

OUR MISSION

The UNSM is the collective voice
of municipal government
in Nova Scotia

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

No Surprises for Municipalities with Provincial Budget

Halifax, April 4, 2014: Given the Province's current deficit, there were no huge surprises for municipalities with today's budget announcement. It appears the challenges municipalities are facing have not been addressed.

"On the positive side, we are pleased that the Province has established its own Municipal Affairs Department that can dedicate more effort to the needs of municipalities", stated UNSM President Mayor David Corkum.

The budget for Municipal Affairs includes an increase in the Capacity Building Grant from \$233,000 to \$491,000. This money will be used to address governance issues and asset management. Given the impacts of climate change, the Province announced a \$1 million program for flood mitigation and flood mapping.

As previously announced, the Federal Gas Tax Fund for 2014-15 will be \$53.2 million. There was no formal budget figure provided for the new Building Canada Fund. The Province has allocated funding for the program but no figures were provided.

On the negative side, municipalities continue to pay significant costs for provincial services including \$223.8 million for public education, an increase of \$8.9 million over last year. Municipalities will also pay \$13.9 million for Corrections and \$7 million for Public Housing, similar to last year. RCMP costs are expected to go up by 1.5 per cent as well as DNA costs which will go from \$219,000 to \$512,000. The Provincial Capital Assistance Program was reduced from \$3.75 million to \$3.05 million.

Other programs of interest to municipalities include:

\$170,000 grant for Age Friendly Community Grants

\$250,000 grant for Senior Safety Program
\$1 million for public transit outside of HRM and \$500,000 for community transit
\$1.5 million for fire protection, an increase of \$286,000
\$2.1 million to establish Regional Enterprise Networks.

Funding for public libraries will be increased by \$200,000 to over \$14 million.

Mayor Corkum further stated "Union of Nova Scotia municipalities understands the current state of financial affairs at the province, and the province needs some time to address the many it is facing. We are looking forward to working with Minister Furey and the new department and are hopeful progress will be made in the near future. Municipalities recognize the urgency expressed in the Ivany Report and are willing to be part of the solution."

The 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.