



NOTICE

- MEETING:** Regular Council Meeting
- DATE:** Wednesday February 18th, 2026
- TIME:** 5:00pm
- PLACE:** Council Chambers, 8296 Highway 7, Sherbrooke

Please Advise If Unable To Attend



Municipality of the District of St. Mary's

Regular Council Meeting
Wednesday, February 18th, 2026

We acknowledge that we are gathering in Mi'kmaqi the traditional unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people.

1. Call to Order
 2. Roll Call
 3. Additions to the Agenda
 4. Approval of the Agenda
 5. Approval of Minutes of Council Meeting held Wednesday January 21st, 2026
 6. Business Arising from Minutes
 7. Recommendations from Committees of Council
 - a. Committee of the Whole – January 21st, 2026
 - b. Committee of the Whole – February 4th, 2026
 - c. Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Anti-Hate, and Accessibility Committee – January 22nd, 2026.
 8. Committee Reports
 - a. Smart-Go – January 13th, 2026
 - b. Eastern Region Solid Waste Management – January 29th, 2026.
 - c. Eastern Counties Regional Library – February 5th, 2026.
 9. Other Matters of Business
 10. CAO Report
- Adjournment
- A 10-minute question and answer period pertaining to agenda items.



Municipality of the District of St. Mary's

Regular Council Meeting
Wednesday, January 21, 2026

We acknowledge that we are gathering in Mi'kma'ki the traditional unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people.

1. Meeting, Date & Time:

The Regular Council meeting of the St. Mary's Municipal Council was called to order on Wednesday January 21st, 2026, at 5:00pm in the Council Chambers Sherbrooke, N.S.

2. Attending:

Warden James Fuller
Deputy Warden Beulah Malloy
Councillor Dana O'Connell
Councillor Scott Beaver
Councillor Emma Tibbo

Also Attending:

Lesley McFarlane, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)
Jadzia Rudolph, Municipal Clerk
Keren Ruller, Director of Economic Development

3. Additions to the Agenda:

- There were no additions to the agenda.

4. Approval of Agenda:

On motion of Councillor Tibbo and seconded by Deputy Warden Malloy, Council approved the agenda as presented.

Motion approved.

5. Approval of Previous Minutes:

Warden Fuller called for errors, omissions or amendments to the previous minutes, hearing none, Council approved the minutes from the Council meeting held December 3rd, 2025.

Motion approved.

6. Business Arising from the Minutes:

- There was no business arising from the minutes.

Councillor Beaver joined the meeting at 5:06pm.

7. Recommendations from Committees of Council:

Committee of the Whole – December 3rd, 2025

No recommendations were made at this meeting.

Committee of the Whole – January 7th, 2026

On motion of Councillor Tibbo seconded by Councillor O'Connell, Council approve Strait Engineering Ltd to develop a plan by March 31, 2026, for St. Mary's to fulfill the requirements of Section 18 of the NS Department of Environment and Climate Change Transfer Station C&D Approval to Operate, for the quoted price of \$16,300+HST, funded from the remaining available \$30,000.

Motion approved.

On motion of Councillor Tibbo seconded by Deputy Warden Malloy, Council agree to provide a Loan Guarantee to the Sherbrooke and Area Volunteer Fire Department for the acquisition of a 2013 Freightliner Pumper Truck in the amount of \$125,000 through the Royal Bank of Canada on a 5 Year Term. If the Department defaults on the terms of the loan the Municipality will fund the loan payments through annual fire tax levy revenue collected on behalf of the Sherbrooke and Area Volunteer Fire Department.

Motion approved.

8. Outside Committee Reports

- a. Eastern Region Solid Waste Management Committee – November 27, 2025
 - Please see the agenda/package for the outside committee report.
- b. Tourism Guysborough County Association – January 2026.
 - Please see the agenda/package for the outside committee report.

9. Other Matters of Business:

- There were no other matters of business.

10. CAO Report:

- Please see the Agenda/Package for the report.
- Lesley McFarlane, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) informed Council of the November and December updates and highlights, as follows:
 - Recreational activities and programs are prepared such as the upcoming Winter Fun Fest which takes place February 28th.
 - Residents may have been aware the Recplex was out of commission for the past several days. The issue has been rectified, and programs and activities will resume Saturday, January 24th, 2026.
 - The shared service between Municipality of the District of Guysborough, Town of Mulgrave and Municipality of the District of St. Mary's Regional Emergency Management Organization (REMO) is proceeding. The EMO Coordinator position is actively being advertised and is currently accepting applications.

Adjournment

On motion of Warden Fuller, there being no further matters of business, the Council adjourned at 5:08pm.

Motion approved.

Recorded By
Jadzia Rudolph, Municipal Clerk

Approved By
Warden Fuller



Municipality of the District of St. Mary's

Wednesday, February 18th, 2026
Council Meeting

Recommendations from Internal Committees of Council

Committee of the Whole – January 21st, 2026

On recommendation of Councillor O'Connell seconded by Councillor Beaver, Council repeal the Sale of Real Property Policy.

Recommendation adopted.

On recommendation of Councillor O'Connell seconded by Councillor Beaver, Council agree to approve the "Disposal of Real Property Policy" as presented at the COTW on Wednesday January 7th, 2026.

Recommendation adopted.

On recommendation of Councillor Beaver seconded by Councillor Tibbo, Council agreed to provide funding support to Sherbrooke Village and the Historic Sherbrooke Village Development Society in support of the 2026 "Christmas at Sherbrooke Village" event.

Recommendation adopted.

On recommendation of Councillor Beaver seconded by Deputy Warden Malloy, Council agree to direct the Warden to send the letters provided by Sean Cameron, Mayor of Town of Antigonish in support of advocating to the Provincial and Federal government for an alternative entrance route to St. Martha's Hospital in Antigonish.

Recommendation adopted.

Committee of the Whole – February 4th, 2026

On recommendation of Councillor O'Connell, seconded by Deputy Warden Malloy, Council agreed that the Warden draft a letter in support of the East River Volunteer Fire Department roof repair project.

Recommendation adopted.

On recommendation of Councillor Beaver seconded by Councillor Tibbo, Council agree to approve the 2026/2027 Application for Residential Low Income Property Tax Exemption with the annual household income range threshold and the tax exemption credit amounts as laid out in the table below, and all other eligibility requirements as outlined in the application.

Total Income Range	Tax Exemption Amount
\$25,776-\$29,899	\$ 210
\$20,621-\$25,775	\$ 260
\$15,446-\$20,620	\$ 310
\$0-\$15,465	\$ 365

Recommendation adopted.

On recommendation of Deputy Warden Malloy seconded by Councillor O'Connell, Council agree to direct staff to leverage the existing partnership with Clean Foundation Nova Scotia to deliver on the municipality's Climate Change Action Plan and withdraw from the Local Leadership for Climate Adaptation (LLCA -24-0485) Climate Ready Plans and Processes program.

Recommendation adopted.

Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Anti-Hate and Accessibility Committee - January 22nd, 2026

The Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Anti-Hate & Accessibility Advisory Committee Recommends that Council approve the updated Municipal Accessibility Plan as presented.

Recommendation adopted.

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish how the municipality will dispose of its real property.

2. Authority

This policy derives its authority from the Municipal Government Act (MGA) of the Province of Nova Scotia including but not limited to *Sections 50(5)(b), 51, and 51A*.

3. Scope

This policy shall apply to real property owned by the Municipality of the District of St. Mary's. This policy shall govern disposal of Municipal Property except to the extent a particular transaction is expressly exempted from it in the text of the resolution of Council authorizing such disposal transaction.

Municipally-owned real property deemed surplus by motion of Council is to be disposed of in a fair and impartial manner, which considers the best economic return to the Municipality of the District of St. Mary's balanced with economic and community development opportunities and in accordance with disposal methods included in this policy, the MGA, and as determined by Council.

The Municipality shall offer real property for sale without warranty as to its completeness or condition, its accessibility, or its suitability for the intended use of the purchaser. All real property shall be sold as is, where is.

4. Definitions

- 4.1 *Abutting Property* - A parcel of land adjoining Municipal Real Property, having one or more lot lines in common.
- 4.2 *As-Is, Where-Is* - Without representation, warranty or condition respecting the condition, developability, planning approvals, zoning, intended use, existence of encroachments, location or state of repair of all buildings or structures, environmental state, risks, physical conditions, or lawful use of the Real Property in question.
- 4.3 *Disposal* - The act of selling or transferring Fee Simple ownership of Real Property or entering a long-term lease as lessor.
- 4.4 *Fee Simple* - Ownership of Real Property in which the owner has the right to control, use, and transfer the property at will.
- 4.5 *Lease* - A lease is a contract in which a lessor (owner) grants a lessee (user) the privilege of utilising an asset, e.g., property, automobiles, or machinery, over a specified period for periodic rent/remuneration.

- 4.6 *Municipality* - the Municipality of the District of St. Mary's.
- 4.7 *Province* - the Province of Nova Scotia.
- 4.8 *Purchaser* - Any person or entity who enters into an Agreement with the Municipality to acquire real property.
- 4.9 *Real Property* - Land and all improvements permanently affixed to the land, including on, above, or below the surface of the land or water. Municipal Real Property is any Real Property belonging to the Municipality of the District of St. Mary's.
- 4.10 *Surplus Real Property* - Real Property that has been declared surplus by Council, in accordance with this policy.
- 4.11 *Unsolicited Offer* - An offer made by a third-party to purchase Real Property that is not actively listed for sale.

5. Designation

Council may, by motion, designate as surplus any real property which:

- i. Is determined to be no longer required for the use or purposes of the municipality, or for use by the public or inhabitants of the municipality;
- ii. Is no longer in the best interest of the municipality to retain ownership; or
- iii. May expose the municipality to liability or risk by retaining the real property.

6. Preparation for Disposal

Prior to disposal of surplus real property, the municipality shall:

- i. Investigate and verify ownership and eligibility for sale (title search);
- ii. Complete migration of the property through the Nova Scotia Land Registration System;
- iii. Ensure a municipal survey of the real property has been completed within the last five years; and
- iv. Obtain a valuation of the property, which may be based on written appraisal prepared by a qualified real property appraiser.

7. Disposal

The disposal of municipal surplus real property will be in accordance with the MGA. The purchaser must agree to comply with all municipal by-laws and policies regarding the use of the real property.

8. Costs

In addition to the purchase price, the purchaser shall pay the Municipality on or before the closing date the following:

- i. the expenses of the Municipality in searching the title and migration of the property;
- ii. the expenses of the Municipality in surveying the property, when required;
- iii. the deed transfer tax on the sale;
- iv. the HST on the sale (if applicable);
- v. the expenses in the preparation of the deed;
- vi. the recording fees for the deed;
- vii. the postage expenses;
- viii. the expenses of the Municipality in arriving at the valuation of the property; and,
- ix. any other expenses involved in the sale/transfer to the purchaser.

9. Unsolicited Proposals

Any reasonable unsolicited offer to purchase real property owned by the Municipality of the District of St. Mary's will be evaluated, and recommendations will be presented to Council in accordance with the principles and processes set out in this policy and the MGA.

10. Authority of Elected Officials and Staff of the Municipality to Purchase Surplus Real Property

In addition to any other legal restrictions, no member of Council or Municipal employee and no person closely connected to a member of Council or to a Municipal employee shall acquire real property disposed of by the municipality. For the purposes of this provision:

- (i) acquisition includes direct purchase, indirect purchase, purchase through an agent or intermediary, and purchase by any corporation or entity in which the individual or their spouse holds a majority or controlling interest; and
- (ii) "closely connected" has the same meaning as it does in the Model Code of Conduct for Municipalities promulgated in the *Code of Conduct for Municipal Elected Officials Regulations*, except that the concept is applicable in this policy to Municipal employees as well as to Council members.

11. Policy Review

The municipality shall review this policy as required and all amendments to this policy shall be recorded in Schedule A.



SCHEDULE A - POLICY AMENDMENTS

Version #	Amendment Description	Approved By	Approval Date
1	Adoption of Policy	Council	



Application for Residential Low Income Property Tax Exemption 2026/2027

The Municipality of the District of St. Mary's provides assistance to homeowners to help pay their residential property taxes. Qualified applicants will receive a credit which is applied directly to the tax account.

To Qualify:

- You must be a **Canadian citizen and permanent resident** of St. Mary's Municipality, and
- Own the assessed property and occupy it as your primary residence, and
- Prior year's property taxes must be paid in full, and
- Annual income from all sources for the previous calendar year for yourself, spouse, and other adults that reside in the same household/assessment account must total to one of the ranges below (based on line 150 of the income tax *Notice of Assessment*), and

Exemption Value: The exemptions provided will be based on the following total income levels:

Total Income Range	Tax Exemption Amount
\$25,776-\$29,899	\$210
\$20,621-\$25,775	\$260
\$15,446-\$20,620	\$310
\$0-\$15,465	\$365

How to Apply:

- After you have filed your personal income tax return for 2025 and received your Notice of Assessment from Canada Revenue Agency, complete the Municipal Application for Residential Low Income Property Tax Exemption form
- Attached copies of the 2025 Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) Notice of Assessment for each adult residing in the home/assessment account
- Sample Notice of Assessment from Canada Revenue Agency (CRA)
- If you do not have your CRA Notice of Assessment for 2025 you can call 1-800-959-8281

Canada Revenue Agency / Agence du revenu du Canada - NOTICE OF ASSESSMENT (T451 E (08))

Date	Name	Social Insurance no.	Tax year	Tax centre
May 5, 2007	Jane Doe	123 456 789	2007	Shawinigan QC G9N 7S6

Summary 000000

Line	\$ Amount
150 Total Income.....	00,000
Deductions from total income.....	000
236 Net Income.....	00,000
260 Taxable Income.....	00,000

A green arrow points to the value 00,000 on line 150.

- Applications must be received by the Municipality no later than December 31, 2026
- Applicants must re-apply each year.



Application for Residential Low Income Property Tax Exemption 2026/2027

Tax Account #	
Name of Property Owner(s)	
Complete Mailing Address	
Telephone #	
# of Adults (age 18 or over) residing in home/assessment account	

- (a) Applicant total income (line 150) \$ _____
- (b) Spouse/Common-Law Partner (line 150) \$ _____
- (c) Other individuals (including tenants living on the AAN or others within the household) (line 150) \$ _____
- TOTAL of all Income from above** \$ _____

***Proof of income must be provided (Copy of 2025 CRA Notice of Assessment for each adult living on the the property (AAN))**

I _____ of _____ in the Municipality of the District of St. Mary's, in the County of Guysborough and Province of Nova Scotia, hereby apply for the **RESIDENTIAL LOW INCOME PROPERTY EXEMPTION** on taxes.

I/we, residents of the Municipality of the District of St. Mary's, the owners and occupants (including all rental tenants on property) of the above property, certify that the information on the application is true and complete, and that the total income from all sources during 2025 was below the limit set out in this application. I/we understand the exemption for **2026/2027** is based on total income range. I/we understand that no application for an exemption will be received after December 31, 2026. I/we understand that no exemption will be granted to low-income applicants if prior year's taxes remain unpaid.

Signature(s) _____ **Date:** _____

To be signed by Councillor, Municipal Admin Staff or Commissioner of Oaths

Sworn to in the County of Guysborough and the Province of Nova Scotia this ____ day of _____ 20__

Signature: _____

Municipal Accessibility Plan

Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Anti-Hate & Accessibility Advisory Committee

SUMMARY

The Municipality of the District of St. Mary's actively fosters a welcoming and accessible environment, ensuring that accessibility is considered in all aspects of municipal decision-making and service delivery. To accomplish this, the Municipality maintains a publicly available Accessibility Plan, updated every three years, outlining actions to identify, remove, and prevent barriers and assess the accessibility impact of policies, programs, services, and by-laws. In fall 2025, consultation through workshops, an online survey, and community events gathered feedback from over 34 participants to update the Plan. The updated plan highlights achievements and recommends improvements across the built environment, communications, services, transportation, and employment. The Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Anti-Hate & Accessibility Committee recommended approval on January 22, 2026. Approval ensures the Municipality remains compliant with the Accessibility Act.

BACKGROUND

The Province's Accessibility Act requires the Municipality to have an Accessibility Plan that is publicly available and updated every three years. The Accessibility Plan must include a report on the measures the Municipality has taken, and plans to take, to identify, remove, and prevent barriers. It must also outline the procedures used to assess the impact of proposed policies, programs, practices, services, and by-laws on accessibility for persons with disabilities, along with any other information required by regulation. As a part of the process to create the Accessibility Plan, the Municipality sought input from persons with disabilities and from organizations that represent persons with disabilities.

CONSIDERATIONS

The Municipality conducted a range of consultation activities in fall 2025, including two in-person workshops in September, an online survey open to all community members, and participation at community events across the Municipality. Feedback from over 34 participants helped identify accessibility needs, priorities, and opportunities for improvement, which directly informed the recommendations and initiatives in this Plan.

The Accessibility Plan highlights municipal achievements in accessibility and provides recommendations to improve accessibility in the built environment, information and communications, municipal services, transportation, and employment, as well as outlining how the Plan will be implemented and monitored.

On January 22, 2026, the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Anti-Hate & Accessibility Committee reviewed the updates to the Plan, provided feedback to finalize it and subsequently recommended its approval. Updating the Municipal Accessibility Plan maintains the Municipality's compliance with the Provincial Accessibility Act.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Anti-Hate & Accessibility Advisory Committee Recommends that Council approve the updated Municipal Accessibility Plan as presented.

**Municipality of the
District of St. Mary's
Accessibility Plan
2025 Update**

DRAFT

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DRAFT

1 Background

The Municipality of the District of St. Mary's is committed to creating an inclusive and accessible community where residents and visitors of all ages and abilities can fully participate in civic life. The Accessibility Plan is a strategic tool designed to guide the Municipality in identifying, removing, and preventing barriers in municipal facilities, programs, services, and public spaces.

This Plan builds on previous accessibility initiatives and reflects the Municipality's ongoing commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility. It provides a framework for implementing practical improvements, setting priorities, and monitoring progress over time.

The development of the Plan was informed by the Nova Scotia Accessibility Act and best practices in accessibility and universal design. It also draws on input from community members, municipal staff, and other stakeholders to ensure the Plan responds to the real experiences and needs of those who use municipal services.

The Municipality aims to foster a more welcoming and accessible environment, promote safe and equitable participation in community life, and ensure that accessibility is considered in all aspects of municipal decision-making and service delivery. In 2023 the Municipality of the District of St. Mary's published its first Accessibility Plan. Barriers to accessibility were assessed throughout the Municipality and a list of actions was created to support the removal of these barriers. To support this, we engaged in a process to update and refresh the Plan's actions that address the needs of residents in our community.

2 What We Heard: Community Consultation

2.1 Background

Community engagement was a key component in completing the Accessibility Plan update. Residents are the primary users of municipal programs, services, and facilities, and their lived experiences provide valuable insight into what works well and what barriers exist. To gather this information, the Municipality conducted a range of consultation activities in the fall of 2025, including two in-person workshops held in September, an online survey available to all community members, and attendance at community events across the Municipality. Through these efforts, feedback was collected from over thirty-four participants, helping to identify accessibility needs, priorities, and opportunities for improvement. This input has directly informed the recommendations and initiatives outlined in this Plan.

2.2 Feedback Summary

Community feedback played a vital role in shaping this Accessibility Plan update. Through in-person workshops, an online survey, and engagement at community events, residents and visitors shared their experiences, identified barriers, and suggested opportunities for improvement.

Participants highlighted several common themes, including the need for improved physical accessibility in municipal facilities and outdoor spaces, better access to programs and services across the Municipality, and more transportation options to support participation. Feedback also emphasized the importance of clear communication, flexible program delivery, and affordability to ensure everyone can take part in community life. The insights gathered helped the Municipality better understand what is working well and where improvements are needed. This feedback directly informed the priorities, achievements, and recommendations outlined in this plan and will continue to guide future accessibility efforts.

3 Achievements

This section highlights the ways the Municipality has taken action to create a more inclusive and accessible environment. Each initiative and improvement reflects our shared commitment to supporting all residents in living, working, and engaging in St. Mary's.

3.1 The Built Environment Accessibility Achievements

- In 2024, automatic door buttons were installed on all public washrooms and dressing rooms at the St. Mary's Recplex, improving ease of access for all visitors.
- In 2025, automatic door buttons were installed at the Sherbrooke Public Library entrances, exits and the washroom, improving ease of access for all visitors.
- In 2025, new rubber flooring was installed at the St. Mary's Recplex, designed to eliminate gaps and heaves for safer, smoother movement.
- In 2025, accessible parking spaces were added at the St. Mary's Recplex to support convenient access for visitors with mobility needs.
- In 2025, accessible parking spaces were added at the 16 Main Street Parking Lot, enhancing access to Pioneer Park.

3.2 Information and Communication Accessibility Achievements

- In 2025, the audio-visual equipment in Council Chambers was upgraded to improve clarity and accessibility for virtual meeting attendees.

3.4 Employment Accessibility Achievements

- In 2023, the Municipality adopted a new Human Resources Policy that strengthens inclusive employment practices by supporting the hiring, training, and accommodation of individuals with disabilities.
- Standing desks were purchased, supporting workplace accessibility and comfort for employees with diverse needs.

3.5 Service Accessibility Achievements

- The Municipality's Equipment Loan Program has expanded its inventory to include adaptive equipment such as sleds and sledges, making recreation more accessible for everyone.
- Recreation programs are open for registration both in person and online, ensuring easy access for all community members.

3.6 Transportation Accessibility Achievements

- To improve access and connectivity for residents, the Municipality supported the development of a non-profit transportation service. In 2023, the St. Mary's Association for Rural Transit was formed, helping community members travel more easily throughout the Municipality.

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4 Recommendations

These recommendations reflect the voices and experiences of the people who live, work, and visit our community. They are designed to help the Municipality identify and remove barriers, enhance access to programs and services, and foster an environment where everyone—regardless of ability—can fully participate in community life. By taking these actions, the Municipality can build a more inclusive, welcoming, and connected community for all residents.

4.1 The Built Environment

The Municipality of the District of St. Mary's is committed to ensuring that public buildings and spaces are accessible to people of all ages and abilities, whether the spaces are owned, leased, or operated by the Municipality. Building on this commitment, the following recommendations outline practical actions the Municipality can take to remove barriers, improve accessibility, and create a more inclusive community for everyone.

- Provide accessible seating at key community facilities, including St. Mary's Recplex and the Sherbrooke Public Library, to ensure all residents can comfortably participate in programs and activities.
- Provide seating throughout Pioneer Park and Stonewall Park to improve accessibility along trails and open spaces, ensuring all residents can comfortably enjoy outdoor areas.
- Ensure at least one fully accessible washroom is available at every municipal facility.
- Repair Municipal Office entrance accessible door.
- Support community partners, local businesses, and organizations in making accessibility improvements by promoting available funding programs and sharing information about grants, resources, and best practices.
- Improve lighting in municipal parks to increase safety, accessibility, and usability for all residents, including during evening hours.

- Equip public and staff washrooms at the Municipal Office with push-button access to improve accessibility and independence for all users.
- Equip the Community Room at the Municipal Office with push-button access to improve accessibility and independence for all users.

4.2 Information and Communications

The Municipality is committed to providing information and communications that are clear and accessible to people of all ages and abilities. Using plain and simple language helps ensure that residents, visitors, and stakeholders can easily understand and engage with municipal services. Building on this commitment, the following recommendations identify actions the Municipality can take to enhance accessibility in communications and better serve the entire community.

- Establish clear policies and procedures to ensure all municipal communications are accessible, inclusive, and available in multiple formats to meet the diverse needs of the community.
- Develop programs and resources to help residents, staff, and community partners better understand accessibility, remove barriers, and foster an inclusive community for everyone.

4.3 Employment

The Municipality is committed to providing barrier-free employment opportunities for people of all ages and abilities. It strives to make employment practices and workplaces accessible for both new and existing employees. Building on this commitment, the following recommendations outline actions the Municipality can take to further support an inclusive and accessible workplace for all.

- Deliver Foundations of Accessibility training to municipal staff and Council to build awareness, strengthen capacity, and support inclusive decision-making.

- Encourage leadership and staff to model inclusive language and call out harmful language when it occurs, fostering a respectful and supportive environment.
- Establish a clear process for employees to request accessibility support, ensuring all staff have the tools and resources they need to work effectively.

4.4 Services

The Municipality is committed to providing equitable services to individuals of all ages and abilities. Building on this commitment, the following recommendations identify practical actions the Municipality can take to ensure services are accessible, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of the entire community.

- Deliver recreation programs throughout all districts of the Municipality, helping remove location-related barriers and improve access for all community members.
- Create a subsidy to help residents overcome cost-related barriers, ensuring that municipal programs and services are accessible and inclusive for all community members.
- Develop a family-based registration form that allows families to register as a unit, rather than requiring individual forms for each family member, making participation more convenient and accessible.
- Offer flexible service and program options to support participation by residents who are unable to attend during regular hours.
- Enhance the Equipment Loan Program by adding accessible equipment for all seasons, ensuring residents of all abilities can enjoy recreation year-round.
- Ensure residents can attend fitness programs without requiring a companion, supporting independence and participation.

4.5 Transportation

The Municipality is committed to providing accessible transportation for people of all ages and abilities in St. Mary's. The following recommendations outline ways to make travel easier, safer, and more inclusive for everyone.

- Develop an accessible multi-use trail network connecting Main Street, Sherbrooke, and northeast Sherbrooke, improving safe and inclusive access to schools and essential services through active transportation.
- Explore creating a network that connects residents who need transportation with those willing to provide it, improving access to municipal programs, services, and community activities.

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5 Implementing & Monitoring the Plan

The Municipal Inclusion, Diversity, Inclusion, Equity, Anti-Hate & Accessibility Advisory Committee, along with appointed staff and council are responsible for adopting and overseeing the MODSM Enabling Accessibility Plan.

The Chief Administrative Officer is responsible for implementing the plan and assigning an Accessibility Coordinator.

The MODSM Accessibility Coordinator is responsible for receiving and responding to public concerns, complaints, and suggestions.

The Accessibility Advisory Committee is responsible for giving feedback and recommendations to the Municipal Council. The Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee will prepare an annual report for council for the fiscal year ending March 31 of each year. This report card will measure the performance of the actions in this plan. The Committee may also make recommendations to improve the plan. The annual report will be a public document that will be posted to the MODSM website.

6 Glossary

Accessibility: the practice of making information, services, transportation and/or environments sensible, meaningful, and usable for as many people as possible.

Accommodation: a personalized adaption of a service or environment to overcome the barriers faces by individuals of all ages and abilities.

Active Transportation: refers to all forms of human powered transportation. Most commonly, it refers to walking and cycling, but also rollerblading, skateboarding, running, wheelchair use, skating, canoeing, kayaking, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing.

Barrier: anything that stops or challenges the full and effective participation in society of an individual of any age or ability.

Communication: the process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or behavior.

Disability: Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act defines a disability as a physical, mental, intellectual, learning or sensory impairment, including an episodic disability, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders an individuals full and effective participation in society.

Equity / Equitable: an individual or group is provided with the same resources or opportunities. Equity recognizes that each person has a different circumstance and allocates the exact resources and opportunities needed to reach an equal outcome.

Plain Language: language that is clear and easy for the reader or listener to understand.



Report to Council

Member of Council: James Fuller

Board/Agency/Organization: SMART-GO

Date Attended: 13 January 2026

Location: Sherbrooke

Agenda attached

Highlights:

- New wheelchair accessible van purchased and delivered
- Looking for new payroll system. ADP wants \$5000
- Unofficial audit by province conducted. No issues found.
- Pet policy reviewed. New direction is that no pets unless a certified service animal.
- Income from previous months October @\$5000, November \$4800, December @3800 (lesser due to being closed Christmas week.)
- Looking for new drivers for on-call and PT

SMART-GO ST. MARY'S ASSOCIATION FOR RURAL TRANSIT
REGULAR MEETING – AGENDA
JANUARY 13, 2026 4:30 P.M. :: 8218 Hwy 7, Sherbrooke

1. Call to order and land acknowledgment; appointment of recording secretary ✓
2. Approval of agenda ✓
3. Approval of minutes from previous meeting - October 7, 2025 ✓
4. Business arising from previous meetings ✓
 - a. First Aid Training (carry forward) ✓
 - b. RTSF Funds Discussion & Application Update ✓
 - c. Appointing an Accountant for Review Update ✓
 - d. Staff & Board Event ✓
 - e. GIC Funds Update ✓
5. Recording e-votes, if applicable ✓
6. Expense authorization votes, if applicable (done quarterly) ✓
7. Standing items
 - a. Reports
 - i. Executive Director
8. New Business
 - a. Vehicle Purchase Update ✓
 - b. Payroll Options ✓
 - c. Unofficial Audit from Province of NS ✓
 - d. Yearly Review of Policies ✓
 - e. Pet Policy ✓
 - f. Hiring Additional Drivers/Volunteer Drivers ✓
9. Correspondence
10. Next meeting - Date/time/duration/agenda items
11. Adjournment



Report to Council

Member of Council: Deputy Warden Beulah Malloy

Board/Agency/Organization: Eastern Region Solid Waste Management

Date Attended: January 29th,2026

Location: Guysborough, NS.

Please See Attached.

Highlights January 2026

ERSWM Meeting – Thursday, January 29th, 2026

New Regional Educator Update

- Laura Franks of Canso has taken the position as the Part-Time Regional Educator
- Tanya updated the Committee that Laura is doing good and that Tanya is pleased with her work to date.

EPR for PPP – Circular Materials

- Website is up to date with all EPR criteria
- **Depots in our Region** only consist of MacMillians Service Centre Mobile Depot – Sherbrooke. MacMillians Service Centre, Antigonish County.
- At this time A&M Recycling in Tracadie and Masons Recycling in Canso will not be accepting any of the new recycling material that is supposed to be going to a depot.
- Tanya informed the Committee that until there is a depot in these areas the new recycling material should be placed in the garbage until further notice.
- Tanya mentioned that she still educates people as to what new materials should be recycled at depots.

Routeware Updates

- Tanya informed the Committee that the Waste Wizard has been updated with all the new changes.
- Routeware sent Tanya the quote for the upcoming renewal of the pricing adjustment. The pricing reflects the agreed amount for our multi – year agreement which was a 5-year contract which would include the CPI (Consumer Price Index) + 2% each year
- Last years amount for 2025-2026 was \$8996.52 taxes included. This year 2026-2027 will be \$9446.31 taxes included (Still waiting on Routeware to send finally Invoice on this amount)

Motions to be made on Various Topics

- Committee made a motion and was seconded, to spend \$300 for gifts and taking a volunteer out for a meal with a Maximum spent of \$50.00
- Committee made a motion and was seconded, that the Regional Coordinator work from home as well as at the office when needed. However, the only thing that was



mentioned in the meeting minutes 2 years ago was about purchasing a printer for Tanya for home. Councillor Buelah (Vice Chair) agreed that this was discussed and agreed upon at that time in the meeting 2 years ago.

Fridges and Freezers

- Kevin (Compliance and Bylaw Enforcement Officer) informed the Committee that the Guysborough Public Works Department were concerned that residents were using deep freezers and fridges for garbage containers. Guysborough has a Bylaw that states that they are not to be used as garbage bins. Kevin has been making visits to the residents of these garbage bins and telling them that they must be removed from curb side due to safety reasons.
- Kevin will update again at our next meeting in March

Tires (GFL – Landfill)

- Kevin also informed the Committee that GFL have posted signs at the landfill that say they are no longer accepting tires at their facility. This is a major concern for Municipalities during the Bulk Pickup.
- Retailers will only accept 4 tires
- A solution is needed to resolve this as tires are showing up at illegal dumpsites.

Datacall Submissions

- Tanya updated the Committee about the Outstanding Datacall Submissions in 3 Municipalities. – Guysborough, Antigonish County and St. Mary's. The deadline for these submissions was September 30th, 2025
- Due to these late submissions Tanya's Coordinator funding is being held back and no money can be dispersed to the other Regions waiting for their Diversion Credit money including our Region 2A
- Last Friday, January 23rd this was brought up at the Chair's Meeting. The Chair of the Chair's Committee was not happy about hearing this as it is **mandatory** to have these complete on the date that they are due. They suggested about sending out a letter to the Region of the 3 Municipalities.

Regional Chairs Update

- Councillor Leon suggested that during the Regional Chairs Update that a letter from the ERSWM Committee should be drafted up about some of the concerns of Circular Materials (Example being: not enough depots)



- Vice Chair Councillor Beulah suggested we talk about this when Chair Neil returns at the next meeting.

ERSWM Program Funding / Litter Clean Up Incentive Funding

- Tanya explained to the Committee that the Cheque requests have been done for all the cleanups but need a motion from the Committee for the amounts being distributed. The total value for the program is \$6000, maximum of \$1200 circulated per Municipality. **St. Mary's – 2 Cleanups** 1) Waternish – Stillwater Community Centre [\$500] 2) St Mary's Education Centre/Academy – Earth Day Cleanup [\$500] **Guysborough – 1 Cleanup** 1) Country Harbour Gun Club [\$500] **Antigonish County – 3 Cleanups** 1) 4 Valleys Fire Department [\$500] 2) Arisaig Community Development Association [\$350] 3) Pomquet Area Cultural Recreational Community Development Society [\$350] **Town of Antigonish – 2 Cleanups** by the St. Andrews Junior School Music Program [\$1200]
- This Motion is also needed as a backup for the ERSWM audit.
- Tanya also explained that our Policy on the Litter Incentive Application states that no individual clean-up will receive more than \$500. All applications are sent to Tanya (Regional Coordinator) and the deadline for the not-for-profits to apply would be September 15th of each year.

Information Session at Public Works (Antigonish County)

- Tanya met with the Public Works guys as well as the staff of the Municipal office to go over any questions or concerns they had. Meeting went well.

Information Session at the Antigonish Farmers Market

- Tanya and Laura (Regional Educator) set up an information booth for residents to come ask questions about the new Recycling program that started on December 1st. Lots of people stopped to pick up a Sorting Guide as well an Advanced Sorting Guide with all the new additions on it for the Blue Bags. Great turn out.
- Tanya suggested about holding another information session sometime in February at the Market

Presentations to Schools

- Presentations were held at 3 Schools. Grade 7 Textile Class at the St. Andrews Junior School. East Antigonish Education Centre/Academy – Primary to grade 6 and grades 7 – 12. HM MacDonald Elementary School – Pre K - grade 3 and grades 4 – 6.

Upcoming Presentation at Paqtnkek

- Tanya will be holding an Information session on February 4th for the residents.

Next Meeting Mar 26/2026





Report to Council

Member of Council: James Fuller

Board/Agency/Organization: ECRL

Date Attended: 5 February 2026

Location: Mulgrave

Agenda attached

Highlights:

- Correspondence from Minister Ritcey stating that funding for sanitary products will end. Board will consider options.
- Final agreements for the opening of Whycocomagh Library are continuing. Staff has yet to be hired by Inverness County.
- Employee benefits program will be adjusted for next fiscal year slightly.
- Library funding: Media release being prepared, Community engagement survey (online) being launched, webpage developed for library funding advocacy.
- Vice Chair elected. Susan Cashan MODG



Eastern Counties Regional Library
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
February 5, 2026
HR Committee Meeting 4:30 pm
Regular Meeting: 5:00 pm
Please note: In person

AGENDA

1. Welcome
2. Approval of agenda
3. Minutes of the January 22, 2026 meeting
4. Business Arising
 - a) Whycomagh agreement update
5. Financial updates
 - a) Income statement ✓
 - b) Grants overview ✓
 - c) Budgeting timelines ✓
6. Human Resources Committee
 - a) Employee Benefits proposal – ~~in camera~~
 - b) Staffing issues for 2026-2027 budget – ~~in camera~~
7. Library Funding Advocacy
 - a) Media release
 - b) Community engagement survey
 - c) Webpage for Library Funding Advocacy
8. CEO Report
9. Election of Vice Chair
10. Adjournment

5 Correspondence



2025-2026

CAO Report – Project Summary

For the period of January 1st to 31st, 2026

The Municipality of the District of St. Mary's

MAJOR PROJECT SUMMARY

1. Housing Initiatives –

CMHC- Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF)

- First annual report submitted in January, with 20 net new permitted units reported against a three-year target of 63 units. Progress expected to accelerate in subsequent years and this program is on track.
- Work continuing with Zzap on housing incentives in the form of a Development Agreement. Revised draft policy incorporates multiple incentives into one program with required forms and is under final review.
- Key upcoming item to be presented to Council this fiscal year is the Water Tower design contract.

2. Climate Change Projects –

Status of the four current Clean programs:

- a) Quest Net-Zero Community Accelerator Program - Benchmark assessment report completed. Scheduling of community workshop is recommended next step. Low Carbon Communities – Extension request submitted for Solar Feasibility Study RFP.
- b) Climate Resilient Coastal Communities- AIM- Scheduling of Governance workshop is recommended next step.
- c) Climate Risk Assessment and Readiness Plans – Recommendation put forward for a revised approach to leverage existing Clean contract and focus on achievement of outstanding deliverables on the municipality's Climate Change Action Plan, pending Council review.
- d) 3D Wave Flood Mapping is looking to schedule community workshop.

3. EMO/REMO –

- Posting for REMO Coordinator position is being filled jointly with the Town of Mulgrave and the Municipality of the District of Guysborough.
- Fire Services Modernization Review underway led by the Department of Emergency Management. Emergency Resilience Forum held January 28 & 29; Day 2 focused on Fire Service Transition. See attached documents for the roadmap and vision communicated by the province.

4. Tourism Promotion & Electronic Content/Advertisements –

- TDAP Communities program is ongoing and updates being made to the Tourism website. Ongoing regular maintenance and upkeep on the Tourism website and social media posts.

5. Business Support–

- Continuing engagement with multiple different local business owners to provide business supports and information as needed.
- Presentation on Community Benefits provided to Committee of the Whole on Jan 21.

6. Upcoming Municipal Events

- a. Winter Fun Fest – February 28th, 2026.

7. Community Development and Recreation Programs

- a. 50+ Hockey began in November and continues to attract approximately 15 participants for recreational play and social engagement.
- b. Adult Recreation Hockey continued throughout January, bringing together over 40 players across three teams for fun and competitive play.
- c. Before and After Program continues, with strong attendance.
- d. Based on feedback from the Active Women's Group participants, programming has been moved to the afternoon for the remainder of the winter.
- e. House League Hockey continued throughout January, welcoming over 40 young participants aged 5 to 15. The program has been well received, providing an opportunity for skill development, teamwork, and community engagement.
- f. Senior Skates Program continued throughout the Monday of January, providing participants with an enjoyable opportunity to stay active on the ice while socializing with fellow community members.
- g. The Skate & Create program, was well attended with approximately 18 registered participants. This program ended on January on January 28th.
- h. The Pond Hockey Program runs on Wednesday evenings from 7:00–8:00 p.m. and offers participants a relaxed, informal pick-up style of play. While initial registration was modest, attendance continues to grow each week, and participants have expressed appreciation for the opportunity to get on the ice in a laid-back and social environment.
- i. Learn to Skate had a strong start in January with approximately 18 children registered and many participating each week. The program has received very positive feedback.

8. Capital projects supporting Community Development and Recreation

- a. Connect 2 – Multi Use Trail Design - The request for proposals closed on January 16th.

9. Accessibility & Inclusion

- a. Accessibility Plan – The Accessibility Plan was first presented to the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Anti-Hate & Accessibility Advisory Committee on January 8. The Committee provided feedback, and staff revised the Plan accordingly. The updated Plan was presented again on January 22. Following review of the revisions, the Committee recommended that Council approve the Accessibility Plan.
- b. Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Anti-Hate and Accessibility Advisory Plan – Now that the Accessibility Plan is complete, the Accessibility Plan will be integrated into the broader Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Anti-Hate and Accessibility.

10. Public Works

Municipal Utilities & Infrastructure

- A power surge at the St. Mary's Recplex caused a failure within the electrical panel. Cimco came to site and trouble shot the issue and replaced an overload and contactor for the brine pump within the panel.
- A main line leak occurred within the parking lot of Clover Farm. The public works team addressed the issue and currently has a temporary bypass installed. Pricing for permanent repairs is currently being collected.




- Consultation took place with Strait Engineering, FracFlow, Department of Environment and Climate Change to discuss the next steps with the remediation of the buried cells and ground water and leachate monitoring plan moving forward.

Capital Projects

Description	Update
I&I Recommendation Phase 2 & 3	Project completed.
Dry Hydrant – Fisherman’s Harbour/PB	Fire Dept confirmed this location is no longer available. Next steps under review.
Dry Hydrant – Liscomb	Location confirmed. Requesting engineering study.
Recplex -RFD – Compressor	Project completed.
Recplex – RFD – Flooring	Project completed.
Flushing Hydrant (Cameron Rd.)	Project completed.
Admin Bldg – Recpt Area Privacy upgrades	Scope refined to address accessibility and security needs.
Accessible Public Washroom 16 Main	Project deferred as work impacted by Shoppers trailer.
Water Tr Plant – Heating and Cooling System	Project completed.
Public Works Garage – Electrical upgrades	Project completed.
Port Bickerton Lighthouse Rd.	Grading planned for spring.
Sewer Testing Equipment/Blower	On track to be completed by end of fiscal year.
Water Treatment Plant – Programmable Logic Controller/Auto Control System	In engineering phase with Strait Engineering.
Replace roof on water pump house	Project completed.
Recplex Ammonia Detection System	Project completed.
Library Kitchen/Community Room Renos	Confirming scope and next steps.
Connect 2 – Multi Use Trail Feasibility Study	Request for Proposals closed January 16 th , 2026.
Water Tr Plant Bubble Traps for Filters	Project completed.
Sewer Tr Plant – Cross Supports Rebuild	Project completed.
Low Carbon Communities Solar Program	Draft RFP has been prepared by Clean and is under review.
Water Meter Upgrade project	Currently underway, 65% complete physical component.
Sewer Equalization Pump Motor Drive	Project completed.

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.

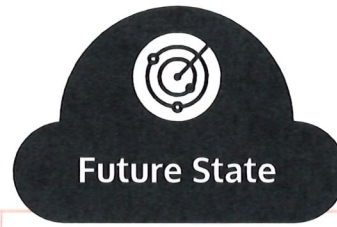
	 Current State	 Future State	 Transition Needs
Governance & Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple Acts in relation to fire services in Nova Scotia Many fire departments are self-governed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oversight by Province Municipally-led fire services 	<ul style="list-style-type: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

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



Current State



Future State



Transition Needs

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

Fire Service Transition



Current State



Future State



Transition Needs

Firefighter Health, Safety & Wellness

- Department-specific; the responsibility of the department to host programs for firefighters

- Responsibility of municipality to take care of their employees
- Meets or exceeds OHS legislative requirements

- Provincial grant programs for mental health training and wellness initiatives

Sustainable Fire Service Funding

- Fundraising for capital and operations
- Fire service sets area rates

- Council approves a budget aligned with approved LOS
- Annual municipal budget for operating
- Municipal capital budget & reserves
- Municipalities will fund essential capital assets based on levels of service being provided
- Fundraising can be used for non-essential equipment in coordination with municipalities

- Municipalities fund municipally-led fire services in Nova Scotia

Municipal FAQ

Governance & Responsibility

Is responsibility for Fire Services really moving to municipalities?

Yes — as recommended in the FSANS Report, we are moving to a system of municipally led fire services.

Under the current system, most municipalities already fund fire services but often lack clear authority, consistent oversight tools, and standardized expectations. The new governance framework is designed to align responsibility with authority, ensuring municipalities:

- Approve service levels,
- Appoint Fire Chiefs,
- Understand risk, cost, and performance expectations,
- Are supported by provincial standards and oversight.

This is about clarifying responsibility, not downloading unfunded obligations.

Why is this change necessary?

The current system has led to:

- Inconsistent service levels across communities,
- Unclear authority on fire scenes and governance matters,
- Municipal exposure to legal, financial, and reputational risk without clear controls,
- Councils funding services they do not fully understand or oversee.

The new model reflects best practice across Canada, where municipalities are accountable for fire services but supported by provincial standards, and oversight, and share in the provision of high quality firefighter training.

Municipal Risk, Liability & Oversight

Does this increase municipal liability?

In the short term, it clarifies it — which actually reduces risk.

Today, many municipalities fund fire services without:

- Clear service levels,
- Formal risk assessments,
- Standardized reporting,
- Defined authority structures.

The new framework addresses these risks along with long standing recommendations on the need for legislated protections for municipalities which can be addressed in amendments to the Fire Safety Act

These elements provide municipalities with stronger risk management tools than currently exist.

What is Council expected to approve or oversee?

Municipal Councils will be responsible for:

- Approving Levels of Service informed by risk assessments,
- Appointing the Fire Chief,
- Ensuring adequate resources are provided to meet approved service levels,
- Receiving regular, standardized reporting.

This aligns Fire Services with how municipalities already oversee policing, utilities, and infrastructure.

Capacity & Administrative Burden

Do municipalities have the capacity to take this on?

The framework explicitly recognizes that many municipalities do not currently have the internal fire governance expertise to do this alone.

That is why the FSANS report recommended:

- Province-wide standards and templates,
- Centralized training and guidance,
- A Fire Commissioner's Office to provide oversight and support,
- Standardized reporting tools to reduce administrative burden.

The intent is to simplify, not complicate, municipal administration.

Will municipalities be expected to manage training, certification, and standards directly?

No.

Training, certification, and professional standards will be established, governed, and overseen provincially, through the Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC).

Specifically:

- Standards, qualifications, certification frameworks, and quality assurance will be set and managed at the provincial level.
- In the interim, training delivery will be delivered regionally using a mix of provincial facilities, regional sites, mobile assets, and approved providers. Moving forward, the delivery will transition to municipalities as part of the broader services transition.

- Training outcomes and compliance information will be reported to municipalities in a consistent, standardized manner to support workforce planning and governance and continuous improvement (e.g. through the RMS and communication to fire service coordinators).

Municipalities will not be expected to:

- act as training or certification authorities,
- develop or maintain training standards,
- administer certification systems, or
- develop new regulatory or quality-assurance responsibilities.

Their role remains focused on service delivery and workforce participation, not system design or oversight.

Funding & Financial Exposure

Is this an unfunded download to municipalities?

No — and this concern was raised repeatedly during engagement.

The framework includes recommendations for:

- Provincial capital funding that includes operating and maintenance costs,
- Cost-recovery for services delivered on behalf of the Province (e.g., highways, wildland interface, Medical First Response),
- Reduced reliance on volunteer fundraising for essential operations,

Municipal responsibility must be matched with provincial partnership.

Service Levels, Risk & Decision-Making

Will municipalities be forced to amalgamate fire departments or close stations?

No.

The framework does not mandate amalgamation or closures. Instead, it requires municipalities to:

- Conduct community risk assessments,
- Define appropriate service levels,
- Make evidence-based decisions.

Regional collaboration and shared services are options, not requirements.

What if Council sets a service level we cannot afford?

The new model strengthens the relationship between:

- Risk,

- Cost,
- Service expectations.

Fire Chiefs will be required to provide clear advice on:

- Risks,
- Resource needs,
- Consequences of underfunding.

This gives municipal administrators and Councils defensible, evidence-based decision-making tools.

Relationship with Fire Chiefs & Departments

Does this change the role of the Fire Chief?

Yes — in a positive way.

The Fire Chief becomes:

- Clearly accountable to Council,
- Responsible for operational leadership,
- Required to report on service levels, risks, and performance.
- Provides indemnification

This strengthens both professional accountability and municipal oversight.

Will this strain relationships with volunteer departments?

Change always creates tension, but the framework is designed to:

- Protect volunteers,
- Improve safety and training access,
- Reduce fundraising pressure,
- Provide clearer legal protection.

Clear governance reduces conflict by replacing informal arrangements with transparent roles and expectations.

Implementation & Timing

When does this take effect?

Implementation will be phased over several years, not immediate.

This includes:

- Transitional periods,
- Ongoing engagement with municipalities.

No municipality is expected to change overnight.

What happens after these workshops?

Input from CAOs and other partners will directly inform:

- Regulations,
- Standards,
- Transition plans,
- Implementation supports.

Municipal voices are critical to ensuring the framework is workable, affordable, and defensible.

Final Message for Municipal Administrators

This modernization is not about shifting blame or cost.

It is about:

- Aligning authority with responsibility,
- Reducing risk through clarity,
- Supporting municipalities with provincial standards and oversight,
- Creating a sustainable fire service system that can withstand future demands.

TABLE QUESTIONS

1. Governance of Fire Service

- What benefits do you see with a potential municipal led fire service?
- What roadblocks do you see occurring to 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 any 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 to 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 and Retention

- What benefits would be seen from establishing a new fire service for recruitment and retention of firefighters?
- What areas should caution be used to ensure retention of firefighters?
- What other areas should be looked at not mentioned to assist with volunteer recruitment and 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 state in your local fire department?
- What would be the toughest challenge to overcome with supports and roles of the province with regards to your local fire department?

Nova Scotia Fire Service Modernization Planning Session Feedback Survey



<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NSFireFeedback>

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

Future System Fully Implemented

March 2029

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