

## **Resolution 14A**

### **WATER QUALITY TESTING (DEFEATED)**

⇒ County of Colchester

**WHEREAS** the Guidelines for Monitoring Public Drinking Water Supplies and the individual water utility approval from the Nova Scotia Department of Environment stipulates the requirements necessary to ensure safe drinking water; and

**WHEREAS** the legislation requires municipalities who operate water utilities, regardless of their size, to monitor, test and report the water quality on a regular basis; and

**WHEREAS** these requirements have not only resulted in increased operating costs for all municipalities, but are calling into question the viability of some smaller water utilities; and

**WHEREAS** the frequency and amount of testing is a significant contributing factor to the increased operating costs; and

**WHEREAS** the water utilities which are meeting the standards on a regular basis would benefit financially from a reduced frequency and amount of testing;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities request that the Nova Scotia Department of Environment amend the legislation to modify the amount of testing and allow those water utilities who consistently meet the water quality standards to progressively reduce the testing frequency.

# DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE

## Resolution 15A

### **PAY WHAT YOU SEE LEGISLATION**

⇒ County of Inverness

**WHEREAS** the people of Inverness County understand that we need to pay taxes in order to maintain government services; and

**WHEREAS** some goods and services have taxes and fees added at the point of sale; and

**WHEREAS** the total cost is not completely apparent to the consumer until the point of sale; and

**WHEREAS** government outlets (i.e. Nova Scotia Liquor Commission, and Access Nova Scotia) include taxes and fees in their posted prices; and

**WHEREAS** taxes and fees not disclosed until the point of sale puts an unnecessary burden on the citizens of Nova Scotia for budget management

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the UNSM write to the Province requesting that posted prices include all taxes and fees, with the total cost to the consumer at the point of sale being the most prominent displayed price.

**Note:** *It is understandable that national and international advertising must advertise the base price, without taxes and fees specific to Nova Scotia, but goods and services purchased within the Province of Nova Scotia should include all taxes and fees in the listed price, prior to the point of sale.*

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: *The Committee does not recommend this resolution.*

EXPLANATION: *Such a change could result in increased costs to retailers through mandatory technological upgrades. It also would promote a lack of transparency by concealing the HST in the overall cost of goods and services.*

# DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & WELLNESS

## Resolution 16A

### **SPECIAL CARE HOMES—COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENTS**

⇒ District of Guysborough

**WHEREAS** many municipal units in Nova Scotia are involved with the operation of Special Care Homes in Nova Scotia; and

**WHEREAS** it is of utmost importance to our Special Care providers that they provide the highest level of care possible for our elderly, the same people who have helped grow our communities and our Province as a whole and deserve nothing but the best level of care in their later years; and

**WHEREAS** there have been delays in negotiating collective bargaining agreements between Health Association Nova Scotia and the Union Bargaining Units that have led to a clouding of issues at the local levels leading to confusion and frustrations for staff and administration; and

**WHEREAS** these same levels of confusion and frustrations can impact on the level care that are provided to our elderly citizens;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities lobby Health Association Nova Scotia and the Minister of Health & Wellness to ensure that proper negotiating procedures and timelines are implemented that will result in the timely negotiation of new labour agreements coinciding with the expiration of existing bargaining unit agreements.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: *The Committee does not recommend this resolution.*

EXPLANATION: *The Committee indicated that municipalities would have no control over the collective bargaining process involving unionized provincial employees. The Province has mechanisms in place such as back-to-work legislation to ensure health workers remain in place.*

# MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR THE *HUMAN RIGHTS* *ACT*

## **Resolution 17A**

### **HOUSING FOR SENIORS**

⇒ Halifax Regional Municipality

**WHEREAS** Nova Scotia has one of the largest populations of senior citizens in Canada; and

**WHEREAS** the demand for housing that meets the needs of senior citizens will continue to rise; and

**WHEREAS** creating living arrangements that provide social networks and support systems will improve the quality of life for senior citizens and allow them to retain an active part of the broader community; and

**WHEREAS** the Provinces of British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Newfoundland have exempted seniors housing from provincial human rights legislation;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities call upon the Province of Nova Scotia to exempt housing designated for senior citizens from the *Human Rights Act*.

### **BACKGROUND:**

*In 2007, Halifax Regional Council requested that the Province consider changing its human rights legislation to allow housing developments that are limited to seniors. Currently this type of limitation is not permitted because it is considered discrimination on the basis of age under the Human Rights Act. However, British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Newfoundland have all exempted seniors housing from their human rights legislation.*

*Senior citizens comprise one of the fastest-growing segments of the population in Nova Scotia. Demand for housing that meets the specific needs of seniors will grow in the coming years. Designating some buildings "seniors-only" provides them with a support system and social network that is not readily available in standard buildings. There is benefit to create housing options that will keep seniors in the broader community, with easy access to transit, medical services, shops, and recreational opportunities, while meeting their accommodation needs.*

*Currently the Provincial government may create seniors-only housing in subsidized buildings. Seniors who do not receive subsidized housing should have the ability to access an equally supportive living environment.*

**COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:** *The Committee recommends this resolution.*

# DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

## Resolution 18A

### CHRISTMAS TREE COUNCIL OF NOVA SCOTIA

⇒ District of Guysborough

**WHEREAS** on June 22, 2011 the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources formally terminated the two Christmas Tree Specialist positions without notice; and

**WHEREAS** full and direct communication was promised between the industry and the government at the meeting in the Fall of 2010; and

**WHEREAS** the Christmas Tree industry was involved in the development of a service plan that would have met budgetary reduction demands placed upon the Department, met industry service requirements; and enhanced economic improvement for this vital rural based business; and

**WHEREAS** the Christmas tree industry has embarked upon a significant development program to improve trees and international market position so as to increase future value to the Province and our producers; and

**WHEREAS** technology and training delivery needs will, in fact, increase as new science and marketing initiatives are brought to the production and sale of Nova Scotia Christmas trees and greenery;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the UNSM petition the Government of Nova Scotia to work with the Christmas tree industry to restore and revitalize tree extension support so as to assure this significant rural commodity has the support required to implement an aggressive growth plan associated with the SMART Tree Research initiative and the first ever Christmas Tree Research Centre developed in collaboration with Government, University and industry.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: *The Committee recommends this resolution.*

# DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

## Resolution 19A

### REQUEST TO ESTABLISH FOREST LAND GRANT

⇒ County of Annapolis

**WHEREAS** in 1978 the Government of Nova Scotia set the forest property tax rate of 40 cents per acre for commercial forest property and 25 cents per acre for forest resource property and has not increased this rate in the past 33 years; and

**WHEREAS** the Province pays municipalities a Farm Land Grant where farm property is exempt from taxation; and

**WHEREAS** the Farm Land Grant was set at \$1.00 per acre in 1978 and has increased to \$2.75 per acre in 2012; and

**WHEREAS** this grant is annually indexed by the Consumer Price Index for Canada; and

**WHEREAS** the reduced tax rate for forest property shifts the property tax burden to residential and commercial property owners and represents an undue tax burden in municipalities with a significant amount of forest land;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities request that the Province of Nova Scotia establish a Forest Land Grant similar to the Farm Land Grant to assist those municipalities with significant forest property.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: *The Committee recommends this resolution.*

# PREMIER'S OFFICE

## Resolution 20A

### POINT LEPREAU NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION

⇒ County of Kings

**WHEREAS** the Point Lepreau Nuclear Generating Station is located approximately 64 kilometres from the shores of Nova Scotia and from the gateway to the Annapolis Valley which is home to the Atlantic Province's major food production and agricultural lands; and

**WHEREAS** during the original construction in the 1970's this nuclear generating station was reported to have experienced approximately one billion in overruns and major delays due to labour disputes; and

**WHEREAS** in November 2010, it was understood that the present refurbishment of the Point Lepreau Nuclear Generating Station will incur two to three year time overruns and the cost overruns will be approximately one billion dollars; and

**WHEREAS** during the past three decades, the Point Lepreau Nuclear Generating Station experienced a number of shutdowns and so-called contained radiation leaks; and

**WHEREAS** Point Lepreau is located on the shores of the Bay of Fundy which is home to a vibrant fishing industry and to whales; and

**WHEREAS** any major radiation leak into the Bay of Fundy would contaminate the entire Bay and the powerful Fundy Tides would push the contamination throughout the region and into the Minas Basin; and

**WHEREAS** even though the risk of a major accident is considered to be low, it takes only one tragic event to contaminate the environment of Nova Scotia and in particular, the Annapolis Valley; and

**WHEREAS** the recent and ongoing disaster surrounding Japan's nuclear industry clearly provides indication of what could happen to Nova Scotia and the entire Maritime Region in the event of a major radiation leak; and

**WHEREAS** several earthquakes have been reported or recorded in the Province of New Brunswick over past years and the Point Lepreau Nuclear Generating Station is built near an earthquake fault line; and

**WHEREAS** the nuclear crisis that followed Japan's massive earthquake is giving rise to new concerns about the safety of the Point Lepreau Nuclear Generating Station; and

**WHEREAS** it is expected that a major source of our province's future electrical energy will be produced by Newfoundland and Labrador hydro through an undersea electrical cable, along with Fundy tidal and wind;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the UNSM write to the Premier of Nova Scotia requesting the following:

1. A list of the safeguards in place at Point Lepreau which would protect Nova Scotians should a major accident occur;
2. What the potential impacts would be if a major nuclear accident occurred; and
3. Assurance from the Premier that all safeguard issues have been addressed.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: *The Committee recommends this resolution.*



# PROPERTY VALUATION SERVICES CORPORATION

## Resolution 21A

### **CANADA POST**

⇒ District of Lunenburg

**WHEREAS** Canada post is in the process of switching from RR numbers for mail delivery tool to civic addresses; and

**WHEREAS** many of the rural residents are still not aware of their new civic address requirement and have not notified the PVSC and/or their municipality of the address change; and

**WHEREAS** municipalities rely on address information from the PVSC to mail out tax bills;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities urge the PVSC to find an immediate resolution to the address problems created by Canada Post moving to civic mailing addresses for rural mail deliveries.

### **BACKGROUND**

*Canada Post is in the process of moving to civic addresses for rural mail delivery and reassigning postal codes. This results in a new mailing address for many rural residents. A number of local post offices in Nova Scotia already rely solely on civic number addresses and will return mail that is not correctly addressed. Other post offices will be following suit and converting to civic addresses in the future. When making the change, the post office sends correspondence and notifies the public before they start returning incorrectly addressed mail.*

*As a result of roll out issues of the new postal address requirements, Canada Post seems to have created confusion among its various post offices. Certain post offices may require civic numbers while others still use rural route numbers. Mail routed through an outside post office requiring civic numbers can be returned if there is no civic number on the mail, even though the residents own post office does not require civic numbers in their mailing address.*

*Unfortunately, many residents fail to inform the Property Valuation Service Corporation (PVSC) and/or the Municipality of their new civic mailing address.*

*Recently, in October 2010, the District of Lunenburg received numerous returns the first day of our tax mail out. Several calls to the postal authorities in Halifax, Ottawa and the local post office persuaded the post office to deliver tax bills with*

*incorrect (old) postal codes and RR numbers.*

*The District of Lunenburg has been working with the PVSC to come to some solution to this addressing problem.*

*The Audit committee recommends a UNSM resolution be approved by Council.*

**COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:** *The Committee recommends this resolution.*

# SERVICE NOVA SCOTIA & MUNICIPAL RELATIONS

## Resolution 22A

### CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS

⇒ Halifax Regional Municipality

**WHEREAS** UNSM has drafted proposed amendments to the *Municipal Government Act* regarding a Code of Conduct for Municipal Elected Officials; and

**WHEREAS** the Code of Conduct has been adopted by the majority of Nova Scotian municipalities; and

**WHEREAS** HRM remains committed to support the UNSM to advance the required changes to the *MGA* and Halifax Charter that would address the issue of sanctions for violating the Code of Conduct;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the UNSM and the Province of Nova Scotia move forward as soon as possible with required changes to the *MGA* that would provide sanctions for violation of the Code of Conduct.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

*UNSM has drafted proposed amendments to the Municipal Government Act regarding Code of Conduct for Municipal Elected Officials. HRM appreciates the work UNSM has undertaken on this issue to date, most notably developing the Code of Conduct itself and working towards its adoption by the majority of municipalities in Nova Scotia.*

*In May 2009, HRM adopted its own Code of Conduct for Elected Municipal Officials, using the UNSM Code as a basis and making slight modifications to reflect some of HRM's unique circumstances. In the same motion, Council endorsed UNSM's resolution supporting changes to the MGA to allow for sanctions for violation of the Code of Conduct. Halifax Regional Council remains committed to support the required changes to the MGA to allow for sanctions.*

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: *The Committee recommends this resolution.*

# **SERVICE NOVA SCOTIA & MUNICIPAL RELATIONS**

## **Resolution 23A**

### **FINANCING OF RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS**

⇒ District of Lunenburg

**WHEREAS** the Province of Nova Scotia's Renewable Electricity Plan and regulations require that by the year 2015, 25% of our electricity must come from renewable resources; and

**WHEREAS** the environmental benefits, through the creation of healthier living conditions in communities, economic benefits through price stability, job creation and the benefits associated with energy security support the renewable energy targets of the Province; and

**WHEREAS** the Province of Nova Scotia has developed the Community Based Feed in Tariff (ComFIT) Program and Enhanced Net Metering Program to achieve the renewable energy targets; and

**WHEREAS**, the ComFIT Program is built on a community energy generation model, in which Municipalities are encouraged and eligible to participate; and

**WHEREAS** participation by municipalities will require capital investments for which borrowing will be required and municipal borrowings are limited by debt service ratios in which it is advisable to not exceed a 15 percent debt service ratio; and

**WHEREAS** borrowings for Renewable Energy Projects will compete with other required capital projects, such as sewer, water and solid waste projects thus limiting the borrowing capabilities of municipalities to complete these necessary projects; and

**WHEREAS** this matter was considered by the UNSM Rural Caucus at their meeting on May 11, 2011, and a motion was passed to support a Resolution to the UNSM respecting the same;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the UNSM request that Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations not include in the debt service calculations borrowings by a municipality for Self Sufficient, Revenue Generating, Renewable Energy Projects under the COMFIT and Net Metering programs.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: *The Committee recommends this resolution.*

# **SERVICE NOVA SCOTIA & MUNICIPAL RELATIONS**

## **Resolution 24A**

### **GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION WITH UNSM**

⇒ Town of Mahone Bay

**WHEREAS** on March 22, 2011, the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations informed municipalities that effective for the 2012/13 fiscal year the province will no longer honor the 2007 agreement with the UNSM on the cost responsibility for various services and the province will stop taking on any additional costs for public housing, corrections and education ; and

**WHEREAS** this decision was made by the government without consultation or negotiation with the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities; and

**WHEREAS** the UNSM and previous Provincial governments have developed a consultation process that worked well for both the Province and the municipalities; and

**WHEREAS** the effect of the announcement by the Minister will result in additional costs to all municipalities without the benefit of discussion;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the UNSM write to Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations indicating that any further changes to policies and programs affecting municipalities should only occur after negotiating in good faith with the municipalities through the UNSM.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: *The Committee recommends this resolution.*

# **SERVICE NOVA SCOTIA & MUNICIPAL RELATIONS**

## **Resolution 25A**

### **HST PROVINCIAL REBATE**

⇒ Town of Mahone Bay

**WHEREAS** municipalities presently receive a 100% rebate of the Federal portion of HST paid and 57.14% of the Provincial portion of HST paid; and

**WHEREAS** it is the Canadian Revenue Agency (CRA) that interprets the provisions of the Federal HST legislation and regulations; and

**WHEREAS** there are instances that the CRA has required partner municipalities to pay HST for their portion of costs paid by the administering municipality; and

**WHEREAS** this has resulted in the non administrating municipalities to be paying a portion of HST twice; and

**WHEREAS** the CRA could make similar rulings in the future and require participating municipalities to pay HST on payments to other joint agencies such as Regional Libraries, Regional Development Agencies, Regional Libraries; and

**WHEREAS** it never was the intent for municipalities to pay HST on inter municipal agencies and partnerships; and

**WHEREAS** the net result is payment only of provincial HST;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities request that Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations set up a program whereby municipalities who are required to pay HST on contributions to municipal joint ventures can apply to the province for a rebate on the net HST cost paid by the municipality to such joint venture.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: *The Committee recommends this resolution.*

# SERVICE NOVA SCOTIA & MUNICIPAL RELATIONS

## Resolution 26A

### **MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS ACT—ELECTRONIC VOTING**

⇒ Halifax Regional Municipality

**WHEREAS** Municipalities are responsible for running and financing their own election processes; and

**WHEREAS** Municipalities are most knowledgeable about the issues facing municipal elections and the preferences and habits of the local electorate; and

**WHEREAS** electronic voting is becoming a more popular option as well as providing cost efficiencies and the opportunity to increase voter participation;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities write to Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations requesting that the *Municipal Elections Act* be amended to allow for more flexibility in electronic voting, thus enabling Councils to pass bylaws determining the use of electronic voting on a case-by-case basis.

### **BACKGROUND:**

*By motion of Regional Council on November 23, 2010, Halifax Regional Council recommended an amendment to the Municipal Elections Act, Section 146A (6), to allow for more choices regarding the conduct of advanced polls: either by a combination of in-person and electronic polls; or by electronic voting only. The propose of the amendments would enable Councils, by bylaw, to make the determination on an election-by-election basis as financial and as voter considerations evolve and could result in substantial cost-saving and cost-avoidance for future elections.*

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: *The Committee recommends this resolution.*

# SERVICE NOVA SCOTIA & MUNICIPAL RELATIONS

## **Resolution 27A**

### **MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT ACT BOUNDARY REVIEW PROCESS**

⇒ Halifax Regional Municipality

**WHEREAS** the *Municipal Government Act* currently requires municipal Councils to be the recommending body for the number of districts and location of district boundaries; and

**WHEREAS** this requirement places municipal Councils in a conflict of interest situation which is not conducive to impartial recommendations or public confidence in such recommendations; and

**WHEREAS** both Halifax Regional Council and Cape Breton Regional Council have passed motions requesting that the Province amend the *MGA* to institute an independent third party to undertake boundary review processes and recommendations; and

**WHEREAS** the Province this year tasked the UARB with undertaking an independent boundary review of both HRM and CBRM, simultaneously with the municipal reviews;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities request that the Province amend the *Municipal Government Act*, Part XVI, Section 369 to remove municipal Councils as the body required to conduct their own boundary reviews and instead have the Provincial Government appoint an independent party and ensure a mechanism for adequate public participation.

### **BACKGROUND:**

*Member of the Halifax Regional Council and Cape Breton Regional Council have both passed motions indicating that it is time for Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations to reconsider the requirement (MGA Part XVI, Section 369) for Councils to be the recommending body regarding both the number of districts within a Municipality and the actual location of the district boundaries.*

*Halifax Regional Council, on December 7, 2010, passed the following motion: "That Halifax Regional Council request that the Province of Nova Scotia amend the MGA to remove Council as the body required to conduct the study of the number and boundaries of polling districts in the municipality and to direct the NSUARB shall be the body that both conducts the study and sets the number and boundaries of polling districts and number of Councillors..."*



*Cape Breton Regional Council passed a similar motion in January 2011:  
"The current legislative requirements place elected officials at the time of the reviews in an extremely difficult position of being the body that is recommending. This "allowed conflict" does not serve to enhance the both public credibility and confidence in Municipal Elected bodies, In keeping with the Provincial approach to setting electoral boundaries the Services Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations should work with UNSM to implement the appropriate amendments to the MGA to provide direction for a 3rd party independent review body to conduct regular boundary reviews as required."*

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: *The Committee recommends this resolution.*

# **SERVICE NOVA SCOTIA & MUNICIPAL RELATIONS**

## **Resolution 28A**

### **PROVINCIAL TRANSFER PAYMENTS**

⇒ Town of Mahone Bay

**WHEREAS** Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations require municipalities to file various reports at certain time levels on a yearly basis; and

**WHEREAS** certain transfer payments are made to municipalities such as grants in lieu, equalization grants, infrastructure payments, and gas tax grants throughout the fiscal year; and

**WHEREAS** Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations unilaterally advised all municipalities that any municipal unit who misses their reporting deadlines will have funding withheld; and

**WHEREAS** the withholding of funding will have an effect on a municipal unit's cash flow and result in a cost to the municipality in the form of lost interest income or operating loan charges;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities request that Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations pay interest to municipalities at the same rate municipalities charge on late payment of taxes for any transfer payments being withheld from any municipality with such interest to be paid from the date the payment would normally have been paid to the date the actual payment is made to the municipality.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: *The Committee does not recommend this resolution.*

EXPLANATION: *Municipalities should be able to submit required reports to the Province in a timely manner.*

# **SERVICE NOVA SCOTIA & MUNICIPAL RELATIONS**

## **Resolution 29A**

### **RELOCATION OF PROVINCIAL OFFICES FROM RURAL AREAS TO URBAN AREAS**

⇒ District of Digby

**WHEREAS** the province has over the years, and continues to remove Provincial offices from rural areas and relocate to central urban areas; and

**WHEREAS** the relocation of these offices to the centralized areas is having a negative impact on small rural communities, especially in terms of the removal of access to the services such as land registry, agricultural offices, etc; and

**WHEREAS** rural communities benefit from the jobs created by having these Provincial offices in their communities;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities petition the Government of Nova Scotia to suspend any plans to relocate provincial offices from the rural areas of the province to the more central urban areas; and

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED** that the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities request that the Government of Nova Scotia help support small rural areas in the province by developing a policy of de-centralization of their offices.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: *The Committee recommends this resolution.*

# **SERVICE NOVA SCOTIA & MUNICIPAL RELATIONS**

## **Resolution 30A**

### **RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY TAXATION**

⇒ County of Antigonish

**WHEREAS** Municipal governments in Nova Scotia provide vital services - including solid waste management, fire protection, policing, water and sewer services, and substantial contributions to education - with tax monies based on the assessed value of property; and

**WHEREAS** residents of Nova Scotia, from whom these property taxes are received, collectively contribute to the maintenance, growth and development of their communities and the Province; and

**WHEREAS** non-resident ownership of land in this province is significant and increasing, and those non-residents pay the same rate of property tax, and receive the same level of services, without other commensurate contributions to the communities in which they acquire property, such that they do not pay their fair share of tax revenue; and

**WHEREAS** this differential in contribution should be recognized in the amount of property tax paid by residents and non-residents; and

**WHEREAS** the Province of Prince Edward Island has adopted legislation - the *Real Property Tax Act* - which provides for a fixed rate of tax on assessment subject to a tax credit for resident land owners, the effect of which is to require payment of a higher rate of property tax by non-residents; and

**WHEREAS** the said legislation has been judicially determined to be both within the jurisdiction of the province and in conformance with the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*; and

**WHEREAS** enacting similar legislation in Nova Scotia would ease the tax burden on resident property owners and allow for non-resident owners to contribute to more prosperous communities;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities request that the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations seek to have the *Assessment Act* amended, or introduce a bill in the legislature to propose separate legislation, the effect of which would be to ensure that non-resident owners of property pay a more equitable amount of property tax, while providing resident owners with a tax credit to offset the rate increase, in a manner similar to that employed in the *Real Property Tax Act of Prince Edward Island*.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: *The Committee does not recommend this resolution.*

EXPLANATION: *The Committee indicated that this is an issue of fairness. There is no basis to charge non-residents higher taxes than they currently pay. Non-residents pay the same taxes as residents and do not utilize municipal services on an annual basis. Non-residents, through spending power, also can contribute significantly to the local economy. Those originally from Nova Scotia who now live elsewhere but own property in their native province are also considered non-resident. Non-residents may also end up paying higher property taxes because their properties are ineligible to receive a cap under the Province's Capped Assessment Program.*

# **SERVICE NOVA SCOTIA & MUNICIPAL RELATIONS**

## **Resolution 31A**

### **SEASONAL TOURISM BUSINESS DESIGNATION—ARTISTS/ARTISAN STUDIOS**

⇒ District of Digby

**WHEREAS** the *Nova Scotia Assessment Act* defines a Seasonal Tourism Business as a business that is closed for at least four months in the taxation year and is a restaurant; a roofed accommodation, or a camping establishment; and

**WHEREAS** eligible seasonal tourist business are taxed at seventy-five per cent (75%) of the commercial tax rate; and

**WHEREAS** many Nova Scotia artist/artisans create and sell their art in studios that are only open during the summer months and which are deemed to be tourist attractions; and

**WHEREAS** these artist/artisans businesses are very dependent upon a ever diminishing tourism market; and

**WHEREAS** it is important to the culture and "green economy" of our province to help grow the local arts community by supporting the people who make what they sell, and live in our communities.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities request that the Province of Nova Scotia amend the *Nova Scotia Assessment Act* so that artists/artisan studios can be included in the definition of a Seasonal Tourism Business.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: *The Committee recommends this resolution.*

# UNSM

## **Resolution 32A**

### **BONUS ZONING**

⇒ Halifax Regional Municipality

**WHEREAS** attracting an increased number of people is necessary to sustain vibrant, dynamic and growing communities; and

**WHEREAS** HRM is committed to pursuing land use and development principles that emphasize densification and re-development in areas already served by existing infrastructure; and

**WHEREAS** creating affordable and attractive buildings within existing developments will attract people and establish healthy, mixed-use communities; and

**WHEREAS** the principle of bonus zoning rewards developers for constructing sites that meet the above-stated goals; and

**WHEREAS** every municipality in Nova Scotia and the HRM regional centre already has the ability to undertake bonus zoning;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities write to SNSMR in support of HRM's request that bonus zoning be permitted within its boundaries in order to put it on an equal legislative footing with all other Nova Scotia municipalities and to eliminate the inequities within HRM itself.

### **BACKGROUND:**

*Strengthening the Regional Centre is a key priority for FIRM: In the summer of 2010, Regional Council unanimously approved Capital Ideas, an approach to growing our urban core that focuses on partnership, infrastructure, investment, and densification of the core to support the economy of Nova Scotia. It endorses principles around land use and development that emphasize redevelopment in areas that are already served by hard and soft infrastructure (streets, pipes, water and power connections, transit, parks, recreation facilities, etc).*

*By improving the livability of the urban core we can attract a critical mass of people, which will create prosperity. In order to bring more people onto the peninsula, HRM needs to build upon the principles of the HRMbyDesign downtown planning strategy: In particular, having the ability to grant bonus zoning throughout the Regional Centre is imperative to addressing issues of*

*affordability and beautification that we need to attract people. Bonus zoning is the ability to grant extra density to developers in return for an improvement or stipulation of some sort to their site - for example, a set number of units reserved for affordable housing, or green space reserved for resident/public use. These kinds of mixed use developments are what are required to build the kind of integrated communities that attract people and businesses. Halifax Regional Council requested the legislative power to undertake bonus zoning in a motion dated June 23, 2009.*

*Bonus zoning is enabled in every other municipality in Nova Scotia, and in downtown Halifax (the area covered by HRMbyDesign legislation). However the rest of the municipality does not have the ability to grant bonus zoning. This creates an unequal situation for IIRM communities outside the Regional Centre. HRM has requested that the Provincial government remedy this situation by extending bonus zoning to all of HRM. The support of UNSM in profiling this request would be helpful.*

**COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:** *The Committee recommends this resolution.*



# UNSM

## Resolution 33A

### **BURSARY PROGRAM**

⇒ County of Colchester

**WHEREAS** the Association of Municipal Administrators, Nova Scotia (AMANS) in partnership with the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities (UNSM) and Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations (SNSMR) agreed to explore and develop strategies that can be used effectively to identify, attract, and recruit the next generation of local government officials; and

**WHEREAS** the above partnership resulted in the preparation of the comprehensive report which was released in 2006 titled "Reality Check: Do You Know Where Your People Are? Attracting the Next Generation of Municipal Government Managers in Nova Scotia"; and

**WHEREAS** the report states that "municipalities across Nova Scotia will be facing an impending labour shortage, and that there are simply not enough young people to replace the retiring Baby Boomers"; and

**WHEREAS** one way to bridge this gap will be for municipalities to implement succession plans and to train their current employees to become managers; and

**WHEREAS** the report also states that "career development opportunities serve to attract competent and motivated people to an organization, lead to higher levels of engagement and to increased retention rates"; and

**WHEREAS** municipalities that are able to offer training opportunities to new and existing employees will be in a better position to weather this labour shortage; and

**WHEREAS** financial pressures of professional development and mandatory training are onerous for some municipalities; and

**WHEREAS** the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities has established a bursary program for women municipal employees that has been successful in supporting the training and development of women;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities' Board work with the AMA and SNSMR in the development of a model, including a funding mechanism and decision making structure, for an inclusive bursary program open to all municipal employees.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: *The Committee does not recommend this resolution.*

EXPLANATION: *While training and development is important to all municipal employees, the research gathered from UNSM's Women in Local Government Report identified fewer training opportunities for women municipal staff, particularly at the clerical level. The Women in Local Government Bursary Program, supported by the UNSM, AMANS, SNSMR and several municipalities, has done a very good job in providing training opportunities for women municipal staff who may not have otherwise pursued advanced training. A bursary program established for both men and women would essentially eliminate the Women in Local Government Bursary Program due to limited funding.*

# **“C” RESOLUTIONS**

## **Resolution 1C**

### **LONG-TERM FINANCIAL SOLUTION FOR FERRY SERVICES—DIGBY-SAINT JOHN & YARMOUTH-PORTLAND FERRIES**

⇒ County of Annapolis

**WHEREAS** ferry services in Nova Scotia are key Marine Highway Connectors that are vital to transportation, tourism and fisheries sectors in our province; and

**WHEREAS** maintaining Atlantic Ferry Services is essential to sustaining and developing key economic generators in communities throughout our province; and

**WHEREAS** the Digby-Saint John Ferry Service and the Yarmouth-Portland Ferry Service are critical for the stability and growth of tourism in the province and economic stability in Southwest Nova Scotia; and

**WHEREAS** the \$600 million dollar annual seafood industry in Southwest Nova Scotia relies on the Digby ferry to export at least 60% of the seafood landed in the area to national and international markets; and

**WHEREAS** the Government of Canada has invested in a 3-year extension of funding for the Digby-Saint John ferry to March 31, 2014; and

**WHEREAS** a long-term funding commitment is needed for the Digby-Saint John ferry service and the Yarmouth-Portland ferry service;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities write the Province in support of the Bay of Fundy Transportation Partnership and the Nova Scotia International Ferry Partnership's lobbying efforts to secure a long-term financial solution for the Digby-Saint John ferry service and the Yarmouth-Portland ferry service.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: *The Committee recommends this resolution.*

# “C” RESOLUTIONS

## Resolution 2C

### **HUMAN SEWAGE SLUDGE FERTILIZER (BIOSOLIDS)**

⇒ Town of Canso

**WHEREAS** human sewage sludge (Biosolids) fertilizers are presently used by some farmers in Nova Scotia under Provincial Government approval; and

**WHEREAS** bio-solids from human sewage are known to include many contaminants in the sludge that may be harmful to public health; and

**WHEREAS** a full study of the uses of Biosolids fertilizers has not been clearly investigated by either the Province of Nova Scotia or the Government of Canada;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities urge the Province of Nova Scotia to ban the application of human sewage sludge (Biosolids) fertilizers to Nova Scotia farmland until such time as a complete study on the possible harmful effects on human health and user farm lands may be completed by the Government of Nova Scotia to the satisfaction of the citizens of the province; and

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED** that the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities petition the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to write the Federal Government requesting a ban on treated human sewage sludge (Biosolids) fertilizers on farms across Canada.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: *The Committee does not recommend this resolution.*

EXPLANATION: *A resolution requesting a provincial ban on biosolids was rejected by the UNSM membership in 2010. The province’s regulations on Class A biosolids are the most stringent in Canada. No additional scientific information has been brought forward in the past year that would suggest that the application of Class A biosolids is unsafe.*

# **“C” RESOLUTIONS**

## **Resolution 3C**

### **STATUTORY HOLIDAY**

⇒ District of Digby

**WHEREAS** there are only five (5) statutory holidays listed in the Nova Scotia Labour Standards Code;

**WHEREAS** Nova Scotia has the least number of statutory holidays in Canada;

**WHEREAS** there is competition to entice our workforce to leave Nova Scotia for other parts of the country and the world;

**WHEREAS** many of our capable workforce would prefer to remain in this Province if they could afford to do so;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities request that the Province of Nova Scotia make the appropriate legislative amendments to add another statutory holiday under the Labour Standards Code.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: *The Committee recommends this resolution.*

# “C” RESOLUTIONS

## Resolution 4C

### **STRICTER REGULATIONS FOR PRIVATE CONSTRUCTION AND DEMOLITION (C&D) SITES ON STOCKPILING OF MATERIALS**

⇒ County of Pictou

**WHEREAS** there are 22 Construction and Demolition (C & D) Sites in the province of Nova Scotia; and

**WHEREAS** since 1995, the province of Nova Scotia has allowed private C & D sites to operate; and

**WHEREAS** private C & D sites are only subject to guidelines, rather than the strict operating permits and regulations that municipally-owned C & D sites must abide by; and

**WHEREAS** private C & D sites are not subject to the same inspection frequency that municipal site are subjected to; and

**WHEREAS** the guidelines do not specifically address the issue of stockpiling of materials on the site;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities request the Minister of Environment to impose regulations on private C & D sites across the province that prohibits the stockpiling of materials and provide for adequate inspection of the private sites.

#### **Background:**

*In August 2010, a fire broke out at a private C & D site, for which a permit was issued by the Department of Environment in 2007. The site had a stockpile of debris estimated to be in excess of 7 stories high. Between August 5 and August 16, 2010, local volunteer fire departments were called to the scene of the ongoing fire every day. Eleven fire departments were involved, and in this time period 2 million gallons of water was pumped onto the massive pile.*

*The fire is speculated to have been caused by spontaneous combustion, demonstrating the risk of the stockpiling practices. Residents have provided pictures of banned materials that are contained or stockpiled on the site since the fire; however, the Department of Environment has stated that the activities have not been viewed during their inspections. The materials are buried and out of sight.*

*The Municipally owned site is inspected on an annual basis; however, the private C & D sites are inspected once every three years.*

**COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:** *The Committee recommends this resolution.*

# “D” RESOLUTIONS

## Resolution 1D

### **ACCESS TO PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES’ EXPERTISE**

⇒ County of Kings

**WHEREAS** the quality of policy decisions made by municipal councils is directly proportional to the information that is provided as background to the decision-making process; and

**WHEREAS** the Province of Nova Scotia, as well as individual municipal councils and the general public, have a strategic interest in ensuring that all municipalities are provided with the highest quality of background information on which to make decisions; and

**WHEREAS** the different departments and agencies of the provincial government often have the expertise, resources and information that can assist municipal councils in the decision-making process; and

**WHEREAS**, for reasons which are sometimes unknown, government employees are often hesitant and/or unwilling to positively respond to requests from municipal staff and/or council members, for professional advice, opinion and/or observations; the effect of such if provided, could be to the benefit the municipal government decision-making process; and

**WHEREAS** it is considered desirable that provincial government employees at all levels of the bureaucracy, when a request is made by a municipality, that they (provincial government employees) be encouraged to respond positively and provide information – including opinions and observations – that the individual employee believes may assist in the municipal decision-making process; and

**WHEREAS** it is important that such actions by provincial employees be undertaken without fear of negative repercussion in any way;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities take immediate action to establish a working committee, which will include municipal and provincial government representation, for the stated purpose of identifying and seeking to overcome present day barriers that hinder provincial government employees from providing requested background information, observations and opinions which can help municipal staff and councils in making informed decisions on matters that fall within municipal jurisdiction.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: *The Committee does not recommend this resolution.*

EXPLANATION: *The Committee indicated that provincial staff, including SNSMR's municipal advisors, is quick to respond to any questions originating from municipalities. Provincial staff is expected to respond in a manner that reflects provincial policy and not personal opinion. Mechanisms already exist through the UNSM where information can be obtained from the Province on behalf of municipalities.*



# **“D” RESOLUTIONS**

## **Resolution 2D**

### **PROVISION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL ON THE SUBJECT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN NOVA SCOTIA**

⇒ County of Kings

**WHEREAS** municipal Councillors across the Province may be called upon from time to time to visit a classroom to enlighten students on the nature of municipal government; and

**WHEREAS** it is prudent to provide our young people with knowledge on this subject as it is required to become more aware of, and more engaged in, civic affairs throughout their lives; and

**WHEREAS** there are few opportunities within the curriculum of our public school system to raise student consciousness about the importance of local government; and

**WHEREAS** public engagement remains one of the most important challenges facing all governments at all levels; and

**WHEREAS** many Councillors in Nova Scotia can make practical use of instructional material presented to our students with consistency in form and content across the Province; and

**WHEREAS** the effectiveness of such instructional material may be enhanced by tailoring one version for elementary students and another version for high school students;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities produce and distribute to all municipalities short educational presentations on the subject of Local Government in Nova Scotia.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: *The Committee recommends this resolution.*

# **“D” RESOLUTIONS**

## **Resolution 3D**

### **REQUEST TO DEVELOP A RESOLUTION TRACKING AND REPORTING PROCESS**

⇒ County of Annapolis

**WHEREAS** the membership of the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities reviews and approves Resolutions at the Annual General Meeting with the expectation that every effort will be undertaken to ensure that the intent of each Resolution is fulfilled and acted upon in a timely manner; and

**WHEREAS** the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities currently does not have a reporting process to clearly communicate progress on each Resolution approved by the membership; and

**WHEREAS** the membership would benefit from a standardized reporting process for Resolutions;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities be required to act in a timely manner and to the fullest extent possible on each Resolution approved by the membership; and

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED** that the UNSM develop a Resolution tracking and reporting process with progress on each Resolution communicated to the membership at Annual General Meetings.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: *The Committee recommends this resolution.*

# **“D” RESOLUTIONS**

## **Resolution 4D**

### **UNSM STRUCTURE**

⇒ District of Lunenburg

**WHEREAS** the object of the UNSM is to represent the interests of local governments in the Province, and to act as the advocate for member units on all such matters as are properly within the jurisdiction of the government of the Province; and

**WHEREAS** the objects also aim to further municipal interests by encouraging cooperation between municipal units; and

**WHEREAS** about ten years ago the UNSM determined that one way of achieving its objective was to form three separate and distinct caucuses, representing its regional, rural and town members; and

**WHEREAS** it appears that after almost ten years, the objective of speaking with a unified voice and promoting what is best in local government and service is sometimes lost within this structure; and members do not feel as though they have been part of the debate and decision making process on policy issues that originate from a caucus; and

**WHEREAS** a review of our structure is always in order, and there are those who feel that the present caucus structure is not working as effectively as it should in providing a unified voice for local government; and

**WHEREAS** we must always convince our own membership of the merits of any particular policy, otherwise we will never have any hope of convincing the Province of Nova Scotia of its merits; and

**WHEREAS** the UNSM for over ninety years of its one hundred and five year history did deliberate together as one body and reached consensus through policy discussion and debate, which produced some excellent results for the Province of Nova Scotia;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the UNSM conduct a complete review of the present caucus structure.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: *The Committee recommends this resolution.*