

NSFM NEWS

WELLNESS TAKES ROOT IN NEW GLASGOW

The third-floor deck on New Glasgow Town Hall is poised to transform into a vegetable garden this year that will yield far more than a fall harvest.

“There’s something to be said for breaking away from your office and your daily routine and getting outside,” town CFO Alanna MacDonald said this month.

In the last few years, ten international research papers have uncovered the positive effects of gardening on everything from reduced anxiety to better awareness of healthy eating.



The roots for New Glasgow’s deck garden took hold after a Wellness Committee member suggested the unused balcony be given a higher purpose.

MacDonald (middle in picture, above) searched online for help and found all the “How To” steps for a box garden on Pinterest.

To carry out the vision, the town has made minimal investments - \$150 the first year and \$300 the second – to piece together the frames and buy soil and plants.

“I’m not a gardener, and I don’t have a green thumb, so it amazes me when things grow.”

The garden’s balcony location makes it easy to succeed.

“You don’t have to worry about animals or bugs; it’s so sheltered and that gives it a chance.”

Staff working out of the building on Provost Street are now used to taking turns on watering duties.

The building hosts the CAO’s office, community development, and a few recreation and finance staffers for a total of about 20 people.

In the first year, people started turning up for more than their water shifts. So, the town brought some Adirondack chairs into the mix to encourage longer stays.

“It’s a very quiet, small space and there’s no one around, so you can really take a break and unwind without any interruptions.”

Awards and Grants

New Glasgow won a Workplace Wellness Silver Award from NSFM/AMANS for the garden.

The town was also awarded a Municipal Workplace Wellness Grant.

The 2020 Grant program is now [open for applications](#). Municipalities can apply for a grant (up to a maximum of \$1,000) for their initiative. The number of grants, and their value, is dependent on the number of successful applications.

Questions? Contact Municipal Wellness Coordinator Rebecca Kolstee, rkolstee@amans.ca.

No Green Thumb Needed

For inspiration, New Glasgow CFO MacDonald saw an article on pallet beds on Pinterest.

The 40”x48” pallets were purchased at Central Hardware (now Kent) for about \$150.

They bought landscaping fabric and stapled it underneath to keep the soil inside.

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New Glasgow, *continued*

The deck is large – so can easily accommodate three or four pallets, with plenty of room for Adirondack chairs.

This year, there are plans for more flower pots and wildflowers to really foster an outdoor oasis.

Each fall, the fruits (or vegetables, in this case) of their labour are made available to any interested staffers.

“Near the end of the season, you can just go and make a salad for lunch,” MacDonald said of the harvest, which has so far included lettuce, kale, Swiss chard, basil, cucumbers, green onions and eggplant.



There was so much produce one year that employees could bag veggies for home use: “It’s really very ‘Help Yourself.’”

“We kept cutting it, but the lettuce just kept on growing.”



NEWS WANTED

This is the January edition of NSFM NEWS. Feedback, story ideas or news tips? Send them in to:

communications@nsfm.ca

RMA Taps Elms for Atlantic Expansion

RMA Business Services just expanded its reach into Nova Scotia, and they’ve brought in a new client relations manager to beef up the team in Atlantic Canada.



Tim Elms, RMA

NSFM announced a formal partnership late last year with the division of Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA), one of NSFM’s sister associations in Western Canada.

RMA Business Services provides cooperative procurement, fuel and purchasing programs for municipalities across the country.

Through the new partnership, NSFM members can get preferential pricing and service on everything from office supplies to heavy equipment, all completely CFTA and APA compliant.

“We offer procurement opportunities that municipalities wouldn’t normally have,” says Tim Elms, manager of client relations in Atlantic Canada.

“And we don’t just do big ticket items. We do any kind of purchase that is being made by a municipality, like signage.”

RMA dates to 1909, so the programs are built on a lot of experience, and then well vetted and carefully calculated.

And their growing membership means NSFM members can tap into a strong purchasing power. In addition to Alberta and Atlantic Canada, RMA has members in British Columbia, Manitoba and Ontario.

Last year, RMA decided to expand eastward and Elms applied to be the first Atlantic Canadian manager of client relations. He started on the job last month.

Elms, who grew up in Lower Sackville, has an Executive MBA from St. Mary’s University and a host of experience in business development and client relations with a slate of local companies.

“I have a background in RFP and RFQ and I understand that compliancy with the Canadian Free Trade Agreement,” he says.

Elms and his wife spend summers in Queens County and he understands the important role that rural municipalities play as the heart of Nova Scotia.

“For me, this position is great, getting out to meet people and also helping them,” says Elms, whose bilingualism will help make the right introductions in municipalities like Clare and Argyle, on Isle Madame and in Chéticamp.

In addition to big items, RMA has an Advantage Staples Program that municipalities can tap into. They also have a tire program for any size vehicles, including trucks, ambulances and fleet vehicles; as well as leasing and capital purchasing programs for larger items like graders.

To learn more, please contact Tim Elms, at telms@nsfm.ca.