



# AMANS NEWSLETTER



February 2024



## 2024 SPRING CONFERENCE - FOX HARB'R RESORT

**SPRING CONFERENCE  
MAY 22-24, 2024**

We are thrilled to announce the upcoming AMANS 2024 Conference at Fox Harb'r Resort May 22-24, 2024 with pre-conference activities on Wednesday, May 22.

**>>> SAVE THE DATES!** 

Join us for:

- Diverse educational sessions covering a range of topics
- Leadership sessions designed to enhance your leadership skills
- Technical sessions to expand your operational knowledge
- Evening entertainment
- Networking opportunities with municipal administrative leaders from across Nova Scotia.

**FALL CONFERENCE  
SEPT 23-26, 2024**

Don't miss out on these valuable opportunities to learn, grow, and connect! Conference Registration opens in March: [HTTPS://AMANS.CA/2024-SPRING-CONFERENCE.HTML](https://amans.ca/2024-spring-conference.html)

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

### 2023 AMANS STRATEGIC PLAN

AMANS is experiencing exciting times as we transition to a new strategic plan.

This refreshed Mission, Vision and Priorities gives direction to our Board of Directors, volunteers, and staff to ensure we align our programs and services to the strategic direction of the Association and what our members need us to be.

For more information on the Strategic Plan visit [AMANS Website](#)



Kim Ramsay, CPA, CMA

#### AMANS Priorities

Capacity  
Building

Relationship  
Building

Advisory

Governance

Organization

#### Mission:

A professional association of current and future trusted advisors, dedicated to excellence in local government through capacity building, relationship building, and objective advice.

#### Vision:

Excellence in local government administration in Nova Scotia through the professionalism, capacity building and leadership of our members.

#### 2024-2025 Membership

We are pleased to welcome 44 new members to AMANS this year and are grateful for the continued support of our 302 returning members. We are now 346 members strong!

We are excited about the projects and programs we have planned. Please reach out if you see an initiative you would like to become involved with!



PHYSICAL  
MENTAL  
WORKPLACE  
FINANCIAL  
SOCIAL



## WELLNESS WEBSITE

Check out the **NEW WELLNESS WEBSITE!**

<https://nsmunicipalwellness.ca/>

This platform has been tested and crafted with your needs in mind, providing a seamless experience while promoting a culture of health and wellness for municipal employees and elected officials.

## WEBINARS & TRAINING

Wellness webinars and training play a role in fostering a healthy and thriving work environment. They serve as essential tools in nurturing the physical, mental, social, emotional and financial well-being of employees. You can expect the following wellness webinars this year: EAP Information Sessions, Financial Literacy, Intuitive Eating, Movement, Menopause, NSFM Health and Wellness Benefits Information Session, Sleep & Ergonomics. Also stay tuned for three wellness challenges and the relaunch of The Working Mind (TWM), an in-person and/or virtual employee and manager training program to reduce stigma, raise awareness around mental health issues and increase access to mental health supports and services.



**MELANIE BOWER,**  
**WELLNESS**  
**COORDINATOR**  
[WELLNESS@AMANS.CA](mailto:WELLNESS@AMANS.CA)

## WELLNESS COMMITTEE MEMBERS WANTED

Are you enthusiastic about promoting a positive workplace culture and committed to the well-being of your colleagues? Submit your expression of interest to join the Wellness Committee, which meets quarterly, to Melanie at [wellness@amans.ca](mailto:wellness@amans.ca) by February 23, 2024. If you'd like more details, reach out!

## WELLNESS GRANTS UP TO \$3000

Promote workplace wellness for municipal employees and elected officials with new or enhanced existing initiatives. These grants are only available to municipalities participating in the NSFM Group Benefits program. Examples include active living challenge, lunch and learn webinar series, shared-use sit-stand desk project, healthy snacks, Meditation Mondays, etc. Deadline: March 31, 2024, 4:30 pm [Municipal Wellness Grants](#)



## ➤➤➤ COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE: FIRST THURSDAY OF THE MONTH 1:00 - 3:00 PM

With 68 Municipal Accessibility Leads working on the implementation of Nova Scotia's Municipal Accessibility Plans, this monthly virtual gathering explores the topics that the Leads are working on in their organizations. With the opportunity to share expertise, learn from others, and ask questions in a supportive, facilitated zoom room, Accessibility Leads are able to build capacity within their organizations while collaboratively growing the body of knowledge to meet the requirements of Accessibility Legislation throughout the Province.

Topic examples for the 2024 Community of Practice include: Working with Accessibility Advisory Committees; Crosswalks, Sidewalks & Pathways: Improving the Exterior Built Environment for Accessibility; Hosting Accessible Community Events; Engaging the Community in Accessible Conversations; and, Prepping for the Plan Renewal.

The Municipal Accessibility Support Program aids Nova Scotia municipalities and villages to develop and implement accessibility improvement projects in accordance with the Accessibility Act.

The program offers training, resources, and tools to help meet legislative requirements under the Accessibility Act, improving access to Municipal services for everyone.

This program is funded by the Province of Nova Scotia's Accessibility Directorate



**JULIE GLASER**  
**MUNICIPAL ACCESSIBILITY SUPPORT COORDINATOR**  
**JGLASER@AMANS.CA**

## ➤➤➤ EDUCATION, TRAINING & RESOURCES

2024 will see opportunities for Accessibility Leads to gather both Provincially and Regionally in person and virtually for training and education sessions with hands-on learning experiences created to meet the requirements of the developed Accessibility Standards and best practices in: the Built Environment, Communications and Employment, in addition to supporting your **Accessibility Plan Renewals which are due April 1, 2025**. Resources and webinars to support the work are housed here:

<https://www.accessibility-program.ca/resources/resources>

## ✓✓ DOES YOUR MUNICIPALITY HAVE A NEWLY ASSIGNED ACCESSIBILITY LEAD?

Please forward their contact information to Julie at [JGlaser@AMANS.ca](mailto:JGlaser@AMANS.ca) to be oriented to the Program and added to the Accessibility Lead Group Contact.



# Municipal Website Venture

## A new generation of Municipal Websites

### ➤➤➤ UPDATE

Going into its 17th year the Municipal Website Venture (MWV) continues to provide significant value to its partners. Most recently we had our first meeting with who we expect to be our newest partner, the Nova Scotia Native Council (NSNC).

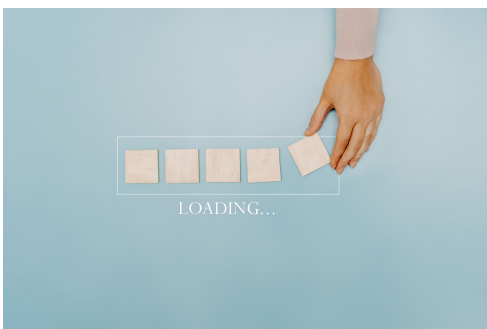
Since the MWV was started we have developed over 150 websites. At the moment we host 46 websites. We have partnered with 15 towns, 10 rural/regional municipalities 3 villages, and 18 public sector organizations/ programs. Currently, websites are being developed for the Municipality of the District of Yarmouth and Cape Breton Regional Police Service.

Between November 2023 and January 2024, new websites were launched for the Town of Yarmouth, NSFM, and most recently the Municipal Wellness Program.

In February we expect to start development on a new website for the Town of Amherst. In addition, there have been expressions of interest from West Hants Regional Municipality, Bible Hill and Acadia First Nation.

Our development platform has always been Joomla. In 2007 we started with Joomla, version 1.0, and in the last 6 weeks version 5.0 has become the platform of choice. As the program matures we continue to add new capabilities to websites. Most recently we purchased a site-wide license of 4AI from Weeblr, a state-of-the-art extension that allows administrators to work with ChatGPT directly from within the Joomla content management system. It's an AI-powered assistant for creating and editing content. 4AI specializes in helping administrators craft prompts to generate high-quality formatted content whether it's for an article, email, or newsletter. 4AI also can be used for translations, improving the quality of existing content, automating financial analysis, and numerous other use cases.

For more information about what's happening with the Municipal Website Venture please contact Les Coleman at [coleman@amans.ca](mailto:coleman@amans.ca).



**LES COLEMAN**  
**MUNICIPAL WEBSITE**  
**COORDINATOR**  
**[LCOLEMAN@AMANS.CA](mailto:LCOLEMAN@AMANS.CA)**

**46 Websites!**



## ➤➤➤ EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### Upcoming Training Opportunities for 2024

In response to your valuable feedback, we have been developing educational programs tailored to our members' needs. We are close to launching our Professional Development Calendar for 2024-2025, which will feature a diverse range of webinars, in-person sessions and eLearning events

Our goal is to empower municipalities with the necessary resources, expertise, information, knowledge, and skills to enhance their service delivery.

For detailed information, visit the AMANS website once the release is announced.



**REBECCA KOLSTEE**  
**MANAGER OF PROFESSIONAL**  
**DEVELOPMENT & EDUCATION**  
**RKOLSTEE@AMANS.CA**

## ➤➤➤ POLICY SUPPORT: AMANS IS PLEASED TO WELCOME NICHOLAS RUDER AS OUR NEW POLICY ANALYST.

AMANS is a trusted resource and stakeholder that actively contributes to the improvement of public policy in Nova Scotia.

- AMANS supports the operations of Nova Scotia municipalities through the development of model by-laws, policies, and best practices and through the provision of objective policy advice in support of evidence-based decision-making.
- AMANS provides policy support and expert advice to the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM) and maintains an active and professional partnership with the Province of Nova Scotia on a number of ongoing projects. Examples of current projects include the Municipal Government Act Review; the Provincial-Municipal Joint Accountability and Transparency Committee; and the Provincial-Municipal Partnership Agreement.
- AMANS hosts the Model Policies and By-Laws library, free for all members. To access the library, please [login](#) to the members-only section of the website.



**NICHOLAS RUDER**  
**POLICY ANALYST**  
**NRUDER@AMANS.CA**

For more information about AMANS Policy support services, contact Nicholas Ruder at [NRuder@amans.ca](mailto:NRuder@amans.ca)

# CONFERENCE SPONSORSHIP

We are grateful for the generous support from the various sponsors of our Fall 2023 Conference. Their commitment played a pivotal role in the event and created a valuable and enriching experience for all attendees. We thank you for all of your support and the services you provide to help our members excel in their work.



## »»» CONFERENCE SESSION TOPICS

**AMA VALUES YOUR INPUT! IF YOU HAVE SUGGESTIONS FOR CONFERENCE SESSION TOPICS, PLEASE FORWARD THEM TO REBECCA FOR COMMITTEE REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION.**



## KEEP YOUR MUNICIPALITIES SAFE - FROM CYBER THREATS!

Cyber criminals are getting savvier and more sophisticated in their attacks - and municipalities are at the forefront of community safety. From the latest cyber threats to how AI is changing cybersecurity, our new report covers key topics you should pay attention to.

The average cost of a data breach in Canada is \$5.64 million. With cyber threats evolving, the need for robust defenses has never been greater. Organizations must remain vigilant, proactive, and adaptable. Creating a culture of cybersecurity will lead to a safer digital landscape, where innovation and technology can thrive securely. Learn about key cyber issues and practical steps to protect your business.

### READ THE FULL REPORT

<https://www.grantthornton.ca/globalassets/1.-member-firms/canada/insights/2023-cybersecurity-report-final-aoda.pdf>







## **COMMUNICATIONS TO SUPPORT MUNICIPAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES**

Record flooding, wildfires, and increased frequency and severity of hurricanes are affecting Nova Scotians, governments, and businesses in an unprecedented fashion. Unfortunately, the trend isn't forecast to change.

The impact of these natural disasters and crises requires significant resources to be diverted from managing the day-to-day operations of government to emergency management. At the same time, municipal staff are stretched to the limit, supporting the elected officials and the public they serve.

There are various approaches to decreasing or alleviating risks caused by natural disasters. These approaches include developing responsible land use planning and zoning to avoid hazardous areas, constructing infrastructure to withstand storms and fires better, and increasing efforts to address the heightened vulnerabilities many residents in our communities face.

However, during the actual occurrence of a disaster, communication is one of the most crucial risk mitigation strategies.

Throughout my career, I have planned and managed several incidents and crises in Alberta and Nova Scotia. I have witnessed firsthand the change in stakeholder expectations in a world where social and digital media make everyone a publisher. The multi-level government approach to managing natural disaster response requires a similar approach when planning your communications. Clear roles and responsibilities within your municipal communications and other levels of government and partner agencies will help quickly establish you as the first and best source of information about the issue, allowing you to maintain trust and credibility with your community while taking ownership of the narrative.

This past year, our team at Iris supported the Municipalities of Shelburne and Barrington during and after the largest recorded wildfire in Nova Scotia's history. Residents were evacuated from large areas of the municipalities and were on standby to evacuate other regions.

Was their home still standing? Is their business gone? Have they lost pets?

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### COMMUNICATIONS TO SUPPORT MUNICIPAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

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During these times of heightened emotion, residents sought prompt notification, transparency, timely and consistent communication, two-way dialogue, and someone to listen to and validate their feelings. Our team applied a trauma-informed approach to communications, prioritizing those most impacted.

We coordinated communications with municipal leadership, provincial government, first responders, and Red Cross representatives. Information gathered from several daily crisis operations meetings was used by our team across varying channels to effectively communicate with residents — email, social media, news conferences, website—and ensure they had the information needed and their questions were addressed. This effective communications approach led to the Municipality of Shelburne's Emergency Management Office Facebook page growing from 200 to almost 8,000 followers.

As natural disasters and crises become more frequent and severe and impact our communities more significantly, effective communication is crucial to mitigating risks and building trust with the public. Remember, the most effective crisis management approach is effective planning, so start planning today to be ready for tomorrow's challenges. Are you prepared for a crisis?

Dawn Delaney is Vice President with Iris, a Nova Scotia-based strategic communications firm. She has completed training and certification through the Crisis Ready Institute and Incident Command Systems (ICS), a command-and-control structure to help manage emergency incidents and planned events.



Learn more about Iris at [www.IrisComms.ca](http://www.IrisComms.ca)

## TELUS, YOUR TRUSTED PARTNER IN CONNECTIVITY

At Telus, we're not just about keeping you connected; we're committed to enhancing your digital experience. Seamless Connectivity:

Experience the power of reliable and lightning-fast connectivity with Telus. Whether you're connecting with loved ones or colleagues, our robust network ensures you stay seamlessly in touch.

Your Security, Our Priority:

Rest easy knowing that Telus prioritizes your digital security. Our cutting-edge cybersecurity solutions are designed to keep your personal and business data safe from online threats.

Innovative Solutions for You:

Discover a world of possibilities with Telus. From advanced mobile plans to smart home solutions, we're here to cater to your unique needs and elevate your digital lifestyle.

Community Matters:

Telus believes in connecting communities. Through our initiatives, we aim to create a positive impact and build a more connected and empowered society.

Let's stay connected,

Jacqueline Dupont-Aylward  
Telus Business Solutions  
Senior Account Manager  
Public Sector  
Atlantic Canada  
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## BUILDING GREAT GOVERNANCE TOGETHER.

STRATEGIC STEPS INC.



### GREAT GOVERNANCE

For any organization to run as well as possible, there must be a clear understanding of the role of the governors and the role of the managers. Strategic Steps' focus on the principles of great governance is woven into each of these offerings. Give your organization the best chance of success by getting and keeping everyone pointed in the right direction.

- Council or Board Orientations
- Council Mid-Term Refreshers
- Governance Reviews
- Intergovernmental Collaboration
- Strategic Planning

### ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

There is always more work to do than there are resources available to do that work. Various tools can be used to ensure that your organization is making the best use of those limited resources, and that it is checking in with those people who rely on your organization to provide necessary services and programs in the most efficient way.

- Organizational Reviews
- Policy and Bylaw Creation and Updating
- Community Engagement
- Management Capacity Building

### DISCOVER OUR EXPERTISE

#### EMPOWERING LEADERSHIP

Over the years, we have seen hundreds of organizations in operation and learned along the way about how best to meet expectations. We believe it is part of our responsibility to set organizations up for success by sharing what we have learned, and by empowering current and future leaders to be the best they can be.

- Conference Workshops
- Event Keynotes
- Customized Workshops
- Pre-Election Candidate Workshops
- Organizational Leadership Training



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**>>> PLANNING AHEAD? US TOO.**

Fall Conference Information  
September 23-26, 2024  
Halifax Tower Hotel and Conference Centre  
More information will be released soon.

