

# 2019 Resolutions Report

## Category A

### 1-2019 Short-term Rentals

**Therefore, Be It Resolved** that Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador partner with Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador on the development of a framework to govern short-term rentals in Newfoundland and Labrador.

MNL collaborated with HNL to address this resolution through joint planning and action. HNL was the lead advocacy organization to request changes to the *Tourist Establishments Act* and *Regulations*. MNL participated in and encouraged members to engage in fall 2020 consultations and also provided a written submission to the Province's *Act* review process. MNL offered generally positive feedback on the proposed framework but expressed concern that short-term rental operations in primary residences were to be excluded from the proposed new registry. These "business use of home" activities are ones that municipalities should have the option of readily knowing about for both development control reasons (if the town has this authority by virtue of having a Municipal Plan and Development Regs) and local business tax collection purposes. It was important that they be captured in the proposed new registry seeing as this would save towns a lot of time tracking them down otherwise.

Changes to the *Act* were announced in November 2020 but, as drafted, the amendments did not reflect the MNL recommendation to register operations contained in primary residences. This new *Tourist Accommodations Act* received second reading in the House of Assembly prior to the Provincial election.

### 2-2019 Provincial Asset Divestment Protocol

**Therefore, Be It Resolved** that Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador work with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to establish a provincial asset management protocol encompassing the ongoing oversight, operation, maintenance, and disposal of provincial assets falling within Municipal and Municipal Planning Area Boundaries.

The pandemic resulted in a number of regular departmental committee meetings being postponed or cut back throughout 2020. MNL has had representation on both a Provincial Asset Management Oversight Committee (specific to the Province's Gas Tax obligations) and a Joint Municipal Infrastructure Committee (JMIC - also including the PMA, engineering consultants and construction contracting representatives) managed by the former Department of Municipal Affairs and Environment. The JMIC last met in July 2020. Following the initial reorganization of provincial government departments under Premier Furey's administration, the provincial engineering staff responsible for the municipal asset management program roll-out under the Gas Tax Agreement were moved to the new Department of Transportation and Infrastructure. While communications with those staff have continued at intervals, specifically regarding the Province's AM Toolkit, broader asset management policy and implementation discussions have stalled. MNL is awaiting an update on the assignment of AM under the latest departmental reorganization (i.e. Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs).

### 3-2019 Federal Government Wastewater Systems Effluent Regulations Town of Marystown

**Therefore Be It Resolved** that Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador approach the Federal Government and, on behalf of all municipalities in Newfoundland and Labrador, lobby for an amendment to the Wastewater Systems Effluent Regulations that would allow for the termination of monitoring of wastewater systems that have already been categorized as 'medium risk' and 'high risk' following the first year of data collection, which will reduce monitoring costs and allow those funds to be utilized towards future treatment solutions.

As a result of the ongoing WSER regulations consultation process, MNL is working with members, the federal government and other partners to address ongoing concerns with monitoring.

#### **4-2019 Revising the Wastewater System Effluent Regulations Transitional Authorization Window**

**Therefore, Be It Resolved** that Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador lobby the Government of Canada for a revising of the Wastewater System Effluent Regulations to extend the period of eligibility for applications to obtain Transitional Authorizations.

MNL was successful in its advocacy efforts to reopen the Wastewater System Effluent Regulations (WSER). The consultation process for amendments to those regulations are open until December 31, 2021. Transitional authorization is an explicit item for amendment consideration.

#### **5-2019 Permanently Doubling Municipal Gas Tax Revenues**

**Therefore, Be It Resolved** that Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador in partnership with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities lobby the Government of Canada for a permanent doubling of the Gas Tax contributions to municipalities.

MNL continues to work with FCM on advocacy for doubling municipal gas tax revenues. This has been part of any advocacy related to fiscal and infrastructure supports for municipalities. In more recent pre-2021 budget advocacy, FCM called for a doubling of the gas tax for the next 3 years. On March 25, the Federal Government announced that a one-year doubling would occur, and that the fund would be renamed the Canada Community Building Fund. MNL's pre-budget release of the COVID-19 municipal impacts report also called for a longer-term doubling of the fund. MNL will continue with this advocacy.

#### **7-2019 Municipal-Provincial Infrastructure Strategy and Communications**

**Therefore, Be It Resolved** that Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador lobby the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to strike a municipal-sector Task Force to oversee the development of a comprehensive Provincial Infrastructure Strategy.

In late 2019, MNL had conversations with senior government staff and were pointed toward the 5-year infrastructure and transportation planning documentation put out under the Way Forward Plan (2019-2023). Any further action on this item have been impacted by the pandemic, a change in government and related departmental changes regarding infrastructure. The provincial department responsible for municipalities has changed in name and related responsibilities twice over the past 8 months; infrastructure responsibilities now lie with the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure.

#### **8-2019 Performance/Service Standards for Crown Lands**

**Therefore, Be It Resolved** that Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador lobby the provincial government to implement Performance/Service Standards for Crown Lands Administration Division that are realistic and achievable, yet meaningful to the individuals requesting the authorization.

Since the 2019 convention and AGM, conversations are ongoing with the Crown Lands Division regarding performance and service standards for crown lands administration.

**9-2019 Payment of Municipal property taxes and poll tax on behalf of income support recipients**

**Therefore, Be It Resolved** that Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador lobby the Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour to establish a joint committee with municipalities to review the property tax and poll tax payment process for those on income support to identify ongoing obstacles to collection and recommend solutions.

MNL met with senior officials in the provincial income support division on this issue. At the end of that meeting, it was determined that more information is required to proceed. A plan for accessing that information was shared and a request for follow up issued. Shortly after this meeting and the request, the global pandemic was called.

**10 – 2019 Streamlining municipal funding programs to provide long-term, predictable funding**

**Therefore, Be It Resolved** that Municipalities Newfoundland & Labrador lobby the provincial and federal governments to move towards an allocation-based system like the Gas Tax Fund and to streamline the process to be more in line with the capacity of all sizes of municipalities; and,

**Be It Further Resolved** that Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador work with the provincial government to review the Community Sustainability Partnership accountability measures to ensure reasonable, equitable application of these measures.

MNL continues to advocate for flexible, multi-year funding for municipalities. Research with municipalities on the impacts of COVID 19 provided 4 recommendations which speak directly to this need. MNL will continue to advocate for these types of funding arrangements and work with FCM on any related advocacy, particularly as it relates to the Canada Community Building Fund (formerly known as the Gas Tax Fund).

**11-2019 Improving service from the Crown Lands Division Town of Flowers Cove**

**Therefore, Be It Resolved** that Municipalities Newfoundland & Labrador lobby the provincial government to establish a standing committee made up of various stake holders (e.g., Crown Land Division, Service NL, Transportation & Works, Municipalities Newfoundland & Labrador, etc.) to identify and solve service challenges.

Since the 2019 convention and AGM, conversations are ongoing with the Crown Lands Division regarding performance and service standards for crown lands administration.

**13-2019 Breastfeeding-Friendly Communities**

**Therefore, Be It Resolved** that Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador work with the Baby-Friendly Council of Newfoundland and Labrador and other health-sector partners to promote the adoption of breastfeeding-friendly community practices, including the supporting of breastfeeding at all municipally owned facilities, accommodating employees and others who are breastfeeding, and otherwise adopting measures recommended by the Council's new breastfeeding toolkit for municipalities.

MNL continues to work with partner organizations to ensure that municipalities are open, inclusive spaces and places for all.