

Nova Scotia Government Retired Employees Association - NSGREA
Presidents' Meeting - February 25. 2025
NSGEU Office, John Savage Drive, Dartmouth, NS
(Simplified Notes Only)

Provincial Executive

President P.G. Comeau, Vice President Patricia Murray, Treasurer Gary Meisner, Membership Secretary Linda McCormick, Pensions & Benefits Representative Bernie LaRusic, Past President Bernard Conrad, Secretary Shannon Kelly

Regional Presidents

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|----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Region 1 (Cumberland County) | – Ron Borne |
| Region 2 (Lunenburg & Queens Counties) | – Lucille Wentzell (via ZOOM) |
| Region 3 (HRM / Hants West) | – Kathleen Bugbee |
| Region 6 (Digby East / Valley) | – Joan Churchill (Vice President) |
| Region 8 (Cape Breton County) | – Bernie LaRusic (Vice President) |
| Region 9 (Colchester County) | – Paula Withrow |
| Region 10 (Shelburne, Yarmouth, Clare, Digby West) | – Shannon Kelly |

Guest: Mr. Keiren Tompkins – NSGREA Representative, NSPSSP

President

President advised:

This year is the 40th anniversary of the association;
The Provincial Executive has been very busy; has held meetings every month;
Convention 2025 is scheduled for September 15th with three Executive positions up for election
– Vice President, Treasurer, Pensions & Benefits, each for a two-year term;

President Comeau noted at the last Convention (2024) he received consensus from the membership about things they were unhappy with; advised since convention the Executive has been very busy implementing changes requested at convention, as well as implementing additional operational changes to improve service to the membership (e-transfers, implementing committees, review of Constitution and Bylaws, etc.).

President noted his interest in the budget - will be instituting a yearly NSGREA budget; the NSGREA Yearly Financial Statement may not be ready for the Convention 2025 mail out, but will be provided to members in attendance at Convention.

President noted dissatisfaction with the existing pension; the newly formed Pensions and Benefits Committee will be holding its first meeting on March 4th; general discussion ensued;

President noted his disagreement with a number of resolutions/motions that were passed at Convention 2024; looking to have changes implemented at Convention 2025

Vice President

Provided a recap of activities being accomplished by the Executive since Convention October 2024:

NSGREA office hours, ZOOM usage by various regions and Provincial Executive, establishment of committees as mandated at Convention 2024, instituting e-transfers as alternative for payments, investigation new office location (accessibility, space), purchase of two laptops, instituting executive email addresses, reviewing website for modernization / updating, reviewing telephone providers for modernization/ better pricing, pursuing closer association with SAC to improve benefits for the membership;

Advised a meeting was held with NSGEU President / 1st Vice President – various discussions (PSSP, access to NSGEU building for NSGREA meetings/ workshops/ convention, and possible access to NSGEU pre-retirement sessions);

Introduced discussion on:

The possible increase on price of convention registration – last increase was 15+ years ago;
The possible increase on membership dues – last increase was 15+ years ago;

Ways and means of finding out who / when NSGEU members (as well as any Public Service Commission employees) retire so NSGREA may approach them regarding our association;

Common practices within regions (number of meetings per year, location/cost of meeting venues, speakers, etc.);

Creation of a Certificate of Appreciation for members; upcoming NSGREA 40th Anniversary; upcoming Convention 2025 date and location;

Pensions & Benefits Representative

Nova Scotia PSSP situation is not a good one; Pensions & Benefits Committee investigating ways to address concerns with government and other authorities; possible involvement of regions in knocking on MLA doors- making ourselves known;

Concern with members taking up the Federal Dental Plan – in response a dental plan comparison was drawn up by Employee Benefits Plus (GMS) and included in the membership package recently sent out to the membership; Employee Benefits Plus (GMS) has a new info sheet regarding extended option coverages that will be shortly sent out to our membership;

Treasurer

Verbal Report - 'Statement as of December 2024';

Treasurer noted the present deficit; discussion ensued on reduction of expenditures, future projections and remedies;

Membership Secretary

Expressed appreciation for assistance being offered to her from NSGREA office staff (Dora, Alan); acknowledged all they do for the membership; being new to the position it is a day-to-day learning experience;

Large membership mail out has been total focal point; feedback from many members on information contained in the mail out has been very positive; great deal of positive feedback received regarding the e-transfer process, nearly 500 members using the system to-date;

Secretary

Prepare meeting agenda / note recording, typing, presentation of unapproved minutes for all Provincial Executive meetings / Presidents' Meetings; attend all Provincial Executive Meetings; completion of final approved meeting minutes;

Ongoing work of membership mandates (resolutions, motions) coming out of Convention October 2024;

Keiren Thompkins – NSGREA Representative on Trustee Board / PSSP

PSSP established in 1923; approximately 65 different employers are presently in the plan (21 of these are new to the plan, within 5 years or less);

Defined benefit plan; based on a combination of age, years of pensionable service and five highest years of salary;

As of June 2024, there are 20,947 actives; 3,695 inactive /deferred; 20,000 pensioners; total membership of 44,340;

As of December 2023 average age of retirees – 71.5 years; presently, there are 40 persons (retirees) who are 100+ years of age;

Contributions are not keeping up with the servicing costs; lower membership in the plan is detrimental to the plan;

Due to lower salaried employees, creating additional contribution level – at 80% and at 60%;

Two ways to financially improve the plan – increase the number of contributors, and investments - need to grow the actives, and have good return on investments;

Next five-year cycle is January 2026 to December 2030; as of March 2024 103.8% and presently hovering 105/ 106%;

December 31.2025 a review will start; it is expected that during the month of May 2025 a decision will be made to index (at least 1.7%) for the next five years;

Regional Executive Reports

Representative of each Region Executive provided a report (verbal or written) on their activities. Discussions from the reports included:

Noticeable drop in meeting attendance / particularly since COVID;
Increasing percentage of region members are seniors/ challenging to get out to meetings;
Positive advantage for use of ZOOM by members;
Difficulty getting members to assume region executive positions;
Meeting locations / costs;
Securing meeting speakers / presentations;
Concern – implementing cost of living increase;
Recent NS legislation regarding estate death benefits;
Request for email addresses for region membership / more direct method of contact;
Re-instituting 'telephone tree' within a region;
Phone committee within a region – verifying correct addresses, phone numbers, etc;
NSGREA publication in community newspapers;

Committee Reports

Reports (verbal) from mandated Convention 2024 committees were submitted / discussed.
Constitution and Bylaws Committee
Complaints Committee
Resolutions Committee

NSGREA 40th Anniversary

President Comeau called for suggestions for celebrating the upcoming 40th Anniversary of NSGREA: --
Provide funds to individual regions to formulate their own celebration within their own region;
Halifax harbour cruise; a sail / cruise in a region's own area;