



Appendix “A” - recommendations with municipal comment

Governance Model and Roadmap - Fire Services Governance Study, Fire Services Association of Nova Scotia

GOVERNANCE AND LEGISLATION

Recommendations	Municipal Comments
<p>1. The Province of Nova Scotia should develop and implement a single, purpose-specific Act that consolidates all existing pieces of legislation governing the delivery of fire protection services in Nova Scotia. This legislation should include the provisions necessary to establish the following:</p> <p>1.1 Only the Council of a municipality may authorize the establishment and operation of a fire department in the municipality.</p>	<p>At present there is no requirement for a Municipality to authorize the creation and/or operation of a fire department. Sections 293 & 294 of the MGA outlines registrations as fire departments.</p> <p>The FSANS recommendation shifts the authority and responsibility to Municipal Governments. In East Hants all 13 departments are registered with the Municipality.</p>
<p>1.2 The Council of the municipality shall be responsible for approving the appointment of a fire chief for the fire department.</p>	<p>Appointing a Chief would enable a Municipality to remove a Chief.</p> <p>There could be a potential that the province requires the Municipality to move towards a one Fire Chief model.</p>
<p>1.3 The fire chief is the person who is responsible for and accountable to the Council of the municipality that approved their appointment, for the delivery of fire protection services.</p>	<p>The Chief role will need to be defined in order to be accountable to Council.</p> <p>Council will need to establish the level of oversight of the Chief to ensure accountability and minimize risk to the Municipality.</p> <p>The FSANS report is not clear on if the intent of their recommendations are for one overall Chief that is accountable to the Municipality or multiple Chiefs.</p>
<p>1.4 The definition of “fire protection services” should include:</p> <p>1.4.1 Fire suppression, fire prevention, fire investigations, and fire safety education.</p> <p>1.4.2 The mitigation and prevention of risks created by unsafe levels of carbon monoxide, as well as safety education related to these levels.</p> <p>1.4.3 Rescue services.</p>	<p>This recommendation is more geared towards the responsibility of the Fire Marshals office. However, definitions may support the development of municipal levels of service.</p>
<p>1.5 The fire chief has the authority and responsibility for the management of the fire department, including but not limited to the establishment of rules, regulations, and operating procedures, and is directly accountable to the Council of the municipality for all aspects of fire department operation.</p>	<p>If the fire chief is accountable to the Municipality, this could imply that the Municipality will be responsible for fire services. Council would need to understand what resourcing maybe needed at that time if the fire service isn’t independent as it is today.</p>

1.6 The fire chief, by way of delegation through the municipality, is the authority having jurisdiction (AHJ) for all matters pertaining to the delivery of fire protection services in the municipality. In the case of the Halifax Regional Municipality, the AHJ for fire protection services is the fire chief of Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency Services. In the case of the Cape Breton Regional Municipality, the AHJ for fire protection services is the fire chief of Cape Breton Regional Fire and Emergency Services.	This is not an issue if model remains status quo with 13 chiefs. Could be strengthened through policy development.
1.7 The fire chief is responsible for making recommendations to the Council of the municipality with respect to fire protection service levels and is accountable to the Council of the municipality for the delivery of the approved levels of service.	Council should consider establishing a service level policy for fire protection. Policy would be adjusted based on ongoing feedback of the Chief(s).
<p>1.8 At a minimum, on an annual basis, the fire chief shall submit a written report to the Council of the municipality that contains at least the following:</p> <p>1.8.1 The fire protection service levels being provided by the fire department.</p> <p>1.8.2 An analysis of the calls for service in the previous year.</p> <p>1.8.3 Any challenges requiring the Council's attention regarding the fire department's ability to continue delivering the current level of service.</p> <p>1.8.4 The Council of the municipality shall be responsible for approving the fire protection service levels provided by the fire department on an annual basis and for ensuring that the fire department has the necessary resources to deliver the approved levels of service.</p>	<p>Administrative burden to each volunteer department and chief.</p> <p>1.8.4 - May prove to be challenging within current operating model as all departments are independent of the municipality which includes their capital and operating budgets.</p>
2. This legislation should define the term "firefighter" in such a manner that includes a fire chief, and any other person employed in, or appointed to, a fire department and assigned to undertake fire protection services, including paid, paid-on-call, and volunteer personnel.	Definitions provide clarity. Would need to review draft legislation to understand what coincides with the term "firefighter".
3. This legislation should include provisions for fire chiefs and firefighters, indemnifying them from all liabilities arising from the performance of their fire department duties, while acting in good faith.	This provision would be valuable.
4. In collaboration with the Fire Services Association of Nova Scotia (FSANS), the Province of Nova Scotia should explore opportunities for enhanced collaboration between fire departments and the Department of Natural Resources' wildland firefighting services, particularly in wildland-urban interface areas.	Agree.
<p>5. The Province of Nova Scotia should consider aligning the governance of fire departments, emergency management, and the Nova Scotia Office of Fire Marshal under one Provincial ministry to maximize opportunities for alignment, synergies, and efficiencies.</p> <p>5.1 The Province of Nova Scotia should consider the implementation of a Nova Scotia Fire Commissioner</p>	<p>Provincial jurisdiction.</p> <p>The outcome may streamline communication for municipalities.</p>

position, reporting directly to the Deputy Minister - Emergency Management, who has executive accountability for the Nova Scotia Office of Emergency Management, the Nova Scotia Office of the Fire Marshal, and for providing oversight and coordination support to fire departments across Nova Scotia.	
6. In collaboration with FSANS, the Province of Nova Scotia should develop, implement, and deliver a comprehensive training program for all municipal council members, municipal administrators, fire chiefs, and senior municipal officials, to be delivered following each municipal election, that covers all aspects of municipal fire service governance, authority, accountability, and responsibility.	This would be integrated into the existing onboarding program of Councilor's post-election.
7. The Province of Nova Scotia should establish the requirement for each municipality to produce and maintain a community risk assessment to inform the establishment of fire protection service levels.	This might align with the risk assessment requirements being discussed in the Provincial REMO standards.
8. The Province of Nova Scotia should consider incorporating mandatory fire safety and fire prevention content into its provincial elementary and high school curricula.	Provincial jurisdiction.
9. The Nova Scotia Office of the Fire Commissioner should conduct complaint-based, request-based, and proactive fire prevention inspections and related enforcement activities in each municipality served by a volunteer fire department in a timely and effective manner. 9.1 In municipalities with career fire prevention staff, the Nova Scotia Office of the Fire Commissioner personnel should be available for consultation and assistance as required by the fire department.	Provincial jurisdiction. As East Hants career compliment evolves this may impact the need for dedicated fire prevention staff.
10. The Fire Commissioner create key performance indicators and other effective service delivery performance management tools to assess the effectiveness of its services Province-wide	Provincial jurisdiction.
11. The Province of Nova Scotia, via the Nova Scotia Office of the Fire Commissioner, should develop and implement mandatory annual reporting requirements for all fire departments, such that the following information is compiled and readily available for all areas of Nova Scotia: 11.1 Fire department resources, PPE, equipment, and apparatus. 11.2 Fire department staffing. 11.3 Fire department service levels. 11.4 Fire department technical qualifications and capabilities, including all aspects of fire suppression, rescue, technical rescue, and emergency medical response. 11.5 Up-to-date contact information for each Fire Chief.	Administrative burden for departments.
12. In collaboration with FSANS, the Province of Nova Scotia should develop a comprehensive change management and communications plan to support the implementation of the recommendations contained in this report.	No comment.
13. FSANS should develop a comprehensive report that quantifies the economic value of services being provided by Nova Scotia	Municipalities may be required to provide data.

fire departments, including the economic value of services being provided by volunteer fire departments in Nova Scotia.

FIRE DISPATCH AND COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS

Recommendations	Municipal Comments
<p>14. The Province of Nova Scotia should implement a consolidated, province-wide fire dispatch and communications system that meets the needs of all fire departments across the province. This should include the following objectives:</p> <p>14.1 Facilitate and enable the implementation of Next-Generation 9-1-1 (NG-911) systems and functionality across Nova Scotia.</p> <p>14.2 Ensure that the fire dispatch facilities, infrastructure, equipment, and operational performance comply with the requirements outlined in <i>NFPA 1225 - Standard for Emergency Services Communications</i>.</p> <p>14.3 Ensure that comprehensive records management systems, processes, and performance analytics functionality are in place to inform and enable effective community risk assessment planning by each fire department, as well as to inform risk-based fire safety education and fire prevention planning by both the Nova Scotia Office of the Fire Commissioner and the fire departments in Nova Scotia.</p> <p>14.4 Ensure that adequate redundancies are in place to ensure the seamless and uninterrupted operation of the fire dispatch and communications system in the event of planned and unplanned system outages.</p>	<p>Would strengthen communications.</p>
<p>15. The Province of Nova Scotia should ensure that adequate cellular and mobile data coverage is available to fire departments to support emergency response operations across Nova Scotia.</p>	<p>Council has been advocating for improvements to cellular service for multiple years.</p>

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND TRAINING

Recommendations	Municipal Comments
<p>16. The Nova Scotia Office of the Fire Commissioner should establish and implement comprehensive and standardized fire service professional qualification and training standards across Nova Scotia.</p> <p>16.1 Where possible, the applicable National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Professional Qualification Standards should be adopted.</p>	<p>As standards are developed they need to consider how volunteer firefighters support their departments non-front line capacities.</p>
<p>17. The Nova Scotia Office of the Fire Commissioner should establish, implement, and operate a centralized Provincial Fire Training School that meets the needs of the fire departments in Nova Scotia.</p> <p>17.1 The Nova Scotia Office of the Fire Commissioner should maximize opportunities to establish, implement, and operate an effective network of regional fire training schools, operating</p>	<p>This is critical to the success of fire service delivery in Nova Scotia.</p>

<p>under the centralized Provincial Fire Training School, that are geographically located to meet the needs of Nova Scotia's fire departments.</p> <p>17.2 The Nova Scotia Office of the Fire Commissioner should maximize opportunities to make mobile training systems and instructors available to fire departments across the province, thereby minimizing travel time and the associated costs and service delivery impacts of sending firefighters out of jurisdiction for training.</p> <p>17.3 The Nova Scotia Office of the Fire Commissioner should maximize the availability of online and other distance-based education and training opportunities, where applicable, for firefighters.</p> <p>17.4 The Nova Scotia Office of the Fire Commissioner should establish and centrally manage all aspects of fire department professional standards evaluation and certification across Nova Scotia.</p>	
<p>18. When implementing standardized fire service professional qualification and training standards in Nova Scotia, the Nova Scotia Office of the Fire Commissioner should establish and implement effective "grandparenting" processes for experienced and current firefighters that form part of the implementation process. The establishment of a fire services advisory committee, in collaboration with FSANS, will help to inform these processes and to support the change management process.</p>	<p>This would be important to maintaining the existing dedicated volunteer base.</p>

FIREFIGHTER HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLNESS

Recommendations	Municipal Comments
<p>19. The Nova Scotia Office of the Fire Commissioner should establish and implement standardized fire service PPE and equipment standards across Nova Scotia.</p> <p>19.1 Where possible, the applicable NFPA standards should be adopted.</p>	<p>Understanding the financial implications would be critical to this recommendation.</p>
<p>20. In collaboration with FSANS, the Province of Nova Scotia should explore opportunities to make the appropriate PPE cleaning and decontamination resources available, in support of Firefighter cancer prevention efforts, in a manner that meets the needs of Nova Scotia fire departments.</p>	<p>Health and Safety is critical in fire service delivery.</p>
<p>21. The Province of Nova Scotia should ensure and clarify that all fire departments and all firefighters in Nova Scotia, including volunteer firefighters, are subject to the provisions of the Nova Scotia Occupational Health and Safety Act and the associated Regulations.</p> <p>21.1 The Province of Nova Scotia, in collaboration with FSANS, should create a drivers certification process making it easier for firefighters to</p>	<p>This would need to be understood further. This would add administrative workload for Chiefs to ensure all departments are meeting and documenting their OH&S requirements.</p>

obtain a license to properly operate a fire apparatus.	
22. The Province of Nova Scotia should ensure that standardized and equitable WCB coverage is provided to all Nova Scotia firefighters requiring coverage, including volunteer firefighters, and should ensure that the coverage rates and amounts being provided are appropriate.	Provincial jurisdiction with local cost implications.
23. In collaboration with FSANS, the Province of Nova Scotia should explore opportunities to ensure that all firefighters, including volunteer firefighters, have appropriate access to proactive occupational cancer screening, imaging, and diagnostic services. 23.1 Consideration should be given to exploring the application of <i>NFPA 1582 - Standard on Comprehensive Occupational Medical Program for Fire Departments</i> with respect to the provision of occupational medical evaluation services for firefighters.	Provincial jurisdiction with potential local cost implications.
24. In collaboration with FSANS, the Province of Nova Scotia should explore opportunities to ensure that all firefighters, including volunteer firefighters, have appropriate access to effective and proactive mental health and resilience education, training, resources, and support.	Provincial Jurisdiction. East Hants Fire Service provides additional Health Benefits/Supports (EFAP) for their members.
25. In collaboration with FSANS, the Province of Nova Scotia should explore opportunities to ensure that all firefighters, including volunteer firefighters, have appropriate access to effective and proactive post-traumatic stress exposure/illness/injury treatment, support, and assistance.	Provincial Jurisdiction. East Hants Fire Service provides additional Health Benefits/Supports (EFAP) for their members. This may not be to the level described in this recommendation without understanding further.
26. FSANS should explore opportunities to aid Nova Scotia firefighters and their families in completing WCB claims and managing the associated processes.	East Hants submits WCB claim that are processed through the East Hants Fire Services Risk Advisor.
27. In collaboration with FSANS, the Province of Nova Scotia should explore opportunities to encourage local employers to permit their employees, who also serve as volunteer firefighters, to leave work to respond to fire department emergency calls, and to ensure that those employees do not suffer a loss of wages while doing so.	This would support recruitment efforts. The Municipality has existing policy that meets this recommendation and a recognition program to recognize businesses that have said policy.

SUSTAINABLE FIRE SERVICE FUNDING

Recommendations	Municipal Comments
28. The Province of Nova Scotia should explore opportunities to ensure that all provincial capital asset grant processes, made available to Nova Scotia fire departments, include the provision of the necessary operating funds to maintain the capital asset in a state of good repair.	Forward thinking.
29. In collaboration with FSANS, the Province of Nova Scotia should work with municipalities to help	There are various funding models throughout the provinces 49 municipal units. The current model in East

municipalities in the development of adequate and sustainable funding models for fire departments, with the goal of reducing their reliance on supplementary public fundraising efforts.	Hants enables the fire departments to recommend their area rates to deliver their current levels of services. If levels or services are adjusted or new standards and legislation are set, this may impact the sustainability of the current model. Municipal engagement is crucial with this recommendation.
30. The Province of Nova Scotia should explore opportunities to implement a cost recovery process for fire departments that respond to emergency incidents on Provincial highways and Crown lands.	Recovering for Motor Vehicle Accidents through insurance would provide an additional revenue stream for services provided. Increases administrative burden to bill and collect. Municipality has previously raised this to the fire chiefs.
31. The Province of Nova Scotia should explore opportunities to implement a cost-recovery process for fire departments that are required to provide medical first-response services, in support of Nova Scotia Emergency Health Services. This should include cost recovery for the necessary equipment, training, and the response to emergency medical incidents by a fire department.	Medical first-response services contribute to a significant call volume for many fire departments. Increases administrative burden to bill and collect.
32. The Province of Nova Scotia should explore opportunities to ensure that fire department levy rates, for both resource lands and Crown lands, are updated to reflect the modern costs of providing fire protection services and the associated needs of fire departments.	Provincial jurisdiction.
33. In collaboration with FSANS and municipalities, the Province of Nova Scotia should explore opportunities for providing standardized and cost-effective fire department vehicle, equipment, and liability insurance coverage and rates, rather than requiring each fire department to manage these issues individually.	East Hants Fire Service have been coordinating their insurance coverages for many years. The coordination is supported by the Risk Advisor for the Fire Service.
34. In collaboration with FSANS, the Province of Nova Scotia should explore opportunities to make grant funding available to municipalities, to produce community risk assessments, hazard and risk identification assessments, and feasibility studies relating to the potential for the regionalization and/or consolidation of fire departments, including the potential for shared service delivery models in Nova Scotia.	Grant opportunities would be good to access as needed. Page 26 of the document references conducting risk assessment and development of a Fire Services Master Plans as a foundational step toward enhancing public safety.
35. In collaboration with FSANS, the Province of Nova Scotia should explore opportunities to make grant funding available to local departments and regions to assist with producing reports for long-term equipment, facility, and apparatus lifecycle management plans, as well as fire service reviews, to support departments as they move forward with the forthcoming changes.	Grant opportunities are needed.

VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Recommendations	Municipal Comments
36. In collaboration with FSANS, the Province of Nova Scotia should consider developing Provincewide recruitment marketing strategies, including print, radio, television, and social media campaigns, to encourage Nova Scotia residents to become and continue to serve as volunteer firefighters.	Creating awareness of the valuable role volunteer firefighters contribute to across the province would support awareness along with recruitment and retention efforts at the local level.
37. In collaboration with FSANS, the Province of Nova Scotia should explore opportunities to enhance collaboration between fire departments and the Nova Scotia Guard to enhance public safety during times of emergency.	Interagency collaboration is key to success.
38. In collaboration with FSANS, the Province of Nova Scotia should explore opportunities to standardize volunteer firefighter compensation structures across the province, ensuring equity and that volunteer firefighters feel appropriately valued and respected. Based on the feedback obtained from numerous volunteer firefighters from across Nova Scotia, the following are examples of suggestions that should be explored: 38.1 Consider implementing enhanced provincial tax credits for volunteer firefighters. 38.2 Consider implementing municipal property tax credits for volunteer firefighters. 38.3 Consider implementing a standardized paid-on-call compensation / honourarium model for volunteer firefighters across Nova Scotia.	38.1 - Provincial jurisdiction 38.2 - MGA legislative changes would need to be made to enable this recommendation. 38.3 - This should to be left at the local level to determine.
39. In collaboration with FSANS, the Province of Nova Scotia should explore opportunities to enhance and incentivize the retention of volunteer firefighters. 39.1 Based on the feedback obtained from numerous volunteer firefighters from across Nova Scotia, this could include the establishment of "retirement" tax credits, allowances, or other honourariums that are made available to long-service volunteer firefighters upon their retirement from the fire service, with the value of these honourariums increasing with completed years of service as a volunteer firefighter.	Provincial jurisdiction.
40. In collaboration with FSANS, the Province of Nova Scotia should explore opportunities to implement cost-subsidized access to fitness facilities for volunteer firefighters, in support of their ongoing health and wellness, and in consideration of the demands associated with their service within their respective communities.	Provincial jurisdiction.