

PHOTO FEATURE

Onslow Rocks was held for the second year at CCJHS auditorium on June 11th with a dance, silent auction, 50/50 draw and grab bags. Close to \$9000 was raised for the Lower Onslow Community Centre and Preschool.

(Harrington Photos)



Scotiabank employees were volunteering at Onslow Rocks, with Scotiabank matching funds raised from the door and 50/50 draw. A \$3000 cheque was presented on behalf of Scotiabank. Left to right- Carleigh Hiltz- Financial Advisor, Randy Jollie- Small Business Advisor and Gloria Elliott- Customer Sales Rep.



Onslow Rocks dance floor was hopping thanks to awesome music from "The Drive".



Some of the Onslow Rocks fund raising committee members were busy getting the grab bags ready for purchase. Left to right- Mike Worsley, Jennifer McKay, Shannon Wolfe, Kayla Redden and Councillor Doug MacInnes.



Sarah Wood, Amanda Stratton and Leanne Fisher display just a few of the amazing donations for the silent auction.

Federation of Canadian Municipalities – Brief Overview

(Editor's Note – When there was a lot of media, especially on CBC, about the monies council's spend on sending delegates to conferences, especially, Federation of Canadian Municipalities – FCM, I asked councillor Taggart if we would submit an article upon his return.)

By Tom Taggart

I am writing this article to attempt to ensure a better understanding of the role and benefits of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. I first wish to explain my role. Two weeks ago I was re-elected as a member of the board. Quite frankly I am very proud of this fact. The FCM is recognized as one of the most influential lobby groups in Canada and the history I am about to provide will confirm this. However back to my position on this board, the fact that I was re elected by my peers, Mayors and Councillors across NS, is very gratifying.

I am sure many are aware of the CBC article of the last week of July in which they questioned the cost and value of Municipalities in Nova Scotia sending delegates to the FCM annual meeting/ convention and trade show. Their article indicated or insinuated too many Municipal officials from NS attended. I truly recognize the roll of the press to hold elected officials to account; however I believe this could unintentionally have a negative impact on Nova Scotia's standing/ strength in this organization. I fear some municipalities may fear a public backlash and not send delegates. We need numbers to ensure our strength at the table. In addition, the networking, education and information gathered at the conference and trade show is invaluable.

Following is the history and the benefits of being a member of the FCM.

In 1901 the first national meeting of Municipal leaders was held. The first political initiative of the then Union of Canadian Municipalities was to convince the Federal government to create legislation that would give communities more control over the actions of utility companies

in their communities.

Today the FCM continues the tradition of advocating having the needs of Municipalities and their residents reflected in Federal policy and programs

Let's fast forward to recent times. In the budget of 2005 Prime Minister Paul Martin introduced what is referred to as the Federal Gas Tax Fund. As a result of consultation and lobby efforts with and between FCM and the Federal government it was recognized there was a very significant deficit in required Municipal infrastructure. The purpose of this fund was to disperse a portion of the federal taxes collected on gas, evenly and fairly across the provinces. That Fund currently provides \$2-Billion annually to Canadian Municipalities. In 2011 this fund was legislated as a permanent source of Funding. In 2013 it was indexed at 2% per year.

Another major accomplishment of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities would be the "Build Canada Fund". During the Global Recession of 2008 the

Government of Steven Harper in an effort to stimulate the Economy began the Build Canada Fund and worked with FCM to identify the needs of Municipalities across Canada. As a result of Consultation and Lobby efforts of the Board and staff at FCM, these programs have grown to where in his very first budget, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau promised \$120-Billion funding over the next 10 years. That is serious money.

I cannot speak definitively on the value to Nova Scotia as a whole, however I can tell you that in the eight years I have been on our council we have received in excess of \$24,000,000 in funding through these programs for construction of the RECC, Waste Management Master plan, upgrades to the Central Colchester Wastewater Treatment plant, the Debert water tower, the new compost facility and other capital projects throughout Colchester County.

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities represents 90% of the

Municipalities in Canada. It costs Colchester approx \$5,000 per year in membership dues. That's pretty good value for money.

As mentioned earlier in this article, I am one of four Nova Scotia directors on the Board of 50. My involvement cost our municipal approx \$5,500 last year in travel and accommodations. Even though as a member of this board, I represent the interests of Nova Scotia first. The benefit to Colchester of having a seat at such an influential board should be clear.

I hope this helps understanding the benefits of the Federation and Nova Scotia's participation. From a totally personal point of view for me it is an absolute honor. Although there are no actual monetary gains for me, the education, experience, contacts and friendships I have made are and will be invaluable.

Tom Taggart, councillor District 10 Municipality County of Colchester, was re-elected as a member of the Board of Directors of the FCM at its AGM in Winnipeg.

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