



# Operating Plan

2025

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## Background

The VOFSM Operating Plan provides an overview of strategic priorities identified by Council for the 2025 Operating Year. As a result, this document provides insight into both longer-term strategic directions adopted by Council as well as details of operational priorities for the current year.

The plan is segmented into categories which generally are derived from the structure of the operating budget and as such helps to illustrate how the expenditures identified in the operating budget are aligned with strategic priorities. The categories used for the operating plan are as follows:

- **Community Services:** includes recreation, cultural and tourism services and are intended to make VOFSM a more desirable place to live and to visit.
- **Transportation and Infrastructure Services:** includes maintenance and improvement for municipal infrastructure and are intended to improve the condition of infrastructure within the municipality.
- **Protective Services:** includes services such as municipal Fire Departments, Policing and animal control and include both enforcement and prevention services designed to create a safe community
- **Planning and Environmental Services:** Includes services such as regional land-use planning and waste management services. Land-use planning services are provided by the Fundy Regional Services Commission and provide a process for planned development for the region that reflects the values of the community.
- **General Government Services:** Includes services related to governance and fiscal management of the municipality. These services ensure effective and efficient operation of municipal services for the community.

## Community Services

**Description:** Community Services activities include projects and programs in the areas of recreation, tourism and culture

**Strategic Objective:** Investments in community services are intended to make VOFSM a desirable place to live and to visit. In particular, investments targeted at young families are designed to help increase the visiting and resident population.

### Projects and Programs:

- **Lighthouse Park (Phase 2):** with support from ACOA and the Province of NB, the municipality will invest approximately \$800,000 to complete the development plan for Lighthouse Park and to the completion of a sidewalk along the Big Salmon River Road.
- **Construction of baseball field:** With support from the Province of NB, VOFSM will complete upgrades to the baseball field located behind the St. Martins School
- **Opening of new soccer field:** An investment of over \$400,000 in 2024 saw the construction of a new soccer field behind the 4-Seasons Complex. In 2025 the focus will be to work with community groups to maximize the value of this investment.
- **Program and Event Coordinator:** With support from ACOA and Province of NB, VOFSM staffed a Program and Event Coordinator. Operationally, this position will advance the following priorities:
  - Coordinating and increasing facility rentals (amphitheatre, 4-Seasons Complex, Soccer Field)
  - Collaborating with residents and local organizations to increase the number of recreational program offerings
  - Collaborating with local tourism operators and organizations to increase the quality and diversity of the tourism offer.
  - Improving on-line recreation, tourism and cultural presence including development of an on-line events calendar
- **Development of new access to Brown's Beach:** Brown's Beach is an important recreational and tourism feature for the community. In 2025 VOFSM will work with the province to upgrade/install a new access to the beach as the current staircase has collapsed.
- **4-Seasons Complex Improvements:** Our largest and most complex recreational facility, the 4-Seasons Complex is a year-round asset to our community. Planned investments for 2025 include the purchase of a new Zamboni. For 2025 VOFSM will invest \$87,000 in the operation of the 4-Seasons Complex

- **Florida Beach:** A favorite summer-time destination, VOFSM will work with the City of Saint John to improve access and parking near this beach.
- **Regional Investments (FRSC):** VOFSM also contributes to the following regional recreation, tourism and cultural services through agreements with the Fundy Regional Service Commission
  - \$165,551 Fundy Region Recreational Facilities
  - \$41,957 to Fundy Region Tourism and Economic Development
- **Incubator Space:** Designed to support local entrepreneurship, the VOFSM operates a retail space adjacent to the 4-Seasons Complex. In 2025 the village will invest \$17,500 into the ongoing operation of this space.
- **Community Centre:** This facility includes the Fire Hall, Municipal Offices and the Community Centre Space and is used to house a wide range of programming and events. For 2025 Council will invest \$35,728 in its operation.
- **Dark Sky Community:** Working with the local Chamber of Commerce, VOFSM will explore opportunities related to designation as a Dark Sky Community.
- **Tourist Bureau:** To support longer stays and increased local spending by visitors, VOFSM invests \$30,000 annually in the operation of a Tourist Bureau located at Lighthouse Park.

## Transportation and Infrastructure Services

**Description:** Transportation and Infrastructure Services includes maintenance and improvement for municipal infrastructure.

**Strategic Objective:** Investments in Transportation and Infrastructure Services are intended to improve the condition of infrastructure within the municipality and to develop new infrastructure to support residential and commercial development.

### Projects and Programs:

- **Water/Waste Water Project:** This project is designed to develop systems that will support a future municipal water and waste water utility for the municipality. In the first phase of the project the focus will be on development of wells for a future water utility and development of designs and cost estimates for water-waste water system to support planning and decision making
- **Canada Community Building Fund:** With capital funding provided by the Province of NB and the Government of Canada, VOFSM identifies and implements priority infrastructure projects. Key projects for 2025 include:
  - Crosswalks on Main Street (\$35,000)
  - Market Building/Office Upgrades (\$60,000)
  - Maintenance Equipment (\$25,000)
  - Benches and garbage cans (\$25,000)
  - Speed Radar Signs (\$10,000)
- **Maintenance Services:** Maintenance of municipal parks, playgrounds, buildings and sidewalks are a demonstration of the pride we have for our community and a commitment to protecting these investments. In 2025 VOFSM will invest approximately \$200,000 in maintenance services.

## Protective Services

**Description:** Protective Services includes services such as municipal Fire Departments, Policing, Ambulance and animal control and includes both enforcement and prevention services

**Strategic Objective:** Investments in Protective Services are designed to create a safe community for our residents through efficient and effective response to emergencies and proactive prevention programs which reduce the probability of future incidents.

### Projects and Programs:

- **Municipal Fire Services:** As a result of Local Governance Reform, VOFSM operates two Fire Departments (Simonds, St. Martins). For 2025 VOFSM will continue to invest in supporting members, equipment and training for the Fire Departments. Operating costs for 2025 are approx. \$475,000.
  - **Fire Service Review:** With support from the Province of NB, VOFSM to undertake a Fire Services Review. A Fire Service Review is a systematic process which provides a clear picture of current and anticipated fire protection needs and information to support operational and budgetary decisions.
- **New Pick-up Trucks:** Both Simonds Fire Department and St. Martins Fire Department are in need of new pick-up trucks to support their emergency operations and Council has committed to working with them to finance this purchase.
- **New Animal Control Contract and By-law:** Beginning in 2025, VOFSM signed a contract with the NBSCPA to provide animal control services for the municipality. To begin, VOFSM will update its Dog By-law to better align with regional and provincial processes. In 2025 VOFSM will invest \$13,751 in Animal Control Services.
- **RCMP Service:** VOFSM continues to engage the services of the RCMP to provide policing in our community. This service has proven to be responsive and engaged. Projected cost for 2025 is \$607,674
- **EMO:** Through a local committee, VOFSM supports the provision of emergency response services. In 2025, VOFSM will invest \$7,000 in EMO operations.

## Planning and Environmental Services

**Description:** Planning and Environmental Services includes services such as Land Use Planning, Building Inspection, By-law Enforcement services which are provided by the Fundy Regional Service Commission. This section also includes Waste Management, which is provided through a combination of the FRSC and contracted waste collection services.

**Strategic Objective:** Investments in Planning and Environmental Services help to ensure that development within the municipality occurs in accordance with established parameters which reflect the values of the community. Waste Management is a critical service provided residential properties and promotes sustainable management of waste within the region.

### Projects and Programs:

- **New Rural Plan:** Adopted by VOFSM in 2024, the FRSC's Planning Services will manage this new approach to development within the municipality. This role includes both management of development and building inspection services. To support this role, VOFSM contributes \$174,262 to the FRSC's Planning Services costs.
- **Unsightly Premises By-Law:** Initiated as a pilot project in 2024, this initiative will continue in 2025 and provides an important mechanism to address property issues which can pose a risk to the health of our residents and our environment.
- **Waste Management:** Through a combination of collection service fees and tipping fees, the VOFSM provides waste collection services on a weekly basis to all residential properties in the community. In 2025, VOFSM will allocate approximately \$690,000 to provide this service to the community.



## General Government Services

**Description:** General Government Services includes investments related to governance and financial management of the municipality.

**Strategic Objective:** Investments in General Government Services are designed to ensure the effective and efficient operation of the municipality and supports council decision making and public engagement.

### Projects and Programs:

- **Digital Communications:** VOFSM engaged Amy Allen Marketing to develop and enhance public facing digital communications with the goal of improving public engagement and communication. For 2025 VOFSM will build on the work that was completed in 2024 through improvements to the municipal website including development of an events calendar and upgrades to Council meeting information.
- **Boundary Alteration Proposal:** As a result of Local Governance Reform, the community of Simonds is now part of the VOFSM. However, it was discovered that the Simonds Fire Department and a small collection of properties in Simonds were not included in the boundary of VOFSM. To address this, the VOFSM will work with the Local Governance Commission to complete a boundary alteration request including facilitating a process of public engagement in the decision. A final report will be presented to Council before being submitted to the Local Governance Commission.
- **External Audit:** VOFSM engages Curry and Betts to prepare audited financial statements for submission to the province as part of the budget process. In addition, VOFSM engages Curry and Betts to prepare interim reports to aid in the fall budget process. For the 2025 Operating Year, VOFSM will invest \$15,000 in audit services.
- **Transfer to Reserves:** In order to support anticipated future capital investments, VOFSM transferred \$171,149 to capital reserves as part of the 2025 Operating Budget.
- **Collaborative Care Clinic:** VOFSM will collaborate with Dr. Luan Le and the Province of NB to support the establishment of a Collaborative Care Clinic in the municipality.

## **Interpretation**

This operating plan is designed to communicate the decisions made during the budget process in a format that allows residents and stakeholders to understand how budget allocations will translate to operational activity.

Through the year our operating realities evolve and some of the priorities and projects identified may be expanded or contracted to reflect these unforeseen developments.