former Councillor, Halifax Regional Municipality • Mr. Andrew Webber, Community Development Officer, Wolfville
UNSM's Active Transportation Committee	UNSM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor Eldon MacDonald, CBRM • Mr. Rick McCready, CBRM • Mr. David McIsaac, Halifax Regional Municipality • Ms. Debbie Nielsen, Infrastructure and Sustainability Officer, UNSM • Mr. Mark Nener, Halifax • Ms. Hilary Paquet, County of Colchester • Mr. Steve Raftery, County of Kings • Ms. Debra Ryan, County of Annapolis • Mr. Gord Tate, District of Chester • Councillor Mike Trinacty, Town of Berwick
NS Building Advisory Committee	Joint Municipal Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor Andre Veinotte, District of Chester
Clean Foundation	Non-Governmental Organization	

Committee Name	Type of Committee	Municipal Representatives 2017
Divert NS (Formerly Resource Recovery Fund Board)	Non-Governmental Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor Pam MacInnis, Municipality of East Hants
Efficiency Nova Scotia's Demand Side Management Advisory Group	Non-Governmental Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Adam Hayter, Halifax Regional Municipality
E-911 Cost Recovery Fee Committee	Provincial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor Clarence Prince, Cape Breton Regional Municipality
Federation of Canadian Municipalities	Non-Governmental Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor Gregory Heming, County of Annapolis • 3rd Vice President: Councillor Bill Karsten, Halifax Regional Municipality • Deputy Mayor Laurie Murley, UNSM President • Councillor Tom Taggart, County of Colchester • HRM Seat—Councillor Russell Walker
Fire Safety Advisory Committee	Provincial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor Fraser Patterson, County of Victoria
Fire Study Steering Committee	Joint Municipal Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Shawn Andrews, Fire Services Coordinator, Guysborough • Ms. Bonnie Coulter, Director, Corporate Services, New Glasgow • Councillor Wayne Thorburne, Bridgewater
Infrastructure & Asset Management Working Group	Joint Municipal Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Chris Boudreau, County of Richmond • Councillor Ivan Doncaster, CBRM • Councillor Gregory Heming, County of Annapolis • Mr. Earl MacKenzie, Town of New Glasgow • Mr. Richard MacLellan, Region of Queens • Ms. Debbie Nielsen, Infrastructure & Sustainability Officer, UNSM

Committee Name	Type of Committee	Municipal Representatives 2017
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Michelle Newell, County of Colchester • Ms. Holly Power-Garrett, Halifax Regional Municipality • Mr. Gerry Verran, Town of Yarmouth
Joint Municipal Accountability and Transparency Committee	Provincial/UNSM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Michael Dolter, CAO, Town of Truro • Mr. Greg Herrett, CAO, Town of Amherst • Warden Bruce Morrison, County of Victoria (Chair) • Mayor Sandra Snow, Town of Kentville
Joint Police Services and Community Safety Advisory Committee	Provincial/UNSM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deputy Mayor Emily Lutz, County of Kings • Mayor Bill MacDonald, Town of Annapolis Royal
Minister's Round Table on Environment and Sustainable Prosperity	Provincial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor Dayle Eshelby, Town of Lockeport
Municipal Finance Corporation	Provincial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Dawn Keizer, Director of Finance, Town of Bridgewater • Councillor George MacDonald, Cape Breton Regional Municipality • Councillor Bernie Murphy, Town of Westville
<i>Municipal Government Act</i> Review	Joint Municipal Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Lyle Goldberg, Manager, Member Relations, UNSM
Municipal Indicators Review Project Committee	Joint Municipal Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Rennie Bugley, CAO, County of Cumberland • Ms. Deborah Campbell, Municipal Clerk, CBRM • Mr. Scott Fraser, Director, Corporate Services, Colchester • Ms. Betty MacDonald, Executive Director, UNSM

Committee Name	Type of Committee	Municipal Representatives 2017
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Leanne MacEachen, Director of Finance, Victoria • Councillor Clarence Prince, CBRM (UNSM)
Nova Scotia Local Government RCMP Contract Management Committee	Provincial/UNSM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor Michael Gregory, County of Colchester
Property Valuation Services Corporation (PVSC)	Non-Governmental Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor Darren Bruckschwaiger, CBRM • Mr. Mike Dolter, CAO, Truro • Ms. Jane Fraser, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, HRM • Councillor Clifford Hood, Town of Yarmouth • Warden Jimmy MacAlpine, District of Digby • Councillor Alex Morrison, County of Annapolis • Ms. Connie Nolan, CAO, East Hants • Councillor Russell Walker, Halifax Regional Municipality • Ms. Amanda Whitewood, CFO, Halifax Regional Municipality
UNSM Board of Directors (2016-2017)	UNSM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deputy Mayor Laurie Murley, Town of Windsor (PRESIDENT) • Councillor Geoff Stewart, County of Colchester (VICE-PRESIDENT) • Mayor Cecil Clarke, Cape Breton Regional Municipality (IMMEDIATE PAST-PRESIDENT) • Councillor Wayne Mason, Halifax Regional Municipality (REGIONAL CAUCUS CHAIR) • Warden Jim Smith, District of East Hants (RURAL)

Committee Name	Type of Committee	Municipal Representatives 2017
		CAUCUS CHAIR) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayor Pam Mood, Town of Yarmouth (TOWNS CAUCUS CHAIR) • Councillor George MacDonald, Cape Breton Regional Municipality (REGIONAL CAUCUS REPRESENTATIVE) • Councillor Russell Walker, Halifax Regional Municipality (REGIONAL CAUCUS REPRESENTATIVE) • Deputy Warden Linda Gregory, District of Digby (RURAL CAUCUS REPRESENTATIVE) • Warden Timothy Habinski, County of Annapolis (RURAL CAUCUS REPRESENTATIVE) • Mayor Jeff Cantwell, Town of Wolfville (TOWNS CAUCUS REPRESENTATIVE) • Councillor Terry Rhindress, Town of Amherst (TOWNS CAUCUS REPRESENTATIVE) • Mr. Bruce Fisher, Manager—Fiscal and Tax Policy, Halifax Regional Municipality (AMA REPRESENTATIVE)
UNSM Fall Conference Planning Committee (2017)	UNSM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayor Carolyn Bolivar-Getson, District of Lunenburg • Mayor Jeff Cantwell, Town of Wolfville • Deputy Warden Linda Gregory, District of Digby • Councillor George MacDonald, Cape Breton Regional Municipality • Councillor Geoff Stewart, County of Colchester (Chair)
Health and Benefits Committee	UNSM/AMANS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Melissa Bonin, Planning Technician, District of Lunenburg • Mr. Mike Dolter, CAO, Town of Truro

Committee Name	Type of Committee	Municipal Representatives 2017
Absence Management Wellness Committee		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Cheryl Ann Fritz, Councillor, Truro • Deputy Warden Linda Gregory, District of Digby • Ms. Cathy Lurette, Health & Wellness Consultant, Halifax Regional Municipality • Ms. Betty MacDonald, Executive Director, UNSM • Ms. Carolyn MacIntosh, Deputy Municipal Clerk, Pictou County • Councillor John MacLennan, County of Inverness • Ms. Sherry MacPhail, HR Officer, East Hants • Mr. Jason Martell, Acting CAO, Richmond County • Ms. Kelly Rice, CAO, Westville • Mr. Jeff Sunderland, Deputy CAO, District of Digby • Ms. Janice Wentzell, Executive Director, AMANS • Mr. Britt Wilson, Manager, Total Compensation, Halifax Regional Municipality •
Nominating Committee	UNSM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayor Cecil Clarke, Cape Breton Regional Municipality, Immediate Past President, (Chair)
Spring Workshop Planning Committee (2017)	UNSM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayor Laurie Boucher, Town of Antigonish • Warden Russell Boucher, County of Antigonish • Councillor Waye Mason, HRM • Mayor Pam Mood, Town of Yarmouth • Warden Jim Smith, Municipality of East Hants