

**Municipality of the District of Lunenburg**  
**Minutes of a Meeting of the Policy & Strategy Committee**  
**Held in Council Chamber, 10 Allée Champlain Drive, Cookville, N.S.**  
**Tuesday, February 17, 2026 – 9:00 a.m.**

**Attendance**

Deputy Mayor Chasidy Veinotte, District 10, Chair  
Councillor Alison Smith, District 6, Vice Chair  
Mayor Elspeth McLean-Wile  
Councillor Morgen Reinhardt, District 1  
Councillor Wendy Oickle, District 3  
Councillor Martin Bell, District 2  
Councillor Pam Hubley, District 4  
Councillor Cathy Moore, District 5 (virtual)  
Councillor Edgar Burns, District 7  
Councillor Ben Brooks, District 9

**Regrets**

Councillor Kacy DeLong, District 8

**Staff**

Tom MacEwan, Chief Administrative Officer  
Alex Dumaresq, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer  
April Whynot-Lohnes, Municipal Clerk  
Lisa Andrews, Executive Assistant  
Tina Robichaud-Bond, Executive Assistant

**1. Call to Order**

Deputy Mayor Veinotte called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and began by acknowledging that the meeting was held in Mi'kma'ki, the traditional territory of the Mi'kmaq people.

**2. Announcements, Acknowledgements, Recognition - Nil**

**3. Public Input**

There were two speakers for the public input session:

1. Carmel Degen (Italy Cross, Lunenburg County) spoke with respect to Item # 9.1.1 on the agenda "Increase Charge Area Homestead Estates Private Road Owners Association" in favour of Policy & Strategy Committee recommending to Council to approve the addition of PID 60639242 to the Homestead Estates Private Road Owners Association Charge Area.
2. Matthew & Jennifer Glaude (Italy Cross, Lunenburg County), property owners of subject property, spoke with respect to Item # 9.1.1 on the agenda "Increase Charge Area

Homestead Estates Private Road Owners Association” to oppose Policy & Strategy Committee recommending to Council to approve the addition of PID 60639242 to the Homestead Estates Private Road Owners Association Charge Area as their main driveway is off the municipal road and they are no longer using the private road access points.

Mayor McLean-Wile arrived at 9:05 a.m.

#### **4. Changes/Approval of Agenda**

Moved by Councillor Hubley, seconded by Councillor Bell that the Agenda be approved as circulated. Carried unanimously.

#### **5. Approval of Minutes**

The Minutes of January 20, 2026, Policy & Strategy Committee meeting were approved as circulated.

#### **6. Business Arising from Minutes - Nil**

#### **8. Referral From Committees/Council – Nil**

#### **9. Staff Reports**

##### **9.1 Planning & Development Services**

##### **9.1.1 Increase Charge Area Homestead Estates Private Road Owners Association**

Norma Schiefer, Manager of Development, was in attendance to review her report titled “Increase Charge Area Homestead Estates Private Road Owners Association” (circulated with the agenda) at the request of the Homestead Estates Private Road Owners Association to add PID 60639242 to the charge area. Ms. Schiefer confirmed that a decision needs to be made prior to the March 1<sup>st</sup> processing of the private road annual maintenance charge.

**Moved by Councillor Reinhardt, seconded by Councillor Burns that the Policy & Strategy Committee recommend to council to approve the addition of PID 60639242 to the Homestead Estates private Road Owners Association Charge Area; and further, that the Mayor and Municipal Clerk be authorized to sign an addendum to the Private Road Maintenance Agreement to implement the same.**

Ms. Schiefer confirmed that the Municipality have been told that the homeowners are aware of the private road maintenance fees, however, the homeowners no longer use the access points from the private road.

It was confirmed that the Association could come back any time throughout the year to request charges, however, they would not be processed until the next regular billing cycle.

Ms. Schiefer noted that determining rights-of-way or encroachments requires reviewing subdivision records.

**The Motion on the floor was voted on and defeated. Opposed unanimously.**

## **7. Presentations/Scheduled Times**

### **7.1 Osprey Village Enhancement/Beautification Plan**

Nathan McLeod, Senior Landscape Architect, UPLAND Planning & Design Studio attended the meeting and gave a presentation titled “Osprey Village Beautification & Enhancement Plan” (circulated with the agenda) and provided a summary of the plan detailing the four main focus areas:

- More Multi-use Paths
- Grow a Green Network
- Make Pedestrian Improvements
- Key Changes to Unlock Potential (future use - commercial and residential)

Mr. McLeod confirmed that data collection was not completed when planning the pedestrian crosswalks and, although a population boost is expected in the area, it would be hard to project numbers.

Dave Waters, Director of Economic Development confirmed that the infrastructure, such as sidewalks, planters, etc. would be owned by MODL.

Stephen Pace, Director of Engineering, Project Management & Public Works, confirmed \$5.1m in capital budget for the sidewalk project. The project is currently in the design stage.

**Policy & Strategy Committee recessed at 10:05 a.m. resumed at 10:13 a.m.**

## **9.2 Administration**

### **9.2.1 Nova Scotia Fire Services Governance Study**

Tom MacEwan, CAO, reviewed the presentation titled “Nova Scotia Fire Services Governance Study” (attached to the Minutes) and stated that this is not an initiative of MODL, it is an initiative of the Province of Nova Scotia. The presentation provided an overview of the recommendations from the study and included details on the following:

- Implications for Volunteer Departments
- Next Steps
- Table Questions from Consultation Meetings
- Fire Service Transition (Current, Future, Transition Needs)
- FAQ’s – Fire Service Modernization Planning Sessions, Vision & Roadmap

Councillor Bell left at 10:30 a.m.

Mr. MacEwan confirmed that we have no further details on the Rural Fire District Act and that the province has a 90-day requirement to communicate dissolution.

Mr. MacEwan stated that included in the information was a visualization and road map showing 12 months' notice is expected to come in April 2026; framework is supposed to be established by September 2026 and new regulations to take effect in September 2027.

Councillors were asked to commit to contacting the Fire Chiefs in their respective districts, over the next 7 – 14 days, to ensure they are all aware of the Province's proposal.

**10. Mayor's/Deputy Mayor's/Councillors' Matters - Nil**

**11. Added Items – Nil**

**12. In Camera - Nil**

**13. Adjournment**

**There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:36 a.m.**



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Policy & Strategy Committee  
February 17, 2026  
Item # 9.2.1

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# Nova Scotia Fire Services Governance Study

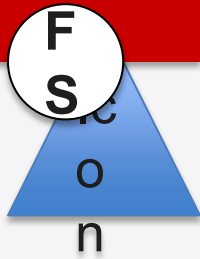
Modernized Structure • Training • Dispatch • Sustainability

Chris Kennedy  
Fire Services Coordinator MODL



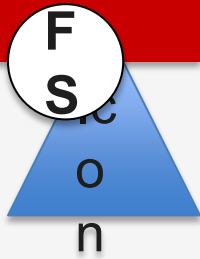
## Overview

- The Nova Scotia Fire and Associated Services Governance Study proposes modernizing fire services governance to improve coordination, sustainability, and effectiveness. It addresses legislative gaps, training challenges, inconsistent service delivery, and funding pressures.
- This study was initiated due to increasing complexity in emergency response, aging infrastructure, and growing expectations for standardized firefighter competency across the province.



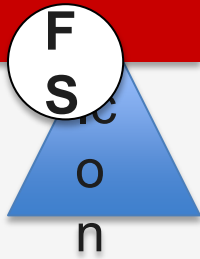
## Key Recommendations

- Creation of a unified Fire Services Act to replace fragmented governance.
- Appointment of a Nova Scotia Fire Commissioner to oversee standards and coordination.
- Development of province-wide training standards and a Provincial Fire Training System.
- Standardized dispatch aligned with NG-911 and NFPA 1225.
- Enhanced mental health, cancer prevention, and WCB protections.
- Sustainable funding models reducing dependence on fundraising.
- Provincial recruitment and retention initiatives.



## Implications for Volunteer Departments

- Possible shift from independent society governance to more standardized provincial oversight.
- Higher minimum standards for training, operations, and equipment.
- Potential reduction in administrative burden as standardized systems are introduced.
- Improved access to mental health and safety supports.
- Changes in funding formulas may reduce reliance on community fundraising but increase reporting requirements.
- Transition toward unified dispatch may require equipment or communication upgrades.



## Next Steps

- Review the detailed recommendations with municipal leadership.
- Begin internal assessment of departmental readiness for new training and governance requirements.
- Participate in upcoming provincial consultation sessions.
- Identify equipment or system upgrades needed for alignment with standardized dispatch.
- Develop communication materials for membership and community stakeholders.



## TABLE QUESTIONS FROM CONSULTATION MEETINGS

### 1. Governance of Fire Service

- What benefits do you see with a potential municipal led fire service?
- What roadblocks do you see occurring with a transition to this type of fire service?
- What provincial support is needed?
- What information or education would be needed to assist municipalities in understanding a new system?
- What oversight will be required to ensure all municipalities are working towards a new system?
- How long of a phased-in period would be needed to accomplish any changes to a new system?
- What would this phased-in period look like?



- What opportunities do you envision a new fire service system would have in your area outside of your municipality?

## **2. Training and NFPA Alignment with Level of Service**

- What would make this achievable for all departments in Nova Scotia?
- What opportunities do you think will exist with standardized training in your region?
- Are there any roadblocks you can think of with implementing training standards?
- What resources will be needed to effectively introduce training standards?



### **3. Implementation**

- Where do you foresee the biggest implementation bottlenecks?
- Who will be the most important champions of the implementation?
- What is the most important piece of the new scenario?
- What are your priorities for infrastructure, technology and equipment, and operational performance in the fire dispatch process including dispatch centres and paging systems?



#### **4. Volunteer Recruitment & Retention**

- What benefits would be seen from establishing a new fire service recruitment and retention of firefighters
- What areas should caution be used to ensure retention of firefighters?
- What other areas should be looked at and mentioned to assist volunteer recruitment & retention?




#### **5. Provincial Role & Supports**

- What supports would provide the most immediate value to municipalities?
- What does success look like for the transition to the future service model in your local fire departments?
- What would be the toughest challenge to overcome with supports and roles of the province with regards to your local fire department.



# Fire Service Transition




This plan outlines the transition for Nova Scotia fire services from a self-governed state to a provincially overseen model. It covers key areas including governance, community risk, service levels, administration, and funding.

	 Current State	 Future State	 Transition Needs
<b>Governance &amp; Legislation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multiple Acts in relation to fire services in Nova Scotia</li> <li>Many fire departments are self-governed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oversight by Province</li> <li>Municipally-led fire services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One consolidated provincial legislation for fire services</li> <li>Regulations established and oversight provided by the Province</li> </ul>
<b>Community Risk Profile</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some departments have completed a community risk profile, but it is not mandatory to complete</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All departments begin using risk assessment model to determine levels of service in coordination with the municipality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Province sets standards for municipalities to use community risk profiles to determine service levels and standards.</li> </ul>
<b>Level of Service (LOS)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determined by fire department</li> <li>Little to no data behind chosen level of service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determined by risk with clear correlation in coordination with the municipality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tool provided by Province that suggests service levels in alignment with risk profile</li> </ul>
<b>Fire Leadership &amp; Administration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elected Fire Chief</li> <li>Holds own liability insurance</li> <li>Responsible for own financials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Municipally Approved Fire Chief</li> <li>Municipal support for finance, OHS, fleet and facilities</li> <li>Shared budget process, new opportunities for regional collaboration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legislation by Province highlighting indemnification</li> <li>Bylaws passed by municipality confirming appointments and other services</li> </ul>

This plan serves as a guide for municipalities and the Province to collaborate on implementing a new, risk-based fire service model for Nova Scotia.






# Fire Service Transition

	 <b>Current State</b>	 <b>Future State</b>	 <b>Transition Needs</b>
<b>Response</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Response times and capacities determined by fire department; gaps in response data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using real-time data and NFPA standards for guidance, a standard of cover outlines number of responders and response time based on municipal demand zones</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Records management system tied directly into Dispatch</li> <li>Data includes call types, dispatch time, chute times and travel time.</li> </ul>
<b>Volunteer Firefighter Recruitment &amp; Retention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruitment campaigns conducted by fire department</li> <li>Staffing numbers determined by fire department</li> <li>Firefighters conduct responses and day to day operations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Municipal Human Resources support</li> <li>Firefighters would be under municipal/regional umbrella</li> <li>Firefighters conduct responses and day to day operations - no changes of significance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear interpretation of OHS applicability for the fire service</li> <li>Support with larger campaigns for recruitment and retention</li> </ul>
<b>Infrastructure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fundraised and mostly purchased by local fire department (boot drives community suppers)</li> <li>50/50 Money</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funded and supported by municipal budget</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding/grant opportunities from province to offset initial costs of fire departments</li> </ul>
<b>Professional Standards &amp; Training</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determined by fire department, no standard of training regulated by province</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shall meet minimum Nova Scotia Training Standards that are supported and aligned to NFPA and Nova Scotia OHS and other related standards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clearer regulations on training</li> <li>Clear authority having jurisdiction for training and certification</li> </ul>
<b>Apparatus &amp; Equipment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintained and purchased mainly by fire department</li> <li>Unknown record keeping or policies on maintenance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aligned directly with Level of Service</li> <li>Shall meet all legislative requirements including OHS purchasing support with municipality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ownership and equipment-sharing possibilities</li> </ul>



# Fire Service Transition

	 <b>Current State</b>	 <b>Future State</b>	 <b>Transition Needs</b>
<b>Firefighter Health, Safety &amp; Wellness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department-specific; the responsibility of the department to host programs for firefighters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsibility of municipality to take care of their employees</li> <li>• Meets or exceeds OHS legislative requirements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provincial grant programs for mental health training and wellness initiatives</li> </ul>
<b>Sustainable Fire Service Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fundraising for capital and operations</li> <li>• Fire service sets area rates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council approves a budget aligned with approved LOS</li> <li>• Annual municipal budget for operating</li> <li>• Municipal capital budget &amp; reserves</li> <li>• Municipalities will fund essential capital assets based on levels of service being provided</li> <li>• Fundraising can be used for non-essential equipment in coordination with municipalities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipalities fund municipally-led fire services in Nova Scotia</li> </ul>

# FAQ - Fire Service Modernization Planning Sessions

Category	Question	Answer
<b>Governance, Structure &amp; Jobs</b>	Will small departments be forced to close or amalgamate?	No. The goal is to ensure every community has adequate and sustainable fire protection. Regional collaboration is encouraged where it improves safety and efficiency, but decisions must be based on community risk assessments and Council. Municipalities will still be able to use mutual aid and service agreements to deliver fire services to their residents.
	Will I have to re-apply for my position or lose my role?	No. The focus is standardization, safety, and sustainability — not removing firefighters or Fire Chiefs.
	Who is actually in charge under the new model?	Fire service delivery will shift from a fragmented system where there are many organizations governed in different ways to one where roles are much more clear and unified – municipalities will take the lead in delivering services. The Province will set the standards and provide oversight. This will improve fire safety and the fire services system promoting capability, capacity, consistency, and continuity for fire services province-wide.
<b>Liability, Legal Protection &amp; Risk</b>	Am I personally liable if something goes wrong on a call?	This is a concern we heard across the province. The new legislation is intended to include clear indemnification provisions that protect Fire Chiefs and firefighters from personal liability. This removes any uncertainty that currently exists, especially for volunteers—and ensures all are legally protected while doing their jobs.

# FAQ - Fire Service Modernization Planning Sessions

<p><b>Funding, Costs &amp; Sustainability</b></p>	<p>Who pays for meeting the new standards?</p>	<p>Fire Services will be municipally led with increased provincial oversight. This means that municipal councils will decide on the budgets to fund the delivery of services. Municipalities already have several financial tools at their disposal to support service delivery including through municipal taxation and area rates.</p> <p>The Province is exploring ways to provide short-term financial support to municipalities to support their transition to a new fire service model. Options include grants to help rural municipalities with the transition and for projects that demonstrate regional collaboration.</p>
	<p>We spend a lot of time fundraising for fuel and basic gear. Will this change?</p> <p>Will we still be able to fundraise for items the municipality won't provide?</p>	<p>It is important that fire stations do not have to fundraise for the resources needed to provide council-approved levels of service. FSANS' recommendations indicated the need for sustainable funding models that remove reliance on fundraising for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fuel</li> <li>• Utilities</li> <li>• Routine maintenance</li> <li>• Core operational costs.</li> </ul> <p>However, stations will be free to continue fundraising for charity and to purchase non-essential fire service equipment, training or additional community benefits provided by those firefighters.</p>

# FAQ - Fire Service Modernization Planning Sessions

	<p>Our department responds to many medical calls (MFR). Will we be reimbursed?</p>	<p>We heard this concern very clearly.</p> <p>The FSANS Review recommends a formal cost-recovery process for fire departments providing Medical First Response in support of EHS. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equipment</li> <li>• Training</li> <li>• Operational response costs</li> </ul> <p>The Department of Health and Wellness and Emergency Health Services will be conducting an evidence-based review of notification models for the medical first responder program in 2026-2027. The review will help decide what works best and whether it helps improve health outcomes for Nova Scotians.</p>
<p><b>Training, Certification &amp; Time Commitments</b></p>	<p>Will I have to travel to Waverley for all my training?</p>	<p>No. We recognize that travel and time off work are major barriers for volunteers.</p> <p>The proposed model includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal oversight of basic fire fighter training</li> <li>• A new central Provincial Fire Training School for specialized and advanced training</li> <li>• A network of regional training sites</li> <li>• Mobile training units that bring training closer to communities</li> </ul>

# FAQ - Fire Service Modernization Planning Sessions

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expanded online and distance education where appropriate</li> <li>• Regional testing/licensing of operators of Class 3 vehicles</li> </ul>
	<p>Will experienced firefighters be forced to re-certify?</p>	<p>There is a difference between qualified and certified.</p> <p>Minimum training standards will be established through legislation and regulation and will apply to all firefighters. Firefighters who are already officially certified are expected to already meet those minimum standards and will not be required to re-certify.</p> <p>Municipalities will set levels of fire service, and the level of service will define minimum training requirements. It will be mandatory to train staff to those standards.</p>
	<p>Does the new framework address mental health?</p>	<p>Yes. Mental health is a key priority.</p> <p>The FSANS Review recommends:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Firefighters have access to municipal health and safety resources to further support and supplement mental health resiliency, resistance, and recovery.</li> </ul>
	<p>Will volunteer firefighters receive the same Workers' Compensation Board</p>	<p>That is the goal.</p> <p>The framework recommends that all volunteer firefighters have the same Workers' Compensation coverage, so they are not out-of-pocket if they are injured while doing their job.</p>

# FAQ - Fire Service Modernization Planning Sessions

	<p>coverage as career firefighters?</p>	<p>In general, this coverage already exists for employees and volunteers. However, some work-related illnesses are not clearly covered under current federal-provincial agreements for emergency services volunteers. Once the final model is confirmed, steps can be taken to fix any gaps or uncertainty about what is covered.</p>
<p><b>Dispatch &amp; Communications</b></p>	<p>How will this affect our dispatch?</p>	<p>The framework recommends moving toward a more consistent, province-wide fire dispatch approach that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meets National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1225 standards</li> <li>• Supports Next-Generation 9-1-1</li> <li>• Improves interoperability</li> <li>• Addresses cellular and mobile data coverage gaps.</li> </ul> <p>The Province is examining how best to deliver dispatch services that meet these challenges, and specific changes will be communicated once known.</p>
<p><b>Final Question</b></p>	<p>Is this already decided, or do our voices still matter?</p>	<p>Your voices matter. The Province has committed to fixing issues that have been emerging for a long time.</p> <p>Legislation is expected to be tabled by September 30, 2026, and will be informed by what we hear from you in these planning sessions.</p> <p>What you share here will directly influence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regulations</li> <li>• Standards</li> </ul>

# FAQ - Fire Service Modernization Planning Sessions

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Funding models</li><li>• Transition timelines</li><li>• Implementation supports</li></ul> <p>Your experience matters, and the modernization of fire services will only work if it reflects the realities of fire service delivery in Nova Scotia.</p>
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# FIRE SERVICE MODERNIZATION

## Vision and Roadmap

*Nova Scotians are adequately protected from fire safety risks through access to high-quality fire services no matter where they live.*

Multiple studies on Nova Scotia's fire safety and services conducted over decades citing similar challenges

**FSANS Leads Extensive Engagement with the Sector on Governance and Administration of Fire Services**

**60** Fire Service Leaders Engaged

**2** Surveys with 1,080 responses from firefighters and fire service professionals

**30+** Workshops Held Across NS



January 2025

**Nova Scotia Firefighter School Value for Money Audit Released**



July 2025

Province severs ties with NS Firefighter School; Firefighter Training Advisory Committee Created

October 2025

**FSANS Releases Report with 40 Recommendations for Change**



**Fire Safety and Services Act Introduced**

CAOs, Fire Service Leaders Invited to Participate in Implementation Planning Session

*We are here*

FTAC Committee Holds First Meeting; Regional Leads Begin Developing Plans to Provide Training Across NS

Implementation Planning Sessions Held with Municipal and Fire Service Leaders

April 2026

**Unified Provincial Legislation and Regulations for Fire Safety and Services Tabled**

September 2026

Transition Period Begins; 12 Months' Notice to Municipalities

**New Legislation & Regulations Take Effect- New System Launches**



By September 2027

With municipal partnership, the Province will create a fire safety and services system that is modern, coordinated, and

Future System Fully



# Comments/Discussion