

## Local Governance Commission Recommends Mandatory Training for Elected Officials and Senior Staff

***First annual report outlines 10 areas where the Province can assist local governments in the wake of local governance reform.***

**Fredericton, September 16, 2025** – In its first annual report, the Local Governance Commission of New Brunswick is recommending that the Department of Environment and Local Government implement mandatory training for elected local government officials and senior staff. This recommendation addresses ongoing challenges many local governments continue to face following the local governance reform.

The proposed mandatory training would cover a range of key areas, including:

- Code of conduct – including a section on harassment and bullying;
- Conflicts of interest;
- Roles and responsibilities of elected officials and staff;
- Financial matters and requirements; and
- *Right to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* requirements.

The Commission recommends that elected local government officials and senior staff complete this training within six months of their election or appointment. It further suggests that failure to complete the training result in the imposition of appropriate sanctions.

In addition, the Commission is recommending the development of optional, standardized pre-election training for prospective council candidates. This training would cover the basic principles of local governance and clarify the distinct roles of council members and staff, topics that have emerged as areas of confusion in many communities.

“These recommendations are grounded in the experiences of local government councillors and senior employees who have shared their concerns with us,” said Commission Chair Giselle Goguen. “Specifically, confusion over governance principles and legal obligations is leading to avoidable conflict, expense, and stress. Mandatory training in the key areas identified by the Commission is a straightforward and efficient way the Department can help support local governments, especially newly-amalgamated communities.”

The Commission’s annual report outlines 9 other key recommendations to the Minister of Local Government, Hon. Aaron Kennedy. These include:

- Allowing the Commission to order training as a sanction in cases involving breaches of conflict-of-interest provisions or code of conduct by-laws;
- Introducing Regulatory changes to prohibit reprisals against complainants;



- Expanding the Commission's authority when reviewing regional service commission boundary alteration requests to ensure larger impacts of such requests are always considered; and
- Requiring an independent 7-year mandatory review of the *Local Governance Commission Act*.

"By acting on the recommendations in our report, the Department of Local Government can ensure local councils and staff across New Brunswick have the tools they need and deserve to serve their communities effectively," Goguen added.

Established on May 15, 2024, the Commission investigates issues impacting local authorities, including alleged violations of code of conduct by-laws or conflicts of interest provisions, and has the authority to issue rulings and impose sanctions when necessary. The Commission also provides advice and recommendations to the Minister of Local Government on matters related to local authorities, including local governments, regional service commissions, and rural districts, such as local government restructuring proposals, regional infrastructure cost-sharing decisions, and the review of certain local government by-laws.

In addition to the Chair, Giselle Goguen, the Commission includes four other members:

Jacques Dubé (Vice-Chair),

Donna Redmond-Gates,

Troy Stone, and

Lizon Chiasson-Foulem,

Ms. Chiasson-Foulem was appointed in July 2025, following the departure of former member John Nugent K.C., who stepped down in April 2025. The Commission is supported by a dedicated staff of four, led by Director and General Counsel, Mary Oley.

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