

Fire Service Association of Nova Scotia



Minutes of Board of Directors Meeting, March 29, 2026

1) Call to Order – President Greg Jones called the meeting of March 29, 2026, to order at 10:01 am. and called for a moment of silence.

2) Approval of Minutes –

Motion: Moved by Shawn Andrews, seconded by Terry MacAloney, to approve the minutes of January 25, 2026. **Motion Carried.**

3) Business Arising from the Minutes –

Additions to the Agenda: The eye safety awareness presentation was cancelled until Mays meeting.

4) Review of Action Items – N/A

5) Executive Report

5. (A) Presidents Report – It has been quite busy over the past 9 weeks, with a lot on the go, especially regarding media relations and working to correct misinformation. There has been significant work happening behind the scenes surrounding the fire governance piece, as well as major discussions involving volunteers.

The conference committee has also been very active, with many great initiatives underway. Bi-weekly meetings have been taking place with Krista, along with regular meetings with the executive, to keep planning and coordination moving forward. VERBAL

Motion: Moved by Greg Jones and seconded by Paul Gould to accept the Presidents Report. **Motion Carried.**

5. (B) 1st Vice President – Rod Nielsen – I attended the Fire Service Modernization presentation in Springhill, participated in most conference committee meetings, attended EHS/MFR quarterly meetings, and followed up on communications regarding fire school. VERBAL.

Motion: Moved by Rod Nielsen and seconded by Terry MacAloney to accept the 1st Vice Presidents Report. **Motion Carried.**

5. (C) 2nd Vice President – Nick Power – I have fielded numerous calls and emails regarding miscommunication within the fire service. I have also participated in all Safety Committee and FTAC

Safety meetings, which take place twice a week and continue to be a very busy and active committee. In addition, I attended the Public Bills Committee meetings alongside Greg Jones and Rod Nielsen, which were very productive.

Motion: Moved by Nick Power and seconded by Craig MacNeil to accept the 2nd Presidents Report.
Motion Carried.

6. Administrative Assistants Report – General administrative duties were reported, including ongoing bi-weekly meetings with the President, financial updates, and maintenance of systems such as Envoke and membership dues processing. It was also noted that preparations and coordination for the upcoming conference are currently a significant focus, contributing to a particularly busy period for administrative operations.

Motion: Moved by Terry MacAloney and seconded by Robert MacPherson to accept the Administrative Assistants Report. **Motion Carried.**

7. County Reports –

Cumberland County – Kendell Spence - From January 1 st , 2026, to February 28, 2026, there have been a total of 200 calls responded to in Cumberland County by 16 departments this doesn't include Amherst Fire Departments call numbers. The Municipality has purchased a check it programs from Vector Solutions. This will allow departments to track their equipment, apparatus, SCBA, PPE, and will also provide a ticketing system that will be sent to administration staff which will notify them of any vehicle repairs that are needed. There has been on going training provided by Sustainable Training Solutions. Hazardous Material Awareness and Hazardous Material Operations were wrapped up in March, and pump operations began in Oxford. Fire Investigations for First Responders will take place in May in Pugwash.

Yarmouth County – Paul Gould

- Municipality of Argyle:

- * A wildland course was held recently at the Pubnico & Dist. Fire Department. Our local Forest Technician is offering training to those who ask.
- * Our Fire Service Coordinator has been working on budget planning and gathering fire department budget plans. He has also been gathering other info on drivers and training records. Fire department registrations are due April 1. He's organized vendor sessions on PPE throughout April where each vendor can demo their products.
- * Quinan Fire had a meeting with our MP, Chris d'Entremont to discuss issues.
- * First Aid training was held on Feb. 7/8 for fire department members

Yarmouth County Mutual Aid Association:

- * A meeting was held on March 19th with an AGM afterwards. There was enough for a quorum to continue.
- * A new website for the association was launched containing a calendar, resources, and surveys.

* There hasn't been a true AGM for the association for some time. New directors were selected, with one opening remaining. The new directors were to meet on March 26th to elect officers.

* The association will now be working on committee development and proceeding with key priorities like training, member engagement, and "stronger association systems".

* The Warden for the Municipality of the District of Yarmouth was present and expressed concerns on Bill 186.

* New DNR claim forms were briefly discussed and handed out to members by our local Forest Tech.

- Argyle Municipal Firefighters Association:

* A meeting was held on Feb. 17th

. * Poor cell coverage and the iPhone crash alerts were discussed.

* A review of calls was provided by the fire service coordinator.

* Ladder and SCBA testing were arranged by the fire service coordinator.

- Calls: February calls for the county were mostly fire alarms (24) and medical (23), with the next most being MVC's (10) and chimney fires (5).

- Other:

* An MFR Refresher was held on March 11th with another planned for April 22nd

. * Interviews are being held for the new REMO Coordinator position. We should be hearing who won the position soon. Our current REMO coordinator is going to be staying on part time, which is what the existing position is. The new role is full time.

* Chief Mike Deveau – Yarmouth Fire Department, resigned near the end of February.

* Digby Dispatch provided all departments with a notification of the spring weight restrictions.

Digby County – Debra Henry - It was noted that Digby has an active training committee, and that Claire is currently working on revamping the structure and function of their training committee. It was also reported that equipment and accessories have been purchased to support funeral protocol activities, with a dedicated committee in place to oversee that area of operations. A final outstanding item noted was the continued search for a bell to be used for funeral protocol purposes.

Guysborough County – Shawn Andrews – It was reported that a new Director of Services has been appointed for the Guysborough County region covering fire and emergency services. In addition, a second position related to fire service protection has been established, with the role expected to begin in September. A new individual is also scheduled to start on April 14. It was noted that these changes form part of a broader restructuring initiative that has already been initiated by council, with multiple adjustments underway within the regional fire service framework.

Kings County – Chad Schrader – It was reported that the Level A Hazmat team has been formally ceased in its current structure. However, council has expressed a strong intent to re-establish the team to meet Level A standards moving forward. A second grant application has been submitted to support capital funding requirements, and further work is ongoing to address equipment, and infrastructure needs necessary to achieve compliance and readiness. It was noted that while progress is being made, additional steps are still required before a fully operational Level A team can be confirmed. The intended service area would include response capability extending across Kings County. Members indicated there is still significant work underway and further updates are expected as the process continues.

East Hants – It was reported that several projects are currently on hold pending completion of a staff report and further direction following the government review and upcoming fire service legislation. It was noted that progress is effectively paused until the legislative and review framework is clarified, as departments are waiting for clear direction on required actions and compliance expectations before proceeding. As a result, work in a number of areas is temporarily stalled until the outcomes of the review process are finalized.

Pictou County – It was reported that an assistant to the Emergency Coordinator has been hired, reflecting the increasing workload and expanding responsibilities within the department. It was noted that the role of Emergency Services Coordinator continues to grow in scope and remains a key position within the overall emergency management structure.

Antigonish County - Robert MacPherson reported that departments in Antigonish County have met several times to review the current situation and discuss how the review applies moving forward. It was noted that another meeting is expected with the municipality as part of continued coordination. While progress is being made, it was acknowledged that navigating the process has been challenging due to a mix of rumours, reports, and uncertainty around requirements. Despite these challenges, it was confirmed that work is continuing and the process is moving forward.

8) Committee Reports

a. By-Laws – Rod Nielsen noted there is a section within the bylaws regarding representation for the fire school that needs to be discussed and potentially amended. Historically, the fire school had representation on the board for many years; however, with the current position and structure of the school evolving into its own entity, it may no longer have the same representation as originally intended under the bylaws. Discussion is needed on whether that section should be removed or updated to reflect the current governance structure. Verbal

b. Finance – Krista gave a detailed review of the financial transactions since the last meeting.

Motion: Moved by Debra Henry and seconded by Chad Schrader to accept the finances report as presented. **Motion Carried.**

c. Conference – Krista Dove – The Conference Committee has been extremely busy finalizing preparations for the upcoming conference. Work is ongoing to complete the remaining details to ensure a successful event. There has been strong interest from vendors, along with excellent sponsorship and overall support. Final arrangements are being confirmed, including speaker lineups, delegate materials and bags, conference purchases, and logistics related to food and accommodations with the venue. Overall, planning is well advanced, and the committee is in the final stages of coordination leading into the conference.

d. Vehicle Insurance Levy – Dave Sponagle – The report was circulated to directors. Financial funding from the province has not yet been received. Greg Jones advised that the letter to the province was resubmitted and funds should be arriving soon.

Terry MacAloney asked about manuals for the levy courses, noting that purchasing books for every student is expensive and that some books are not fully utilized. Concerns were also raised about students having to pay for books associated with a free course. Terry suggested that perhaps course providers could supply and reuse the manuals as an alternative.

Dave Sponagle indicated he believed approval could be given for the purchase of one set of books per course. Greg Jones requested that Dave Sponagle forward the matter to his committee and bring back a formal recommendation for May.

Rod Nielsen asked where the books are purchased, and Greg Jones responded that there are numerous distributors available, although Firehall Bookstore is most commonly used.

George Derabbie asked about a possible funding increase, and Greg Jones advised that nothing has been confirmed yet, although it was included in the proposal. George Derabbie also questioned the final certifications associated with Sustainable Solutions for Level 1 training. Greg Jones stated that discussion would take place under the Pro Board section. Dave Sponagle commented that most participants appear satisfied with Sustainable Solutions training.

Terry Canning advised that he planned to gather student feedback following a recent training course. Robert MacPherson agreed that capturing feedback is important, noting he had spoken with someone who completed the course and felt it did not cover all required material, resulting in the need for additional training afterward. Nick reminded the Board of Directors that any concerns regarding training should be brought back to the board for review.

Following the resignation of Amy Yarrow, the board discussed the need to review options for a replacement appointment. It was also noted that a call for committee members will take place following the conference.

Motion: Moved by David Sponagle and seconded by Robert MacPherson to accept the VILF financial report as presented. **Motion Carried.**

e. TIR – Greg Jones had nothing to report at this meeting.

f. Resolutions – Nick Power – Requested Nova Scotia Legislative Consideration – Blue Emergency Vehicle Lights.

WHEREAS, it is universally agreed that responding to, and acting within a responder's capacity at emergency situations is inherently dangerous and all partners involved in the delivery of emergency services wish to mitigate danger as much as possible to ensure responder and citizen safety; and,

WHEREAS, countless studies, reports, and case studies, as attached, have been conducted and concluded that the appearance of blue flashing lights on all emergency response vehicles makes them more clearly distinguished from normal highway traffic; the aforementioned reports further outline that this distinction is heightened during reduced visibility situations such as poor weather at low light and night time conditions; and,

WHEREAS, at the March 28th , 2021, Board meeting, the Fire Service Association of Nova Scotia (FSANS) received correspondence from Emergency Health Services NS to support their cause to permit the use of blue flashing lights on ambulances to increase safety of their response personnel; on March 5th , 2025, the FSANS Board received correspondence from Halifax Regional Fire & Emergency services requesting similar support; and

WHEREAS, many Provinces and States are amending, or have amended their respective Traffic Safety Laws to permit use of blue flashing lights for emergency response vehicles with Prince Edward Island making the most recent update in January 2025; and

WHEREAS, FSANS is aware that the Province of Nova Scotia is currently crafting and revising

regulations for, the-yet-to-be-finalized, Traffic Safety Act to better serve and protect all users of public highways and roadways in the province; and while the current Motor Vehicle Act is still in effect, it would appear that now is the time to ensure the Traffic Safety Act will reflect these important changes to emergency response vehicles lighting;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the Fire Service Association of Nova Scotia encourages the Province of Nova Scotia to ensure the applicable Section of the Traffic Safety Act extends the permission to use blue flashing lights on defined emergency response vehicles (ambulances, fire trucks, police vehicles, and any others as appropriate) and specifically that these lights can be utilized in conjunction with existing red flashing lights, and outline any specific requirements for the placement and operation of these lights.

Motion: Moved by Nick Power and seconded by Steve Marcellous to support and present the Blue Emergency Vehicle Lights to Government. **Motion Carried.**

g. Standards – Terry MacAloney – All three firefighter levels have now been posted on the website. The committee will now begin work on reviewing the Traffic Safety Manual, with meetings scheduled in the near future to begin that process. There has been a significant amount of positive feedback received regarding the three levels, as well as the support role. Greg Jones also noted that he has heard favourable feedback specifically regarding the support role. Verbal.

h. Dispatch – Greg Jones Nothing new was reported today. It was noted that this is linked to the broader governance piece, and at this time no additional updates have been received by others. Chad Schrader advised that Valley Dispatch is currently being worked on, with a full complement of staff in place, including relief and additional staffing support. Greg Jones also noted that Public Safety involvement extends to Amherst as well.

i. CISM – Wade Jennings – no report.

j. Health & Wellness – Nick Power – There were a few emails received and work is ongoing on various items, including the toolbox and other related matters. Verbal.

k. Accreditation Board – Greg Jones noted there is significant ongoing work to “right the ship” to ensure systems are functioning correctly. He advised that work is being done in coordination with JPSAC on the Pro Board portion, with support from Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM) and the associated committee work.

It was explained that, historically, the fire school handled the education component while Pro Board handled the examination process. With changes to the system—moving away from the school-based structure—certification pathways and training processes have been separated and updated. This includes obtaining first net certificates and establishing appropriate training and certification tracking systems.

Work is ongoing to ensure all testing requirements, checks, and balances are properly confirmed, and this will continue over the coming months. Information will be shared with departments as next steps are finalized. It was also noted that, with the fire school no longer functioning in its previous capacity, the qualifications board structure is not the same as it once was.

Rod Nielsen asked for clarification, noting that currently there are challenges around certificates and the transition to systems such as LearnNet to access certification records. It was confirmed that some exams

still need to be completed to meet required standards, and that proctoring procedures must be fully compliant and carefully verified to ensure accuracy.

The website has been updated to reflect the current information, particularly regarding the changes to the fire school component. It was noted that if testing was completed through Pro Board, the certification information should be available and verifiable online.

Craig MacNeil added that Kirk Janes is working extensively on this transition, with a significant amount of work underway. Doug MacKenzie further noted that the overall fire service system will look different moving forward. The intent is not to penalize anyone, but to ensure that training and certification outcomes are correct and properly issued. Verbal

I. Nova Scotia Fire Fighters School – Rod Nielsen– Greg Jones advised that the situation has been “a bouncing ball” as efforts continue to stabilize and re-establish operations. It was noted that the entire executive resigned a few weeks ago, leaving no current executive in place, with only a small number of directors remaining. As a result, discussions are ongoing regarding next steps, with responsibility currently resting with the existing directors.

There was also reference to the most recent visit from the Department of Labour, which identified several outstanding items from previous inspections, along with a small number of new findings. These were described as not major in nature but still requiring attention. Items noted included facility maintenance, safety systems, electrical compliance, hose drying tower inspection requirements, equipment standards, safety data sheets, training records, and general occupational health and safety documentation.

It was further noted that there had been discussion around potential third-party interest (including industry partners) to assist with funding to bring facilities up to standard; however, there is no confirmation that this is currently progressing, and uncertainty remains as to whether such support would be sufficient to satisfy Department of Labour requirements.

Greg Jones also advised that he has been in communication with various parties regarding governance matters. It was noted that misinformation circulating publicly, including social media commentary about new compliance orders, is not accurate. The current orders are linked to previously outstanding compliance issues rather than entirely new enforcement actions.

Financial concerns were also raised, including that the organization is not in a strong financial position and that certain obligations, including insurance, may not be fully up to date.

There was broader discussion regarding the future of the facility and training infrastructure. Concerns were expressed about the risk of losing a formal training ground, while others referenced ongoing efforts in other regions (including Antigonish) to develop training capacity.

Greg Jones clarified that reports suggesting a confirmed new facility build within 2–3 years are incorrect. It was also noted that some circulating information is inaccurate and should not be relied upon.

Further discussion took place regarding the role of the fire school and its relationship to governance structures. Some members expressed the view that the fire school is a private entity and should not be directly embedded within fire service governance structures, while others emphasized the importance of safe, compliant, and provincially supported training alternatives.

There was consensus that safety and compliance must remain the priority. Reference was made to alternative training pathways, including provincially supported programs such as FTAC and other approved certification systems. It was noted that these programs operate under provincial oversight and are separate from fire service governance bodies.

It was also emphasized that while training must continue, it must be delivered in a safe, compliant, and sustainable manner, with appropriate oversight and adherence to standards. Verbal

m. Medical First Responders – Rod Nielsen –

The group announced this was Laura Mather's last meeting with this group and thanked her for all she has done for the MFR program.

The lightning bolt is now going to be a challenge coin and will be for all responders and the individual. Scene to survival for cardiac arrest being the criteria.

CPR guidelines, changes have been announced for BLS instructors. A copy of the new changes is going to Dr. Andrew Travers to review before we make any changes to MFR guidelines.

 Nurses as MFRs; Once EHS is on scene they can allow the individual to perform the particle skills under their scope of practice. Until their arrival and approval, they will need to contact Medical Control at the Comms Centre for approval and instruction.

One new agency, Gabarus in CB and Tignish Bridge has applied for a substation Equipment and standards: tourniquet and pressure dressing bandages are ready for shipment and the training for them will be offered online on the HUB. A pilot project with a few agencies on O2 sat monitors and non-invasive BP monitors will begin soon.

Moving forward with exploring electronic PCRs, Glucometers, exploring the options and the possible guidelines of use and treatment pathways.

MFR app, not a lot of feedback yet. MFR HUB contract is up in July with the current vendor. No changes until that time.

The winter and spring sessions update: more facilitators have come onboard.

Still working on increasing the number of facilitators per county. 49 sessions so far this spring that contain 2 to 3 essential modules per session. Creating a video to show how to find out what and when courses are available and how to request a course. The 18 to 20 sessions outside of the mandatory need to be updated.

There are still occasions of people showing up at sessions that have not registered. A record and matrix are kept of where and when the sessions are being held to assist in determining the areas needing the training. Doctors Travers and Armstrong have offered to attend the sessions to say hello and answer any questions.

HRM Good Sam pilot project: high quality communications, although the numbers are small. Still under evaluation before it goes out to the province 2026 Expo in Greenwich; hands on Friday night, 2 sessions of CPR, SIM truck will be there. Skill station for teams of 3 for airway management, tourniquets and stretcher operation. Escape room for groups of 5 in 15 sessions. Saturday: 6 vendors on site, Dr. Armstrong trauma session, great debate on sepsis, different treatment pathways, clinical updates, Special Patient Cards and their patients. Sold out 2 weeks ago 215 registered.

A MFR program awareness session is now provided to all new paramedics in the

orientation process.

FSANS:

The funding formula for training costs for onboarding and recertification has not changed since 1998. The cost of this training from third party vendors has more than doubled since then. The cost of onboarding boarding new members and new agencies has grown to be cost prohibitive for an increasing number of fire services. More rural areas are usually hit the hardest and they are the most needed for the sake of time. The current model is not sustainable to keep the MFR program successful.

There are fire services still saying the MFR program is subsidizing EHS and stopping the clock for EMC. Education is needed in how the pre-hospital system and MFR program work together.

The MFR Levels of Service are poorly understood by some agencies and the gap between the levels appears to be too vast for some agencies to be palatable to make a change to a higher level of service.

FSANS has not had any communications regarding any issues of being able to contact the Comms Centre in a timely manner. EMC reported they changed the location of the FRCO desk closer to the other dispatchers and they are assisting with FRCO tasks.

There have been recent responses by Level 2 agencies for cardiac arrests that are known hangings. The agencies are asking if there is a way to filter these calls for agencies not wanting to respond to a hanging or will this need to be filtered at their dispatch level.

Report discussion - Laura Mathers was acknowledged for her significant contributions to MFR training, with members noting she was prompt, efficient, and highly effective in supporting program delivery.

Discussion took place regarding initiatives within MFR services, including the development of a lightning bolt decal for response vehicles and the introduction of a challenge coin concept to recognize cardiac arrest survivals. It was noted that all members involved in successful resuscitation events would also receive recognition, with emphasis that the initiative must be implemented effectively to be meaningful.

It was noted that CPR practices continue to evolve, and there are ongoing considerations involving nurses serving as MFRs, including uncertainty around insurance coverage when operating above standard MFR scope.

Updates were provided on system and pilot initiatives, including a new agency at Tidnish Bridge and broader hub developments. A pilot project is being explored for agencies involving the use of oxygen saturation monitors and blood pressure monitors, with further details pending. Consideration is also being given to glucose monitoring equipment and how various agencies may integrate these tools.

Electronic patient care reporting systems were also discussed, with ongoing engagement with government regarding confidentiality requirements. It was noted that transitioning from paper-based forms to electronic systems will be a gradual but beneficial process, particularly for improving data access and usability.

The MFR application has not yet received significant feedback, and further engagement is expected following upcoming expo opportunities. Members are encouraged to provide feedback based on usage experiences.

It was reported that there have been 17 changes to the MFR Hub. Pricing was obtained from the current provider, but costs were noted to be very high, and negotiations were paused as the current contract expires in July, with plans to re-evaluate options.

Approximately 49 training sessions have been delivered this spring. Concerns were raised that not all departments are aware of session locations, and efforts will be made to improve communication, including the development of a video or distribution tool to support awareness. Additional sessions have been requested, indicating ongoing demand.

It was also noted that two emergency communications centre physicians will be attending upcoming sessions to observe, engage, and provide input. The HRM and Good Sam pilot project, where first responders interact directly with physicians in communications centres, has had limited exposure so far but is viewed positively. Corey Beals noted the application has already proven useful for crew feedback and communication, with potential for future expansion. The system is intended to improve communication, support clinical decision-making, and allow crews to be released more efficiently when no critical care needs are identified.

Rod Nielsen emphasized that this aligns with the intended purpose of the application and expressed support for its continued success.

Discussion also took place regarding an upcoming expo scheduled for the week following the FSANS conference, to be held in the same venue space.

Funding models for training were raised, with discussion around achieving cost-neutral delivery where possible, recognizing that training costs have increased significantly since 1998. Concerns were raised regarding the financial burden on rural departments delivering MFR services, particularly in relation to onboarding costs.

It was noted that greater education is needed for municipalities, fire services, and the public regarding the MFR role and its value.

Craig MacNeil reported that he had been asked by council to bring forward information to FSANS regarding the cost of MFR programs to municipalities. While the program was explained, council expressed interest in cost recovery models and requested direction and input from FSANS.

Rod Nielsen and others noted that recovery cost approaches remain unclear and require further discussion. It was also suggested that individuals in some areas have raised similar questions regarding costs. Concerns were expressed that some municipal perceptions may be based on incomplete or inaccurate information regarding funding and provincial contributions.

Greg Jones suggested municipalities should engage directly with organizations such as AMANS and NSFS, and that documentation and formal communication should be used to address ongoing concerns. It was noted that these issues have been longstanding and remain under discussion within governance reviews, particularly in relation to financial and operational aspects of MFR services.

Craig MacNeil requested that the board provide a formal letter to support his discussions with council, so that information can be presented directly.

Additional operational discussion included the role of MFRs in broader emergency response, including the ability to complete scene assessments such as smoke detector checks and fire safety planning during medical calls.

Concerns were raised about variability in service levels across departments and the impact this has on response consistency. It was noted that communications centre adjustments have helped improve call handling efficiency, including repositioning staff to improve visibility and coverage between dispatch functions.

Discussion also touched on challenges in rural cardiac arrest response and variability in willingness or ability to respond in certain situations. It was noted that filtering or structuring responses in such cases presents significant operational and ethical complexity, particularly given the human factors involved.

Motion: Moved by Rod Nielson and seconded by Craig MacNeil to accept the MFR report as presented.
Motion Carried.

n. Director to CAFC – Nick Power – A couple of meetings were held where PSPNET was discussed. It was noted that the province is still not fully on board, although the program continues to expand and add additional services.

There was also discussion around emergency response initiatives and increased emphasis on fire smart messaging, particularly in light of recent forest fire activity. Prevention efforts were highlighted, with concern expressed that prevention messaging is not consistently reaching all departments, reinforcing that prevention remains a key priority moving forward.

Discussion also included plans for “GR Week” in May, following the usual format. However, it was noted that the federal government schedule has changed due to budget considerations, and the event will not proceed as originally planned this year. As a result, GR Week will be rescheduled to a different time next year.

Motion: Moved by Nick Power and seconded Kendell Spence to accept the CAFC report as presented.
Motion Carried.

o. Director to MFCA – Nick Power – A recent in-person meeting was just completed last weekend, and planning is progressing well. Speakers are coming together and the overall conference program is shaping up positively. The upcoming conference will be held in Saint John from July 16 to 19. Host hotel rooms are secured, with additional accommodations available at nearby hotels for overflow. Work is also ongoing on training initiatives and additional programming in support of MFCA, with continued development and coordination underway to support upcoming sessions and events.

Motion: Moved by Nick Power and seconded by Terry MacAloney to accept the MFCA report as presented. **Motion Carried.**

p. DNR – Greg Jones – No recent updates were reported, aside from changes in their leadership. It was noted that further discussion will be needed in late April to review how things are progressing and the overall direction moving forward.

Department of Natural Resources and Renewables issues were raised, with a reminder that any concerns should be reported to the Board of Directors as they arise. Rod Nielsen suggested maintaining a running list of DNR-related issues, including items such as cheques, their intended purposes, and applicable rates, to ensure they are tracked and addressed appropriately.

It was also recommended that these matters be communicated to the executive so they can be reviewed and actioned in a timely manner. VERBAL

q. **Fire Marshal** – Doug MacKenzie – Office of the Fire Marshal update noted that the Fire Investigation Local Assistance Program has now been completed. Two online sessions were delivered with approximately 80 participants in total, and certificates are in the process of being issued.

Local assistance cards will be distributed shortly. Departments requiring training were encouraged to reach out, and it was noted that funding support is available for those willing to host courses, including modest support for items such as refreshments.

An issue was reported federally regarding medal processing due to a paperwork delay, which resulted in a roughly three-month disruption. This has now been resolved, and certificates are expected to be processed; however, medals cannot be issued until certificates are fully received.

A provincial update indicated there may be a departmental restructuring, with the possibility that responsibilities could transition to emergency management effective April 1 or upon the House rising. It was also noted that under a new minister, updated certification documentation may be required, and current processes are temporarily on hold pending final decisions.

It was further stated that discussions are ongoing with federal and provincial partners regarding REM-related matters, including database alignment and coordination with federal fire commissioner support. Regular meetings are being held to address operational issues and system integration.

Beneficiary cards were confirmed to still be valid and should remain up to date. They are currently administered under Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage, with expectations that they may transition under any new departmental structure.

George Derabie raised questions regarding upcoming fire investigation basics courses and local assistance training opportunities. It was noted that departments interested in hosting sessions should contact organizers directly, with support available for minor hosting costs. Participant numbers should also be provided when scheduling.

Rod Nielsen commented positively on the online fire investigation basics course, describing it as very well received.

r. **Fire service advisory** – Greg Jones – No report.

s. **Governance Committee** – Greg Jones advised that following his return from vacation on February 23, he became aware of developments related to Bill 186 and the Support for Fire Services Act. He attended the press gallery and noted that there had been significant misinformation circulating in advance of the announcement.

It was reported that elements from the governance review were being selectively referenced and, in some cases, misrepresented in public discussion, creating a perception that did not align with the actual content of the report.

On March 2, Greg Jones and Rod Nielsen attended the Public Bills Committee. The format of the session was described as limited, with approximately five minutes for presentation and five minutes for questions. It was also noted that other organizations, including AMANS and NSFMFA, had separate engagements with government representatives on the same day.

Since the committee meeting, there has been limited direct communication from government, although ongoing discussion continues within the fire service community and with various government stakeholders. Concerns were raised about widespread misinformation circulating on social media, particularly regarding the governance review.

It was clarified that the governance report is separate from the value-for-money audit related to the fire school, and that the two documents are not linked, despite being conflated in public discussion. This misinterpretation has contributed to confusion and shifting narratives.

It was noted that things have begun to stabilize somewhat, though some departments continue to engage in social media discussions. Members were reminded not to engage publicly with misinformation, as it tends to escalate and become difficult to manage. The group reaffirmed its approach of not posting or responding publicly to such content to avoid further confusion.

It was also noted that governance engagement sessions led by the province have been completed, with strong participation and generally positive attendance. While feedback was mixed in some cases, participants generally felt heard during the process. It was acknowledged that a portion of negative commentary originated outside of these formal sessions.

Doug MacKenzie commented that although some participants later suggested they were not made aware of the sessions, communication efforts were extensive through email and social media, and overall engagement was considered transparent and well received.

Rod Nielsen raised a broader question regarding communication breakdowns—specifically how information is disseminated and where gaps may exist in order to better identify and address misinformation or missed messaging points moving forward. VERBAL

t. Communications – Nick Power – no report

u. Nominations Committee – Shawn Andrews – On behalf of the Chair, it was reported that multiple meetings were held to develop a proposed slate of officers to bring forward. The recommended slate is as follows:

- President: Rod Nielsen
- 1st Vice President: Nick Power
- 2nd Vice President: Craig MacNeil

It was noted that nominations will still be accepted from the floor at the AGM, however these names are being put forward as the proposed slate.

It was also confirmed that Daniel Gaudet will be attending the AGM.

Rod Nielsen further emphasized the need to review all subcommittees and encourage broader participation across departments. It was noted that increased engagement and involvement will be important over the next year to year-and-a-half to support workload and initiatives.

A call was made for renewed participation, including new members and new ideas, to strengthen committee effectiveness moving forward. VERBAL

v. Joint Municipal Fire Service Review – Rod Nielsen – no report

10. Correspondence –

- **Park'N Fly App** – They have a new app and new numbers plus information will go in highlights and in delegate bags at conference.
- **Use of FSANS Logo** – The matter of use of the FSANS logo was raised in relation to insurance levy providers and Sustainable Training (Jeff Perry). It was requested that the FSANS logo be placed on all training certificates. Craig MacNeil noted concerns that, although funding may be administered through FSANS, the use of the logo could be interpreted as an endorsement of the program, which may not be appropriate. Doug MacKenzie clarified that the relationship is that of a training provider rather than a formal partner organization. Following discussion, the consensus direction was that the FSANS logo should not be used on these certificates, and the response to the request is no.
- **Camp Courage 20th Anniversary** – A partnership request was received from CC seeking \$5,000 in support for youth and infrastructure initiatives. It was noted that the Board has flexibility to contribute any amount it deems appropriate. The event is scheduled for July 2026, and it was agreed that the item will be tabled for further discussion at the May meeting to determine the Board's position. Rod Nielsen noted the request and confirmed it will be brought forward for consideration at that time.
- **Mental Health Resources - BetterMinds** – A proposal was brought forward from a community outreach specialist in Florida regarding potential support from BetterMinds. After brief discussion, the Board indicated it would not be pursuing support or engagement with this service at this time.
- **Letter from the New Ross Fire Commission** – A letter dated February 25 (received approximately two weeks ago) was addressed to Kim Masland regarding the proposed commission and firefighter training/certification process. The correspondence raised serious concerns related to the Fire Protection Act and the governance of fire departments. It highlighted issues from the perspective of the New Ross Fire Department, noting a membership of approximately 30 volunteers with limited experience and a need for consistent training. It also referenced concerns about the absence of a formalized fire school structure and inconsistencies in training delivery across volunteer departments. The letter emphasized that communities rely on volunteer fire services for public protection, particularly in remote areas such as Chester Municipality, and expressed concerns about the ability to maintain confidence and consistency in service delivery without standardized training pathways. It further suggested that communities should have stronger governance over their own fire services, while acknowledging the role of representation in addressing questions and concerns. The correspondence was signed by Cameron Boone, Executive Secretary of the New Ross Fire Department. Greg Jones noted that he has attempted to contact the individual by phone and email; however, no response has been received to date.
- **Habitat for Humanity** – A request received approximately two months ago from Michael Kennedy, identified as a funding manager and partner in Nova Scotia, was reviewed and

discussed. Greg Jones requested additional information to better understand how FSANS might be able to assist. The request outlined support for a staff and volunteer onboarding program, including safety components, safety protocols, and fire safety-related repairs under a new home ownership program. This included proposed installation of safety features such as smoke alarms and fire extinguishers. It was further noted that the proposal included establishing two buildings located in Lunenburg and Bridgewater, with FSANS expected to cover associated costs. Following review, Greg Jones advised that this type of request is not within FSANS scope and recommended that the proponent be directed to engage with local fire departments and municipal governments for appropriate support and coordination.

- **Request for meeting -Munn Insurance – FSANS –** A follow-up was provided regarding prior engagement with Munn Insurance, noting that a presentation was delivered last year following an initial meeting. It was reported that there have since been repeated requests for additional meetings and ongoing outreach, including requests to use FSANS branding, access email distribution lists, and arrange provincial tours in collaboration with FSANS. It was also noted that the organization has expressed interest in working toward expanding its operations in Nova Scotia. A recent request again sought an urgent meeting prior to the upcoming conference to discuss a potential transition into the province. Greg Jones advised that this request has been declined and reaffirmed that FSANS will not be involved in supporting or facilitating the development or expansion of private insurance business operations in the province.
- **App Idea - Jeff Bolton –** An email was received on Friday from an individual proposing the development of a new application intended to “revolutionize” communication within the fire service. It was asked whether anyone was familiar with the individual. No confirmation of prior knowledge or engagement was noted at the time of discussion. Greg Jones indicated he will follow up directly to obtain more information and assess the proposal further.
- **Member benefit Opportunity – Upper Canada Wills Estate planning –** An email was received expressing interest in offering a member benefit opportunity related to discounted will preparation services (50% off). The proposal also included a \$20 stipend per completed referral. It was noted that similar services have previously been used by the RCMP. Rod Nielsen indicated he will obtain additional information for further review before any decision is made.
- **Letter from the Lunenburg Regional Fire & Emergency Services (LRFES) –** A letter from Lunenburg Regional Fire & Emergency Services was presented to the Board for discussion. It was noted that the executive was not involved in this item. Discussion focused on communication challenges and engagement within the association. Chad Schrader indicated that concerns have been raised about information not consistently being brought back to association members, with similar feedback reportedly shared by others in the region. Paul Gould advised that information had been circulated through appropriate channels, including FTAC-related communications, and that follow-ups were made when responses were not received. Darrell Locke stated that he has also spoken directly with members and shared information, noting that departments are encouraged to raise concerns in real time rather than after the fact. Additional comments reflected differing perspectives on engagement and communication effectiveness within the region, with some members suggesting there is a breakdown in information flow, while others emphasized that communication has been distributed, and participation is required to stay informed. Doug MacKenzie noted that lack of engagement with association processes can contribute to misunderstandings or dissatisfaction with decisions made. Craig MacNeil added that some of the concerns reflect disagreement with current direction and broader governance

changes, contributing to perceived tension in the area. It was noted there is a general disconnect in communications and engagement within parts of the region. Greg Jones advised he will respond to the letter on behalf of the Board, ensuring a transparent and formal reply is provided.

Additions to Agenda:

Eye Safety Awareness Presentation - A program was brought forward through the CNIB Foundation in collaboration with Fred Jeffers (Labour and Skills). It was noted that the presenter had been scheduled to discuss the initiative today; however, she was unable to attend due to illness. The presentation will be rescheduled for May and is expected to be approximately 30 minutes.

Navigate Energy – A group was discussed that focuses on retrofitting fire halls at low to no cost, including providing guidance on timelines, funding opportunities, and working with community champions to support project delivery. It was noted that they are actively engaging with departments and communities and have completed work in areas such as Blue Mountain and approximately 20 other community centres, including some in Pictou County. They are currently meeting with various departments and seeking additional opportunities to bring proposals forward to government. It was also noted that this group had previously met with FSANS. The general consensus was that while the initiative is positive, responsibility for follow-up and engagement rests with the group to connect directly with interested departments as needed.

Fire School - From the discussion, the matter was reviewed regarding the continued inclusion of the group within the Board structure. Craig MacNeil suggested that the group be removed from Board representation, noting that the bylaws state a member “may” sit on the Board, and therefore it is not a mandatory position. It was further identified as a housekeeping item that can be formally addressed at the AGM, where the change can be confirmed and properly recorded in the official minutes and bylaw documentation.

FTAC Committee – The discussion focused on whether any consultation with FTAC is required before proceeding with amendments to the bylaws. It was questioned whether FTAC should be engaged on the matter and whether its role is intended to be permanent. A suggestion was made that representatives could be invited to a meeting for further clarification if needed. Doug MacKenzie advised that a provincial training structure is expected to remain in place in some form, potentially through an ad hoc or recognized provincial training committee that can be engaged as required. The group agreed that the appropriate process would be to proceed through a formal notice of motion for the AGM, where the amendment can be presented and voted on accordingly, rather than making immediate structural changes outside of that process.

Lights and Sirens - A discussion was held regarding vehicles equipped with lights and sirens and the associated inspection and compliance requirements. Craig MacNeil noted that once lights and sirens are installed on a vehicle, it is considered modified emergency equipment and may require a yearly Motor Vehicle Inspection (MVI), as the installation is treated as vehicle “work” that must meet inspection standards. Rod Nielsen emphasized the need for broader education and awareness on this issue, particularly for departments and members, and suggested it should also be communicated to insurance providers. He also noted that any personal vehicle equipped with lights and sirens may be classified as an emergency vehicle and should be treated accordingly for insurance and compliance purposes. Greg Jones indicated he will review the matter further and provide clarification and supporting information back to the Board.

Darrell Locke and Chad Schrader put their names forward to be considered for the VILF committee.

11. Adjournment

The next meeting May 31st - 10:00 am Brookfield – in person and good attendance is requested.