

Sheralee Mitchell-MacEwan

From: Kim Ramsay
Sent: August 29, 2025 1:45 PM
To: council
Subject: NSFM (proposed) Bylaw Amendments
Attachments: By-Law Changes Document - November 6 2025.pdf; 2024_NSFM By-Laws Amended.pdf; 2025-08-19 Letter to CAOs from Ramsay - NSFM By-Law Changes.pdf
Importance: High

Councillors,

The NSFM is proposing several bylaw changes at the Fall 2025 Conference, at its AGM. There are two amendments that I would like to bring to your attention, amendments which relate to the role/relationship between NSFM and CAO's and the Association of Municipal Administrators (AMANS).

- I. **Motion #3 to remove the right for elected officials to have staff present at "Member Meetings", defined as the AGM or Special Meetings (per Section 6.3 – meetings called throughout the year) ARTICLE 3 – MEMBERSHIP - 3.6 Rights of Members**

Delete 3.6 c) "A Member Unit may send municipal staff to Members' Meetings as advisors to Elected Municipal Officials. Staff advisors shall not have voting rights but shall be entitled to speak at such meetings."

Discussion:

The NSFM did not bring this change to light in their introduction email on August 19, 2025. It is included in the list of 16 motions to amend the bylaws.

In 2022, the NSFM bylaw changes attempted to give the CEO and the President the power to exclude staff advisors and other elected officials from certain Special Meetings. Amendments were made (and passed by the membership) to strike these powers from the bylaw. Elected officials were vocal in 2022 that they rely on their staff advisors to help them work through complex municipal issues and support them at NSFM meetings and in their discussions about these issues at the Council table. Municipal staff play a key role in disseminating information for Council.

Although generally the "staff" at these meetings is the CAO, Councillors/Mayors/Wardens may want to have the Municipal Solicitor, their Director of Transportation, the Fire Chief, a Building Official or their Director of Planning at topical meetings (a few examples). Imagine having a meeting to discuss Fiscal Review where your Director of Finance was not permitted in the room or on the call.

A member's right to have municipal staff attend these meetings in an advisory capacity will be removed with this proposed amendment. The discretion of whether staff can be present will rest with the Board (who I assume will delegate this to the CEO or a member of the Executive).

The NSFM's Act of Incorporation recitals (attached) read in S4.a, "...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;”. Few, if any, NSFM staff have worked in municipal government. The practical day-to-day application of local government issues facing Councils isn’t available from the staff team at the NSFM. Having staff advisors in your NSFM meetings is key to ensuring this advocacy is accurate and representative of East Hants’ best interest.

There is no context provided in the NSFM package explaining why staff would be excluded from member meetings.

As elected officials you rely heavily on our staff to provide advice on a variety of issues. If you believe that you are better served when NSFM information shared with elected officials is available to your staff advisors, you may want to make or support a motion that votes down Motion #3 amendments or vote against the motion if/when put on the floor at the NSFM AGM.

II. Motion #5 to Amend the Composition of the Board

ARTICLE 5 - BOARD OF DIRECTORS - 5.2 Composition – Delete 5.2 a) xi. A representative appointed by the Association of Municipal Administrators

Discussion:

For many years, the Boards of the NSFM and the Association of Municipal Administrators (AMANS) included one seat from each other’s Board, typically the Past President of each organization. The NSFM Board is recommending to its members that they move away from this. This move follows decisions of the NSFM Board to sever office space with AMANS after a 30+ year relationship and to move away from billing and receiving administration fees on behalf of AMANS in 2026.

Although they respect the NSFMs decision to bring this amendment forward, AMANS has taken the position that the move to sever the Board relationship is not in the best interest of either organization or municipal government as a whole. AMANS will NOT be amending its By-laws to remove the NSFM seat on their Board. A letter from the President of AMANS (me) is attached for your reference – this was sent out to all AMANS members when the NSFM gave notice of their bylaw amendment motions.

This move comes as we need more than ever to have a united front of all member units when dealing with downloading, power erosion and improving our fiscal realities in our collective work with the Province. The presence of a municipal administrator at NSFM Board meetings can enhance the Federation’s decision making, and subsequent representation of municipal interests, by the NSFM Board. For full disclosure, as my two year term as President of the AMANS comes to a close in October, I would be the next AMANS Past President to serve on this Board if the amendment fails.

As elected officials you rely heavily on the NSFM Board to represent the interest of our municipal unit. If you believe that the presence of an experienced municipal administrator on the NSFM Board supports East Hants’ interest, you may want to make or support a motion that votes down Motion #5 amendments or vote against the motion if/when put on the floor at the NSFM AGM.

III. Conclusion

Please review the full slate of proposed by-law changes (attached) and make an informed decision when it comes time for you to vote at the NSFM Annual General Meeting this fall. There are 16 changes in total, I have provided background on two. If you want a more fulsome discussion on the other amendments, please let me know.

I hope you are all looking forward to a busy September!

Kim

From: NSFM Communications <communications@nsfm.ca>
Sent: August 19, 2025 9:00 AM
Subject: Notice: Annual General Meeting & Proposed By-law Changes

Good Morning,

This correspondence is addressed to all elected municipal officials.

At the June 27 meeting of the Board of Directors, the Board discussed a series of prospective by-law changes. These proposed changes will be presented for the membership's consideration at the upcoming **Annual General Meeting**:

November 6, 2025 @ 1:30 pm
Commonwealth Board Room
The Westin Nova Scotian Hotel
1181 Hollis Street, Halifax, Nova Scotia

Article 10 – By-Law Amendments of the NSFM By-laws provides for the following:

- a) These by-laws may be amended at the Annual General Meeting or a Special Meeting, on a motion passed by two thirds (2/3) of votes cast or, in the event of a motion proposed by way of E-Voting, on a motion passed by two thirds (2/3) of the votes cast by way of E-Voting subject to the satisfaction of the requirements of Art. 6.6 (d)(ii).*
- b) Notice of proposed amendments to the by-laws must be provided at least twenty-eight (28) days prior to the date on which they are to be discussed.*

Pursuant to subsection 10 (b) of the By-laws, **this information provides a minimum 28-days notice period of the proposed by-law changes**, for which there are sixteen (16) separate Motions being proposed.

Summary of Changes

The attached **By-law Changes Document** outlines in detail the changes being proposed. The vast majority are designed to clarify, simplify, or update the by-laws.

One change we would like to draw your attention to is **Motion #5** which will change the composition of the Board of Directors by removing the representative of the Association of Municipal Administrators Nova Scotia (AMANS) and reducing the size of the Board from 17 to 16. The reasons the Board is proposing this are:

- AMANS and NSFM are separate and distinct organizations and this is a structure that no longer makes sense, given their unique roles

- The NSFM Board feels there are better avenues and more effective ways to utilize to communicate and strengthen our relationship with AMANS
- The Executives of both organizations have discussed this and are committed to work on a path forward for collaboration, communication, and cooperation

Online Information Session

NSFM will be hosting an online **Information Session** on ~~Tuesday September 16 @ 4:00 pm~~ to review the prospective by-law changes with the membership. A meeting invite will be sent to you in the near future.

Please find attached the following:

- Motions #1 through #16 for each proposed by-law change
- A copy of the current NSFM by-laws illustrating all changes being proposed

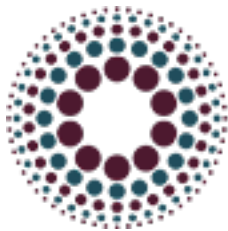
Motions will be moved, seconded, and discussed prior to a vote. Any questions, please contact imorrison@nsfm.ca.

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NSFM is located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaw. We are all Treaty people. We also acknowledge the histories, contributions, and legacies of the African Nova Scotian people and communities who have been here for over 400 years.

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