

**Annual General Meeting
Fire & Emergency Services Committee AGENDA
Best Western Hotel, Cookeville
Wednesday, April 9, 2025 – 7:00 p.m.**

1. Call to Order
2. Welcome & Opening Remarks – Mayor Mclean-Wile
3. Introduction of Committee Members & Councillors
4. Approval of Minutes of Annual Meeting – April 10, 2024
5. Chair’s Annual Report – Fire & Emergency Services Committee 2
6. Fire Service Coordinator’s Report 3-11
- 6.1. Draft Training Strategy12-29
7. Registration Package – to be returned by June 15th, 2025
8. Other Items Circulated/Available
- 8.1. Updated Civic Maps (provided)
- 8.2. Updated Maps for Road Map Series Book (available if required)
9. Appointment for four representatives to Fire & Emergency Services Committee
- 9.1. Report of Nominations – Chris Kennedy..... 30
10. New Items
- 10.1. Code of Conduct
- 10.2. Date for 2026 Annual General Meeting – Wednesday April 8, 2026
11. Adjournment

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Annual Report

Fire and Emergency Services Committee of the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg

2024

I want to first thank all the members of committee, from the Fire Services, the Municipal Council, and the members at large. The committee structure/membership provides a cross section and together we work to make improvements. In October of last year, we had a municipal election. That election resulted in a few less meetings but the committee worked on to meet the initiatives set out in an earlier workshop.

The group worked well together and was able to move forward with the business of the Fire Services. The support staff including the Fire Services Coordinator brought matters to the table and provided background information as required.

The Fire Service Representatives of this committee attend the Lunenburg Regional Fire and Emergency Services meetings (LRFES). This interaction is vital in understanding the concerns of the Fire Service and ensures matters go forward to the Municipality of Lunenburg.

-There were many updates done to the annual registration form as more crucial information is obtained to get a better understanding for decision making. That will be discussed at the annual meeting.

-budget recommendations are made on the various grants to the Fire Service including, municipal grants, matching grants, insurance grants and training grants.

-A presentation of the LRFES Training Committee was made during a FESC meeting which has brought the critical matter of Fire Fighter (FF) training to major discussions. There is a training document that will be used to prepare a plan of ensuring that appropriate FF Training will be addressed to meet the needs of the Fire Service.

-Insurance proposals have been called for the Fire Service and significant savings will be realized.

As you can see from this report the Committee members have worked at a number of initiatives but there are many more as we work together collaboratively going forward.

I also wanted to take this opportunity to thank Chris Kennedy for his assistance to all the fire service groups over the past year whenever they required him.

Brian Keizer

Committee Chair

Fire & Emergency Services Committee
Date: April, 09, 2025
Item: 6.
Authorization: Alex Dumaresq

Fire & Emergency Services & FESC Annual General Meeting

April 09, 2025, 19:00hrs
Best Western Plus Cookville



CVFSA/MODL Medals

- 21 - 20 yr Firefighter Awards (420 yrs)
- 9 - 30 yr Firefighter Awards (270 yrs)
- 10 - 35 yr Firefighter Awards (350 yrs)
- 4 – 40 yr Firefighter Awards (160 yrs)
- 4 – 45 yr Firefighter Awards (180 yrs)
- 8- 50 yr Firefighter Awards (400 yrs)
- Totalling 1,780 years of combined service



New CVFSA/MODL Medals



Achievements Through Joint Collaboration

- Work Plan for Fire Services Coordinator
- Successfully completed Soft Skills Workshops for Firefighters and Leaders
- Resiliency Sessions done with a couple of departments and one on ones
- Fire Depts asking for EAP for Firefighters
- Visited 21 of the 23 fire stations



Achievements Through Joint Collaboration

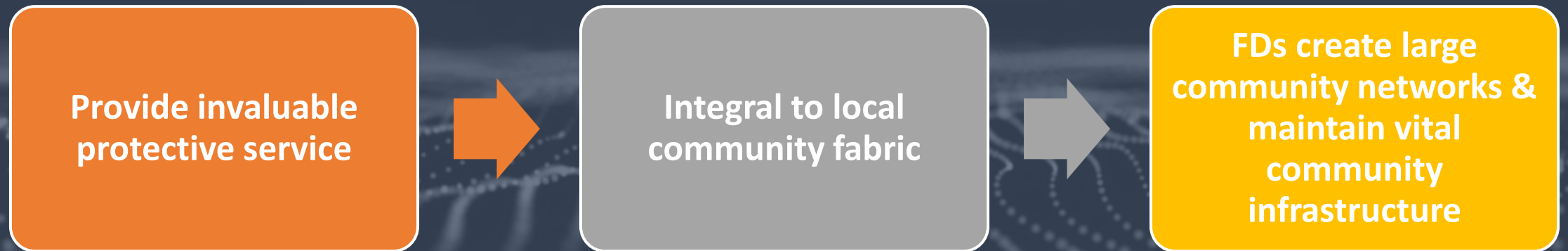
- Review of Insurance by Joint Services board had good savings for MODL and Fire Services
- Draft Training Strategy
- Code of conduct
- Municipal Council supported FESC request for \$100,000 to be placed in an account for a Regional training facility



Critical Incident Stress Management for the Fire Service in Nova Scotia



Importance of Fire Departments







Fire & Emergency Services Committee
Date: April, 09, 2025
Item: 6.1
Authorization: Alex Dumaresq

Draft Firefighter Training Strategy FESC Discussion

April 2025



Origin

- **FESC completed Strategic Workplan in November 2023.**
- **Developing a training strategy central part of workplan**
- **LRFES training committee worked with staff to prepare concepts**
- **FESC meeting with LRFES to review drafts**



Issues

- **General**
 - Aging cadre of volunteers
 - Reduced time commitment from new volunteers
- **Specifics:**
 - Level 1
 - Driver/operators
 - Officers
 - Specialized training
 - Facilities



Recommendations

- **Enhanced local level 1 training**
 - Support for trainers
 - Training, stipend
 - Support for coordination
 - Promotion & honorarium
- **Funding for other training**
 - Driver/operator
 - Specialized & leadership



Regional Training Facility

- Council contributing to reserve
- Research on other regional facilities
- Preliminary discussions to begin with regional partners

Possible components

- Live fire facility;
- Training tower;
- Minimum of 2 classrooms;
- Cold smoke building;
- Confined space trailer;
- Apparatus bays;
- Possible colocation with other first responders and/or future specialized functions;
- Fitness/gym facility;
- Dormitory & showers;
- SCBA workstation & air compressor



Draft Discussion Paper for Lunenburg Regional Training Strategy

Prepared By: Chris Kennedy, Fire Services Coordinator,
Alex Dumaresq, Deputy CAO

Based on discussions with: LRFES Training Committee,
MODL's Fire & Emergency Services Committee (FESC)

Date: Fall 2024

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Executive Summary

The development of a training strategy was highlighted in the Fire and Emergency Services Committee's workplan. Staff met with LRFES & FESC to identify issues, priorities and recommendations for a joint strategy. This paper was created to summarize their work and share more widely in the fire service before finalizing the strategy.

Key issues identified included the changing nature of volunteerism and the demands on volunteers' time and the need for expanded training opportunities and facilities locally. Ideally the strategy will improve training in the region resulting in:

- Increased Level 1 trained firefighters in the Volunteer Fire Service
- Increased trained officers in the Volunteer Fire Service
- Increased drivers/operators in the Volunteer Fire Service; and
- Increased opportunities for specialized training.

Recommendations for achieving the above goals centred on the following areas:

1. Establish Baselines and Set Measurable Goals
2. Enhanced Local Level 1 Training
3. Develop Program to develop and Retain Local Trainers
4. Promote Training for Fire Service Members
5. Support Driver/Operator Training
6. Support Specialized Training
7. Support Regional Facilities
8. Ensure a Regional Approach is Maintained

Background

Volunteer Fire Service

Lunenburg County is fortunate to have a large and strong volunteer fire service. With over 600 volunteers, the community benefits from a large and dedicated group of first responders who are incredibly dedicated to their community. This strategic document is a collaboration between the Lunenburg County Fire and Emergency Services group (LRFES) and the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg's (MODL) Fire and Emergency Services Committee.

Origin of the Strategy

The Fire and Emergency Services Committee plays an important role connecting the municipality with its fire services providers. In addition, the committee explores opportunities for strategic advancements for the fire service. In November of 2023 the committee completed a strategic work plan focussing on safety, capacity & governance, and recruitment & retention. A key outcome of the work plan was to collaboratively develop a training strategy for the fire service.

MODL staff met with LRFES training committee members in the spring of 2024 to explore concepts and then prepared draft versions of this report to stimulate discussion among the LRFES and the Fire and Emergency Services Committee. It is the experience knowledge and ideas of those members summarized in this report.

Existing Training Opportunities

Local Level 1 Firefighter Training

LRFES has a training committee and have been making incredible strides. This devoted group has put together a local Level 1 training program using volunteer resources. It is designed to be as inexpensive and as flexible as possible, to maximize the number of volunteers who can participate. The courses started in started in 2022 with 8 completing the program; in 2023 another 10 volunteers completed the training. This year there are 19 enrolled in the local, volunteer-run Level 1 training. Currently the demand for the training exceeds the volunteers' capacity to put on the program.

Nova Scotia Fire School

There is also a teaching institution in Halifax which provides a range of courses and learning opportunities. In addition to offering level I (both training and certification options) there are also more advanced programs such as: level II firefighter training, hazmat, extraction, pumper/operator training, fire service instructor training, and officer training, among others.

While the range of training options is much larger than what is available in Lunenburg County, there is a higher cost for level 1 training, while also being less flexible and requiring travel time compared to the local option.

Online Training (Vector)

Currently some local departments buy a subscription for online sessions from Vector Solutions. These courses follow NFPA scope of training, and are a useful tool, though they cannot provide the same quality of education as in person instruction.

Other

Most departments host regular training nights to practice firefighting skills. These meetings sometimes involve training on specialized techniques and/or involve cross-training with other departments.

The LRFES receives a \$10,000 grant from MODL for training, which has been used in the past to bring in guest speakers and provide specialized training.

There are additional opportunities for training that are relevant to the fire services including Provincial training on emergency management (ie. Incident Command System training; wildland fire interface).

MODL also offers a leadership training grant to departments seeking to improve human resources skills in their organization.

Issues:

General

Like most volunteer groups in Nova Scotia, our fire service is facing some demographic challenges. The average age in the province has increased and this is reflected in our fire service. Long serving, highly experienced firefighters are aging out of active service across our departments. Fortunately, there has been new interest in volunteering, buoyed in part by an influx of new residents because of the covid pandemic.

New volunteers require training in order to be effective members of the fire service. The nature of volunteerism is also changing in a way that has challenged the fire service. New volunteers are now more likely to place limits on their volunteer time in face of increased economic pressure and family commitments. When considering training options, flexibility is a must to help volunteers complete programs while balancing other life commitments.

Local Level 1

The local program has been highly successful, providing good training that is offered free to firefighters. There are some challenges to the sustainability and scope of the training. The local training program provides complete instruction of written and practical skills expected of Level 1 firefighters, but does not provide certification. Trainees seeking certification must take the additional step of pro-board testing (consisting of a written and practical exam), normally through the Nova Scotia Fire School.

The current arrangement is highly reliant on a core group of volunteers who are already committed members of local departments. In addition to volunteering to provide instruction, these individuals are also completing administrative tasks to manage enrollment, track attendance, evaluate trainees, record completion and provide certificates.

Trainers for the local program are recruited by word of mouth using local knowledge. There are no set pre-qualifications in order to be a volunteer instructor. The working groups discussed some minimum qualifications that would be worthwhile establishing, including: Level 1 certification, and techniques of instruction as well as some combination of fire service experience and/or Level 2 certification.

Officer Training

As long-serving volunteers retire from officer positions, new volunteers are required to step into these leadership roles. Officer training includes several components beyond Level 1 firefighter training including:

- Firefighting Level 2 training,
- Human Resources management training,
- Interpersonal skills,
- ICS 100 & 200, and
- Strategy & Tactics training.

Officers are responsible for many responsibilities beyond training and emergency response including: Human Resources issues, department safety, organizational management and administrative duties. While beyond the scope of this document, there is a heavy burden on these critical volunteers and departments must be careful not to burn out their core members.

There are different options for formal officer training: the Nova Scotia Fire School provides officer training. The Halifax Regional Municipality has also developed an in-house officer training program.

Driver/Operator Training

Similar to officer roles, retirements in the Lunenburg County volunteer service are limiting pools of trained drivers and pump operators. More opportunity to train volunteers for these critical positions is needed. Currently there are limited opportunities for training for drivers and operators. To be a trained driver, it is recommended that individuals possess a Class 3 Nova Scotia driver's license. Scheduling these exams from the Registry of Motor Vehicles in Nova Scotia has been an issue; the Fire Services Association of Nova Scotia has been working on some measures to reduce this barrier including mobile testing for the Class 3 exam and a shorter waitlist for exam scheduling for members of the Fire Service. LRFES is currently observing to see if these efforts are effective.

Specialized Training

Continuous learning is a central component of adult education. In addition to maintaining and expanding the technical skills of our volunteers, specialized training put on in the region can encourage cross-department communication and relationships. Firefighters in Lunenburg County have expressed a continuous desire for specialized training but there are limited opportunities. Some examples of specialized training that has taken place or would be of value for the volunteer fire service include:

- Extrication work;
- Junior training day;
- Incident command system (ICS);
- Managing a Maday; and
- Responding to Electric vehicle accidents and structure fires with solar/batteries.

Facilities

Training in the Fire Services requires specialized facilities. Some training facilities exist in local departments in Western Lunenburg County that are available for departments to use (e.g. Bridgewater, Northfield, and LaHave). Currently there is no live-fire training facility in the County. In addition, not all departments are aware of and make use of these facilities.

Regional facilities are valuable as they provides different learning opportunities, and the opportunity for training and collaboration with other departments. If training facilities are not in Lunenburg County it creates a travel barrier, increasing the time commitment for volunteers who participate in training.

As part of the development of this strategy, other regional facilities were reviewed to see what components were included. Example facilities reviewed were:

- Lesser Slave Lake Regional Fire Service training facility;
- Comox Fire Training Facility;
- Hants County Fire Training Ground; and
- Pugwash Fire Training Ground.

Different components identified included:

- Live fire facility;
- Training tower;
- Minimum of 2 classrooms;
- Cold smoke building;
- Confined space trailer;
- Apparatus bays;
- Possible colocation with other first responders and/or future specialized functions (e.g. EMS, Police Services, dispatch centre, hazmat unit);
- Fitness/gym facility;
- Dormitory & showers;
- SCBA workstation & air compression.

Training Goals For our Volunteer Fire Service

Through discussions at the working group level, we propose the following goals for the training strategy:

- Increase number of Level 1 trained firefighters in the Volunteer Fire Service,
- Increase the number of trained officers in the Volunteer Fire Service,
- Increase the number of driver/operators in the Volunteer Fire Service; and
- Increase opportunities for specialized training.

Options & Preliminary Recommendations

Based on the issues and opportunities identified above, the working groups has developed the following recommendations. In general, these recommendations rely on LRFES continuing and enhancing its role in delivering training, with enhanced municipal funding to support these initiatives.

Establish Baselines and Set Measurable Goals

1. MODL Establish a baseline for level of training in the County for key metrics, including:
 - Level 1 trained;
 - Officers trained;
 - Drivers/operators trained;
 - Trained and class 3;
 - Trained and class 5; and
 - Pump operator trained.
2. In 2025 the FESC set measurable goals for a 5-year window for each priority.

Enhanced Local Level 1 Training

3. LRFES Focus on Training over Certification:
 - Training is the critical part, certification can be encouraged.
4. LRFES Maintain and enhance the local Level 1 Training Program:
 - standardize a formal training curriculum;
 - pay an honorarium to volunteers who complete training; and
 - increase the number of Level 1 course seats offered per year.
5. Consider a central coordination role for registration, documentation.
 - note: No staff capacity in MODL exists for taking on these administrative responsibilities; other jurisdictions who have a similar function also have a centralized capital purchasing and fire tax system.
 - An alternative approach could be a grant paid to LRFES to provide an honorarium to a volunteer providing the administrative function.

Develop Program to Develop and Retain Local Trainers

6. LRFES Establish qualifications for instructors:
 - Provide funding to fully cover the cost of completing courses to achieve the recommended qualifications.

Promote Training for Fire Service Members

7. MODL, LRFES, and individual departments promote training among the fire service:
 - During orientation;
 - At monthly meetings;
 - At the fire services AGM & LRFES meetings;
 - Through LRFES website and social media; and
 - Recommend that every department assign a lead training officer, all communication on training would be provided both to chief and lead training officer.
8. To ensure that the training is accessible to more volunteers, LRFES should promote the flexibility of the training while ensuring that training options have maximum flexibility including:
 - Using online & do at your own pace as options; and
 - Allowing volunteers to attend make-up session if their schedule doesn't permit them to follow the initial schedule.

Support Driver/Operator Training

9. LRFES Promote the provincial government's prioritization of volunteers seeking class 3 drivers license testing.
10. Provide an honorarium for volunteers who complete driver/operator training.

Specialized Training

11. LRFES re-invigorate specialized, regional training:
 - as LRFES had been doing pre-covid, using the existing MODL training grant;
 - Grant paid out based on actual expenditures;

- consider organizing a symposium similar to the successful forum hosted in Colchester.

12. MODL continue to provide soft skills/interpersonal/leadership training for departments.

Regional Facilities & Approach

13. MODL Fire Services Coordinator create and annually promote a central list of training facilities and opportunities here in Lunenburg County.

14. MODL Council continue to build reserve for a regional facility through annual budget allocation.

15. MODL Share concepts identified in this report with the fire service and regional partners to further discussion on potential components of a regional facility.

16. Continued regular and proactive dialogue between MODL Fire Services Coordinator, LRFES and FESC.

17. Share information with Towns; ensuring they are included in the strategy development, training opportunities and funding.

Non-report Recommendation

(important topic of discussion in working group – doesn't fit in a training strategy):

Communication within LRFES

- There is a need for a better avenue for disseminating information out through the whole fire service.
 - E.g. it's difficult to advertise training to all LRFES members, the info usually only goes to chiefs
 - There is a LRFES email list, you can sign up as a member

Fire & Emergency Services Committee
Date: April, 09, 2025
Item: 9.1
Authorization: Alex Dumaresq



Memorandum

To: Fire & Emergency Services Committee (FESC)
From: Chris Kennedy, Fire service Coordinator
Date: April 9, 2025
Re: Annual General Meeting, Fire Service Representatives

Current Members of the FESC

The four fire service members currently servicing on the FESC have been contacted by the Fire Service Coordinator and are willing to let their names stand as members of the committee for another year.

They are as follows.

1. Brian Keizer, District 1&2 Fire Commision
2. Emily Bowers, Captain, Hebbville F.D.
3. Darren Mulock, Chief, Northfield & District F.D.
4. Dean Schmeisser, Deputy Chief, Dayspring & District F.D.