

# **HANSARD**

**NOVA SCOTIA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**

**COMMITTEE ON  
NATURAL RESOURCES AND  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**Tuesday, May 28, 2019**

**COMMITTEE ROOM**

**Rural Economic Development**

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**NATURAL RESOURCES AND  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

Suzanne Lohnes-Croft (Chair)  
Hugh MacKay (Vice-Chair)  
Rafah DiCostanzo  
Keith Irving  
Brendan Maguire  
Hon. Pat Dunn  
Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin  
Claudia Chender  
Lisa Roberts

[Ben Jessome replaced Hugh MacKay]  
[Bill Horne replaced Brendan Maguire]

In Attendance:

Darlene Henry  
Legislative Committee Clerk

Gordon Hebb  
Chief Legislative Counsel

**WITNESSES**

NOW Lunenburg County

Tina Hennigar - Project Coordinator  
Lynn Hennigar - Member



House of Assembly  
*Nova Scotia*

**HALIFAX, TUESDAY, MAY 28, 2019**

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
NATURAL RESOURCES AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**1:00 P.M.**

CHAIR  
Suzanne Lohnes-Croft

VICE-CHAIR  
Hugh MacKay

THE CHAIR: Order. I call this meeting of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources and Economic Development to order. This is the May 28, 2019 meeting. I am Suzanne Lohnes-Croft. I am the Chair of the committee and the MLA for Lunenburg.

Today the committee will be receiving a presentation from NOW Lunenburg County, my home place. I would like to ask the committee to introduce themselves, but before we do, we also have media from NOW Lunenburg County, Mr. Ed Halverson, so I'd like to welcome you from CKBW radio, which is our local radio station in Lunenburg. We don't see you often here at committees or the Legislature so welcome, Ed. Be kind - you're always kind.

[The committee members introduced themselves.]

THE CHAIR: I'd like to remind people in attendance to put your phone on vibrate or turn it off. Should we have an emergency or a need to exit the building, please go out the Granville Street doors and up to the Grand Parade and meet outside St. Paul's Church. There's tea and coffee and washrooms in the anteroom, please help yourself.

The only people allowed to take photos during this meeting are the media. I'd like the witnesses and the members to wait to be recognized by me so that your microphone can be turned on.

We will ask for introduction of our guests and also their opening remarks, starting with Ms. Tina Hennigar.

TINA HENNIGAR: Good afternoon, Madam Chair and committee members. My name is Tina Hennigar. I am the coordinator of NOW Lunenburg County.

LYNN HENNIGAR: I am Lynn Hennigar. I am a core team member of Lunenburg County, so I have been involved with NOW since its inception in 2014. We're very proud to still be here five years later.

THE CHAIR: Great, and we'll go to our opening remarks. Ms. Tina Hennigar.

TINA HENNIGAR: I am excited and honoured to be before you to tell you about our grassroots organization that I coordinate, representing the community I love, Lunenburg County.

NOW Lunenburg County started in 2014 when a small group of committed community members and business owners read the Ivany report. When they learned that Nova Scotia was in the early stages of a prolonged period of accelerating population loss and that by 2026 - that's just a few years from now - one in four people will be over the age of 65, they knew they had to act but they knew they couldn't do it alone.

They began hosting a series of community meetings to learn what the community needed to stay, live, and thrive here in Lunenburg County. They even engaged our youth and asked them what they needed to come back to Lunenburg County, Nova Scotia. It all boiled down to population growth; with more people we'd have more kids in our schools, more customers for our businesses, more people working for our manufacturers, and creating even more opportunity here.

With the support of the Community Foundation of Nova Scotia and the Lunenburg County community fund, I was hired in 2016 to grow the population - easy peasy.

We knew we had to go out and tell people about our community and the opportunities that exist here because we cannot afford to wait for people to find us in their retirement. We packed up our 1976 Boler camper with everything anyone would need to know about Lunenburg County, and we set off on a cross-Canada tour, hosting conversations at kitchen tables, at farmers' markets, and in local parks. I compared the view in Calgary, Alberta to the view that they would find in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia. I compared the hustle in downtown Toronto to the hustle they would find in downtown Mahone Bay.

Our invitation worked. Meet Amy and Ross. We didn't actually meet them, but they watched our documentary. As I do for many of the people who are interested in moving here, I act as their first friend. I connected them with possible employment opportunities and lifestyle opportunities. Ross happens to be a high school teacher, and they wanted to know some of the teaching opportunities, so I connected them with our website, which lists all the jobs every Tuesday at four o'clock. I promise you, this couple would never have known that had I not told them about it. Since Amy is an artist, I connected her with links to all of the cultural places in our community, things that would be of interest, in particular our magazine, where Amy can read about dozens of people who have moved to Lunenburg County, just like her.

However, we did learn that we need to address some of the barriers prohibiting people from moving here. We need to attract doctors to our community. The Nova Scotia doctor shortage is not unique, but we do a very good job of highlighting it. Meet Emma. We first met Emma at a doctor conference, where we met and invited dozens of doctors just like her to our community. This is the doctor recruiting conference that we went to in Digby. We introduced Emma to Dr. Tarah Millen. This is the doctor on the left there. We did a doctor recruiting series where Tarah Millen shared with us how amazing it is to live and work in Lunenburg County. Emma got to meet Tarah through that video and learn from her what it's like to live and work here. No one can recruit a doctor quite like another doctor.

We learned that Emma was interested in locuming in our community, but she needed a place to stay that was close by the hospital. Unlike government, we can leverage our relationships with those in the community, and we were given a two-bedroom executive-style apartment to use to host doctors, locums, clerks, and medical students. We even hosted Emma for the occasional lobster dinner. We know that this type of welcome works, because just last weekend Emma and her husband visited us for the weekend and explored the community looking for real estate. By the way, Emma's husband is also a doctor. The community needs to be involved in the welcome.

Another barrier that we have identified is that, while our real estate is affordable in comparison to the rest of Canada, some properties have a lot less value because they still do not have access to high-speed Internet. We know from our cross-Canada tour that Canadian families want to settle and invest in resilient communities where innovation is a priority. We assembled a team of people, experts in broadband network, who work to bring broadband to communities all around the world. They're doing it from their offices in Lunenburg County. We have expertise right here in our province that we're not exploiting. They point to communities such as Olds, Alberta, and Wales, in the U.K., as examples of communities that have created their own Internet. They have been encouraging us via video conference calls, telling us how they did it and how we can do it too. They did not believe the ISPs that told them that it was impossible.

Nova Scotia has a rich history in co-ops, and we have created an Internet co-operative with plans to create a sustainable model. This government could help us by demanding open access to fibre. Communities are shut out of the process. We're not eligible federally or provincially to apply for any of those funds. There is nothing innovative, creative, or imaginative about the way Nova Scotia plans to address the lack of Internet access in our province. This certainly is not future-proof.

What are we asking from our government? Nothing more or nothing less than you asked of us in the Ivany report: the courage to make decisions in helping to create a more resilient Nova Scotia with future-proof broadband; help and encourage creativity in how communities are empowered to promote and market to host doctors, recognizing that doctors and their families come for community; and believe in Nova Scotians, just as Mr. Ivany said. This will require creativity and imagination, but we can do this. We have to believe we can do this.

Finally, I want to share with you this image. This was me this past weekend taking three much younger medical students out for what turned out to be a 20-kilometre bike ride around Lunenburg County. We got the bikes loaned to us from a local bike shop. We went on spectacular trails. We went to the yacht club. We even had a couple of beers. We met some locals. Afterwards, they told me that they didn't want to go back to the city. They told me that they didn't want to leave Lunenburg County.

It was hard work. I hurt today - still. But that is what it's going to take to grow our population and to address some of the barriers that exist to moving here. It's going to take hard work. It's going to take sweat. It's going to take creativity. It's going to take collaboration with our private sector. It will take all involved. We will have to get out of our comfort zone, as I was on that bike.

I invite you all to get uncomfortable with me. I promise it will be worth it and it will not require you to go on a 20-kilometre bike ride. Thank you for your time.

THE CHAIR: Thank you, Ms. Hennigar. We will open the floor to questions from the members of the committee. We will do one question with a supplementary until we get close to the end of the committee time. We will start with the PC caucus and Ms. Smith-McCrossin.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Thank you for your presentation and your heart and your passion. I can see that you love your community very much.

The two main things that I'm hearing from you today is you're putting out a plea to government to say, help us with recruiting physicians and also with improving access to broadband. The first one I'd like to talk about is recruiting physicians. I'd like to hear more about the specific challenges that you face in Lunenburg.

When did the challenges start? You're not alone. You're probably aware of that. Typically, you're right: physicians recruit physicians. A physician is not going to move to a community unless they speak to their colleagues and find that it's a good place to live and raise their family.

This government changed that when they came into power in 2013. In several communities around the province, they were denied the right to recruit their colleagues and denied the right for physicians to move to their communities. I'd like to know more about your specific circumstances in Lunenburg, and when did the problems start?

LYNN HENNIGAR: I'm not sure I can answer specifically when the problems started, but we were asked by a couple of local retired physicians to get involved in the community recruitment piece probably close to three years ago. So we've created a team of people who are addressing this issue and talking about all facets of it.

What we're really asking is for you to allow us to help you. Not really the other way around. We would like community to be part of the process and a little bit more recognized as a partner in trying to bring and retain physicians.

It's not an easy subject. There are so many facets to it from engaging your public and helping them understand the need to show up for appointments, the need not to accost their doctors. There's a whole community piece. Doctors need to be able to go to the grocery store without being harassed about who and when they might get to see a doctor. So there are all of those pieces.

One of the things we discovered and one of the first things we did was bring doctors in to talk about what their issues were, what was going on, what could be changed.

[1:15 p.m.]

There are a whole host of things within NSHA that are issues but we're not truly qualified - Tina and I, parts of our committee are quite qualified - to comment on that. One of the things we understood or learned very early on is that Lunenburg County and the South Shore in particular is not part of the early exposure for medical students and trainees, so people were not experienced in Lunenburg County early enough in their process to know that this was a place that they might want to come back to and actually work. So we have a long-term view on how we're going to recruit doctors. It certainly includes the very beginning piece and Tina can talk to some of the issues with - what we've dubbed the Dog and Pony Show - of taking a doctor through as quickly as you can.

The longer-term issues we're working on include a partnership with Dalhousie and their longitudinal integrated clerkship which brings medical students into the community for 48 weeks at a time, so we're getting ready to implement that. We're working with more locums so we're exposing more young doctors to our area. We participated quite strongly

in Rural Week. Those are some of the things we're attempting to do, and I think I'll let Tina take it from there on her piece.

THE CHAIR: Ms. Tina Hennigar.

TINA HENNIGAR: We are involved very marginally with the experience where doctors come and they're exploring the community and often they are experiencing my community but as well it could be Truro or maybe Liverpool. I think there's a better way. The way it's happening, I don't believe anyone is going to move to my community by driving through it for an hour and pointing out the various pieces of infrastructure. I think it's going to take spending some time in our community, taking them to the beach, maybe going for a bike ride.

We had teenage daughters of a doctor come who spent the afternoon with me. We went for burgers and milkshakes, we did a walk on a trail, they saw an ice rink for the first time. Later they told their dad - their father was the doctor - who said it's really up to the girls where they go, it's not up to him. They said that our tour - and there were three or four of them over a span of two days - made the most impact, spending some time with me. Granted, I think it was two hours, it could have been great just to have them for the weekend to show them some of the social gatherings and some of the cultural aspects and take them to the youth group and things like that.

I did as much as I could in two hours, but it did feel rushed. My argument is I think the community needs to be part of that. When it comes to the licensing and the pay for service and all of that, I am not qualified to do that, nor do I wish to do that. That's something that the people who are recruiters and the NSHA should be doing. But in terms of the community, I think the community has to play a role in that.

In terms of leveraging some things in the communities, I can get 18 holes of golf for someone who wants to go golfing or I can get someone to take us out on their sailboat. I don't know that NSHA could do that or for that matter, anyone else in government. We are able to pick up the phone and call someone and take them lobster fishing and we've done that.

That all comes at a cost. For example, when I took those girls out to explore the community, that is something we had to pay for. We have a very generous community but our municipalities - we have five, and I've presented to them multiple times each - they do not believe that this is a municipal role. As well, a lot of our taxpayers believe the same thing. They've been very generous, incredibly generous, and if I ask for something, they give it to me. I asked for cookies and I got a lady who made me a tray of cookies to take to Rural Week to put on the table in the hospital - very generous.



I think we can show some more creativity. We can show some imagination. This is not about an ego and who is responsible for bringing them here, honestly, it's about bringing them to my community. Nobody cares who gets to wear the glory.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Thank you for sharing all of that. Am I hearing that you're feeling there is a disconnect between the current physician recruitment structure within the NSHA and your community?

TINA HENNIGAR: I think there could be a better way if we all work together. Right now, I don't know that there's a real strategy for working together. I think it's kind of appeasing us by giving us an hour. I think we could actually look at the results to say that it's probably not working, that there could be a better way to do it. We have an amazing recruiter in our community. I love her very much. It's just the conditions are not there for this to work as it could. I have many ideas of how it could be improved, but we're not given the autonomy to do that.

THE CHAIR: Ms. Chender.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Thank you for your presentation. Maybe we'll come back to the doctor issue because I think that is an interesting one, and I think it's great how you're pioneering in that way in terms of community-led initiatives.

I want to switch to Internet for a second. We have been advocating, since the announcement of the Internet Trust, for a community-owned middle mile because there has been a market failure. Everyone acknowledges that. The minister acknowledges that.

In the case where there is a market failure, it seems somewhat odd to then invite the market to come back in to fill the gap. The response that we have gotten is, well, we're going to contract better this time, but that's almost out of an Aesop's fable. That's always the response.

I think it points to what you're talking about in terms of the need for creativity. The same thinking that got us into this is not going to get us out of it. I'm really curious about the work you guys are doing. I have a few questions. I guess what I would love to understand, because I know you have done research on this, my understanding is that NOW Lunenburg County has also advocated for community-owned infrastructure. I wonder if you could talk a little bit about what got you to that point, any research you did or conversations you had, and why you think that's the best.

THE CHAIR: There are other people who have questions, Tina, and I know you have a lot to say, but it's interesting.

TINA HENNIGAR: I would say the research is people who I spoke to on my cross-Canada tour who moved here and said, what do you mean I can't have access to Internet? You did not tell me that. What is it, 16,000 people in our community who do not have access to high-speed? That's a problem. It's a problem not just for those people who can't have access, but it's also a problem for those folks who have homes that are their biggest investments intending on selling them one day, but they can't if they don't have access.

LYNN HENNIGAR: I just want to give you a really quick overview of how we got to where we did. We ran into the barrier. Most of us live it. The Chair of NOW doesn't have good Internet either. We live this reality.

We had a public meeting just to talk to the community about what was possible. One of the things that NOW is trying to work against is the negative narrative that this is a problem and there's nothing we can do. What we had was a public meeting that highlighted what has been done around the world that has worked, like Olds, Alberta, the B4RN program in Wales, and there are small co-ops all over the U.S. cropping up. This is a problem that is actually solvable, not solvable in the traditional ISP way because the return on investment is not there.

I liken it to being very much like a personal mortgage. The money is there to build the house and to have the house at the end. It's just going to take a 15- or 20-year timeline. It's not a two-year goal. One of the other pieces that we feel very strongly about is that it does not have to be a hole into which governments sink money. What it needs to be is a way for communities to affordably access capital. If we can do that, we can actually make it work. That's what our research has shown, that given a 10- to 20-year timeline, depending on the difficulty in the area, it can actually be done.

That meeting brought to us four or five local people who implement high-speed Internet in places like sub-Saharan Africa. They live in Lunenburg County, and they implement around the world. We know we have some expertise, and we have some people in our group who have the business-case side.

We have registered our co-op. It's ready to go. It hasn't been funded because we applied for a piece of government money, and you couldn't do anything until you knew whether or not you got the money, and then we didn't get the money. We're a little bit behind, but we're working on that. We have located a pilot location. We have a pilot community in mind. We know how many houses. We have a company that will help us map and design what that pilot project could look like. We know that pilot project is going to cost somewhere around \$250,000. We know that delivering high-speed fibre, which is relatively future-proof, to homes costs about \$20,000 a kilometre.

What we haven't gotten to yet is the ability to actually do that pilot project and to test the co-op model. We have done some small focus groups to test the community's desire to be part of a co-op. It's quite strong. People are interested in being involved. They're willing to do what it has taken in other parts of the world. In B4RN, they go out and they

actually dig and lay their own fibre. One of the other pieces that co-ops bring to communities is a skill set. You would have a skill set within your community to do some of this work, and you create jobs.

From our point of view, it's no-lose, but it's not in the game - and it's not just not in the game in Nova Scotia, it's not in the game federally. We don't fit the box, and that's what we're asking. We just want to be able to be in the game. Could you create a different box, maybe a circle, that we could be part of?

CLAUDIA CHENDER: That obviously is really similar to the conversations we have been having and the research we have done, particularly that stickiness piece. If you have that expertise, if you can create those jobs, then even if the technology isn't future-proof, the setup is because you have people who are invested in it, not just by contract but by life.

To follow up in terms of those boxes, my understanding of the Develop Nova Scotia bidding pre-qualification process was that municipalities could partner with providers big and small. Did you attempt to engage that process or to apply? What was your experience?

LYNN HENNIGAR: We didn't apply. We did attend all of Develop Nova Scotia's meetings and were assured that there would be a path in for us. When the actual application came out, there was no path other than with a municipality. Our municipalities are not interested in being in the Internet business, which I think is a bit of a shame because I liken it to some of our municipalities that have embraced wind. I think there's money and opportunity there, but they just see it as one more thing on their plate, so we have not found a municipal partner.

THE CHAIR: We'll turn it over to the Liberal caucus. Mr. Jessome.

BEN JESSOME: Thank you all for being here. I appreciate your time. I just wanted to make mention of this because I'm not sure if you folks are aware of it, but in this year's budget there was a couple hundred thousand dollars allocated specifically for doctor recruitment in the fashion that I think you're referencing. We have seen an example of your community's experience and success in lending a hand in that respect. The community that comes to mind is the Town of Digby. In fact, their MLA has even gone on recruitment-type missions and first-hand directly to me expressed the value in that personalized capacity. Like you said, you can call someone up and say, let's try to get this person a round of golf or get them to check out some of the corners of your community that you may not get from a brochure.

I just wanted to make sure that that was stated. I know the intention behind that is to try to suggest that the government is confident and willing to partner with communities in that respect because our communities are the ones that know most specifically what's cool and what's attractive to people from the outside.

[1:30 p.m.]

As I said initially, my folks are property owners in the area and I'm wondering if you can comment on any plans or any comments around capacity for public transportation in the area. I know that Bobby Mercer's cab is out that way and once in a while he'll come out to Darby's Head to look after us on the weekend, but what's the deal with public transit in the area?

TINA HENNIGAR: The Town of Bridgewater has just facilitated a bus that goes in the Town of Bridgewater. I also know that Lunenburg is having some discussions. They're doing a long-term strategy and they are having some discussions around creating a bus in Lunenburg as well.

It would be fabulous to have a bus drive around our entire county - to go from town to town - but currently we just have one within the Town of Bridgewater that doesn't go outside the town limits. There are other opportunities and smaller cab drivers or whatever, but public transportation certainly is a challenge to get around.

There is the bus that takes people to the city or to the airport and things like that. I don't know if that answers your question about public transportation.

LYNN HENNIGAR: I just want to supplement that with - that was part of our discussion when we landed on population growth. One of the issues is the critical mass required for public transit. Part of the goal is to try to increase the population in Lunenburg County to the point where some of those things become more possible and at least somewhat more affordable.

We do have a Citizens for Public Transit group that is still working. They were originally very stuck on a fixed-route service. At the time, the government was not prepared to finance a fixed route. I was on the municipal council at the time, and there was this deadlock between a group that absolutely wanted a pilot around fixed route, a government that only wanted to do dial-a-ride, and municipalities in the middle that knew that any pilot project meant they would be in the public transportation business forever and were terrified of that.

It's an odd space. I think we've moved beyond that. Chester's got a bus. I think it's coming. Whether it's going to be here in the next few years, I don't know.

THE CHAIR: They currently have a survey going on right now.

TINA HENNIGAR: You just made mention about the funding that's coming for communities for doctor recruitment. I'm very much looking forward to learning about how we can apply for that fund.

I also wanted to share that at this latest doctor recruiting event we went to there were some booths; Colchester County and Port Hawkesbury, for example, did have people in attendance who were in government or their local councillors, which was great. We brought a doctor with us. Dr. Catherine Kelly spent three days with us actually talking to potential doctors. Actually, she thought she would hire a few that she spoke to on the spot to work with her in her clinic.

I think I'm a pretty good advocate for my community to talk about the assets of our community, but the questions about practising in a hospital, I certainly can't answer those with any amount of knowledge. I think the model that works really well is just having a community leader, and then also someone who works in that field.

BEN JESSOME: I couldn't agree with you more. Based on my understanding of how that circumstance is working in Digby, there's kind of like - we'll defer to the group that's aspiring to make this happen. It's not like there's a prescription around who goes and who doesn't. I think there is 100 per cent value in bringing someone working in the field, who spent a little bit of time on the ground - this is why I came to Lunenburg County to practise and this is why I'm going to stay, type of thing, so I couldn't agree with you more.

To go back to the piece on transit, it sounds like there have been a couple of different options explored that haven't completely sunk in. It sounds like there is some momentum going. For example, in our community we have a service called BayRides. You may or may not be familiar with it, but it's kind of community-led. They have a board of directors and whatnot. You call and set up a pick-up the following day, they come and get you. It seems to be, dare I say, pretty seamless and it has been a staple in the community for the past couple of years. Has that been explored as an option?

LYNN HENNIGAR: Yes. That's actually the dial-a-ride option. When I was on council and the councillors were discussing it, one of the things we don't have or didn't have in Lunenburg County was that core community coming together to deliver, so the municipality was sort of filling the void. I think those programs work much better when they're grassroots and led by citizens.

We had a group, Citizens for Public Transit that weren't interested in that dial-a-ride model. We don't have a huge population so the fixed route with having to have bus shelters and all of that was a fairly expensive alternative. We were looking at whether we could start with a dial-a-ride and potentially grow it. It just didn't get anywhere.

I understand this group has now changed their view and they're back out working, and they were very dedicated people, so I would expect to see us moving in that direction some point soon. I'm quite hopeful today. Bridgewater's experiment has worked, which I think bodes well for the county as well.

THE CHAIR: We'll switch over to the PC caucus - Mr. Pat Dunn.

HON. PAT DUNN: Thank you for what you've been doing for the past number of years. It's really nice to hear of a group in the community that's trying to improve their community and make it better. Of course, across our province, the more groups we have like yours, I think it will be better for the entire province.

You acknowledged the shortage of doctors and primary care providers. Access to a doctor is certainly not unique to Lunenburg. As we all agree, it's something that we're struggling with across the province from Yarmouth to Cape Breton. Talking with the residents in your area, would that be their number one priority when you have discussions with them as far as a need basis?

TINA HENNIGAR: I actually think it certainly is something that people are talking about - there's no question. Also, Internet access probably ranks up there equally. I run into a lot of people who are very happy with their nurse practitioner - people who say that when they need care, they get care.

It's interesting - I think if we could make our communities more connected, if we could improve that, we could solve that issue. I think we could have Telehealth. We could have access to some of the things that we're struggling with now. We have a lot of people in rural Lunenburg County who have to have Lamaze classes through online services, and yet they may not have access to Internet. I think Internet would improve health actually.

PAT DUNN: I often think that trying to attract doctors to a certain area becomes very competitive. I know in Pictou County where I live, there's a group and someone is there. Their main focus is to attract doctors to Pictou County. In fact, I have a young medical student living with me for the past three weeks. I didn't recruit the person. It's just a friend of my daughter and she wanted a place to stay, so she was more than welcome.

Have you been talking to other areas - other groups, other people - to see some of their strategies and ideas, or are they sort of tight-lipped because of the situation we're experiencing?

TINA HENNIGAR: Actually, it's quite the opposite. I feel like there is a lot of collaboration happening between communities. In your community, for example - Pictou County - Nicole Levy would be considered me, I would assume. We are doing a panel on doctor attraction. I was talking to the gentleman who was organizing it and I said you need to call Nicole Levy because she's doing some great work too.

I'll just give you a quick example. At the doctor conference that we went to, I was speaking to a young doctor who wanted to speak in a community that was predominantly French. She's French - she was interested in Lunenburg County, but to be perfectly honest, we don't have a strong French-speaking community so I connected her with the other communities within our province that would be more appropriate for her.

I feel that everyone is acting very collegially. I was speaking to a doctor who was looking at wanting to be a palliative care doctor. We don't have that particular listing in our community at this point; perhaps down the road we will. I knew they had one in I believe it was Guysborough County, so I connected that doctor to Guysborough County.

We all have to be acting like that. If we don't start trying to keep these doctors within our province and they go to Ontario, they'll never come back. I know that it is a competitive nature; however, I don't want someone living and practising in my community if they don't absolutely want to be there. There is no benefit to that. If they would rather be in Annapolis, let's see that they can get to Annapolis. Let's make sure if they want to stay here that they love it and that they are thriving and that they're just not another doctor that leaves. That takes some time to find that match, and we need to make sure that we allow that time.

THE CHAIR: We'll move to the NDP caucus - Ms. Roberts.

LISA ROBERTS: I'm very inspired by the energy of your work, so thank you. A lot of your work is focused on attracting residents who may be coming from other parts of Canada. That's great, but I wonder if you also have reflections on how the province can be better with recruiting and settling immigrants from other countries.

Earlier this year, the CEO of the Office of Immigration, Tracey Taweel, said that the province doesn't have enough information to understand why about 30 per cent of new immigrants end up leaving the province. I'm also acutely aware that many newcomers who do come, are actually coming to the metropolitan area. I think Lunenburg may share some characteristics with Halifax, but much of Lunenburg County is really rural. I'm wondering if you can offer some insight in terms of what makes people stick and why they aren't in many cases sticking.

TINA HENNIGAR: I recently actually went with the Office of Immigration to France and Belgium. They witnessed our welcome, our invitation, while we went on tour and wanted us to go along with them, which I did, and it was amazing. I think there is a lot that we can do to help newly landed immigrants settle here.

A few examples - my osteopath is French and in talking to him - I always ask people whenever I meet someone, what is it that we're missing or what would you love to see? All he wanted was duck fat. He could not find duck fat anywhere. He cooked everything in duck fat in France and could not find any here. So I went to a local French restaurant and I asked him for a jar of duck fat. These are the little things and no one else is doing that

work, but a jar of duck fat made him feel like he could cook his French fries the way he likes them at home. Those are the little things.

Things such as - we have a doctor living in our community - they are Muslim. This is not a great story, but I feel like we need to have an open discussion about it and there could be an opportunity. If there is a terrorist incident happening in the world, that week at school is not pleasant for their children. These are conversations that we need to have happen. I didn't know this until I spoke to the mother, who was distraught. The husband is a doctor. He got his licence to practise in another province. He's not gone yet, and I'm not trying to suggest that these things don't happen in other provinces as well, but this is an opportunity where we can engage our citizens. We can talk to our citizens. It does happen, we understand, that some patients deny service from particular doctors because of race. We have to start talking about that.

[1:45 p.m.]

I think that there are things we can do about helping people settle here. I always say that when people move here, I'm their first friend in some cases - their real estate agent or me. Sometimes that means taking them to the fire department breakfast, or taking them to the Legion breakfast, or taking them to a penny auction, or the Legion bingo. These are customs that they're maybe not all that familiar with. They make a big, big difference. We have a mosque in our community that a lot of people don't even know about because it looks like a regular building. It's just inviting people, introducing them to people. They're going to need a little bit of guidance, and we have to show some courage and have some uncomfortable conversations.

LYNN HENNIGAR: I would just like to jump in and talk about the duck fat because that is not an insignificant piece. If you move to a new country and a new place, there are certain things that make you comfortable. One of them is people like you. We all gravitate to people like ourselves. Food and culture and religion are all a big part of that, making sure grocery stores are able and willing to provide some of the products that provide some of that comfort and allow you to not have everything completely unfamiliar. At least you can make a meal that looks something like home.

It's the same with your ability to practise whatever religion you have in a way that doesn't require you to travel halfway across the province. Whether that's - I'll probably get struck down for this - a repurposing of some of our extra churches or whatever, you need to be able to connect people to community.

We feel like that's a role for NOW, having those tough conversations and getting people to think about those things and to be open to that. We all want to feel like the person next to us, and the more you know, the more comfortable you are.



There is a deep-rooted issue in Lunenburg County that comes from the fact that people love it there, and they don't travel, so they are truly unaware of a lot of different races, cultures, et cetera, so they fear that. It's just a basic human response that we need to find a way to address.

TINA HENNIGAR: One other fun little story - at our doctor engagement event, we brought in all the doctors from our area and wanted to find out what we can do to keep them happy. This one gentleman told a story. He was working in emergency - his wife is a doctor as well - and he was really missing hockey. He works a lot, missing hockey, didn't have a gentlemen's hockey league. A guy comes in, and he stitched up his face. He's stitching up his face asking, what happened? He said, oh, I took a puck to the face. So the doctor said, there's gentlemen's hockey? He said, yes, why don't you come out? We play every Thursday night. The doctor now has a gentlemen's league hockey team. You shouldn't have to have a kid take a puck to the face in order to join a gentlemen's league hockey team. It may just mean new people come, and the neighbours find out what they need, what would make them happy. He could have been aligned with a hockey team years prior.

LISA ROBERTS: I appreciate your comments about some of the honest and difficult conversations that we have to have. I'm going to talk about a few of the things that the NDP has been pushing for in terms of immigration, and I wonder if you could comment on them and whether you feel like they have potential.

One thing we introduced was an Act to create a regional nominee pilot program for Cape Breton, recognizing that some of our immigration programs have been treating the province as a whole and not recognizing different realities in different parts of the province. We're also calling for the province to work with the federal government to permanently increase Nova Scotia's allocation of both government and privately sponsored refugees, to expand the occupational codes covered in immigration programs, to ensure that programs and supports are available in rural parts of the province, and also to create a provincial assurance fund to provide stable financial support for sponsorship agreement holders and allow for more immigration through the family reunification stream because we know that people come because of people. That's true at all levels of immigration - all different occupational codes and levels of well-being.

I guess out of any of those, do you hear things that you would like to see the province move on with immigration?

TINA HENNIGAR: I hear from employers a lot. Employers in our community are struggling to find talent, find people. There are only so many ways you find people: invite other Canadians or have more babies or you can invite people from other countries.

Employers have told me that they find it very difficult in some cases to go through the process. Some of these small business owners in my community are doing their inventory, doing payroll, doing all of these things and they really don't have the time or the knowledge. It's beyond their capacity to go through the process of immigration. I'm hearing from them that it's almost too much trouble.

When they get folks - and we eventually do - they love who they get. They're hard-working people, very accommodating, wonderful, but I think it would be beneficial to all of us if we could refine the process or make it a little less arduous and a little less challenging for employers.

LYNN HENNIGAR: One of the things we recently chatted about was whether or not there is an opportunity for the province to recruit people without necessarily having a job in their pocket. So, are there areas where we know we have major gaps and if people were on the ground and able to be interviewed and in the country already, that those jobs could be filled quite quickly without having to have someone attached to a specific employer. We think of things like truck driving and some of the other issues that we have. That's one of the ways I feel like it may help the situation.

It is an onerous process for employers, and it will take a whole community to welcome people. Employers can't on their own ensure that their employees integrate into the community or find their place. They have a role to play in that, but it can't be entirely up to them. I think we as a community also have to step up into that.

THE CHAIR: We'll move on to the Liberal caucus with Ms. DiCostanzo.

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: My questions are very specific, and I will get to them, but if I may speak to the immigration issues that I heard here today. I worked with new immigrants in the last two years and I remember a family of seven children - the parents in their 30s moving to Tatamagouche. I was so happy for them, congratulated them, and not even seven months later they were running back to Halifax. It's unfortunate. Many things happened. They felt very isolated. The language was an issue. I don't think they had what you have in your community. They had a fire in the house. They were just traumatized by that move. It was unfortunate.

I hear of a story in Chéticamp where another family has done exceptionally well. They brought in another member of their family and they're working. They have four jobs. They can't keep up because there is such a shortage of employees, so a community can make a difference. It really is about the community and how they welcome that family. What you are doing is what needs to be done. It's difficult for other cultures that come.

My husband is Italian. When they first came to Halifax there was nothing Italian here. You couldn't get pasta. Everything came from Montreal, and it was a celebration at the time to get whatever food they were used to. This story is the same. It's repeating itself with different groups. They always congregate together so they can be together. If you're

going to bring, bring four or five families. Don't bring one alone. We need to think of that as small communities.

They would love jobs or entrepreneurial jobs. The community can say, here, we have a business, this gentleman can't keep up. His kids don't want to take the business. Come and take it. We will support you to start. Things like that are what's going to start the immigration process, if I may say.

My question was, I wanted to know, what is NOW Lunenburg? Do you have membership? Are you a non-profit organization? How many members are there? How are you operating? If you don't mind giving me that.

LYNN HENNIGAR: NOW Lunenburg County started in 2014, and it really started with Elspeth McLean-Wile. She read the Ivany report and essentially said enough. I have had enough reports. I don't want to talk about it anymore. Who do I know who might be willing to join me and do something? She brought together five or six people she knew or knew of in the community. I was one of the people she knew of. At the time, I ran the community newspaper. She also brought in some accountants, some retired people, some people who were in philanthropy. We just got in a room together and asked, what can we do, and what do we need to know to do it? We brought in a person who knows how to facilitate, and we started to meet with the public to figure out what we needed to do.

NOW has a few guiding principles, if you will. We don't have a membership. We aren't anything. We don't have a bank account. We don't have rules or regulations or anything like that - quite deliberately. One of the things we do very deliberately is, every time we make a decision, we challenge ourselves as to whether or not we're making that decision in the same traditional way, whether there's a better way, a different way - not just for the sake of a different way but to be sure that we are being true to the fact that what we are absolutely clear of is that the old ways of doing things aren't working, and we need to find new ways to do them.

We brought in the public, and we have grown from there. We spent a lot of time getting to population growth. We went down a number of different paths and failed. I think the one thing - if we could leave you with anything, it's that failure is the key to success. We fail regularly, and we have no problem with that.

The other key is the fact that we are privately funded. We have put our own money in. We have gone out and found people in the community willing to support us. We found a foundation that was willing to provide us with some money. One of our struggles has been how we continue, particularly once we hire an actual employee. We have had great co-operation through the Community Foundation of Nova Scotia. That's who actually hires Tina because, as I said, we don't have a bank account. They have provided us with some administrative support so we can function.

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: For me, the community or the private sector can fund you, but it's such a simple thing to be a non-profit organization. I'll give you an example. A kid in third-year neuroscience was doing something amazing in downtown Halifax, sitting with the homeless, and he had seven kids as part of this. I said to him, just register as a non-profit because there are things that the community can give, the church can give, but also government.

You guys are looking for grants, or little things, and government will give you one-third. They still expect you to get the private - but you can be an association, just with a \$50 registration. There's already three of you. You just need a president, a vice-president, and a secretary. You will get so much further with that. You can find all the funding that will help you in different - and sometimes it's not just money. It's educational things and programs that would help you along the way.

I'm surprised - I looked you up and it's not a non-profit organization or something that can make you a known entity, if you see what I mean.

[2:00 p.m.]

LYNN HENNIGAR: I would say we very deliberately stayed away from that to this point. We revisit it every so often when we get into a situation like this. I think we feel like we don't want to be what everyone needs us to be. We want folks to meet us where we are. We know that's a bit of a big ask, but we're doing this work as volunteers. We've been at it for five years. We've done some pretty fabulous stuff and we are very committed to doing it independently.

We would absolutely like to have some funding, but we never wish to be in a position where our funding dictates what we're doing. We're not prepared to chase money and to change in order to get it. We are prepared to accept it to take us down the paths that we've recognized in conjunction with our community.

It's not a great answer for you, but it's where we've landed. We will certainly take that back again to our next meeting. Just for your information - because I think it's unique in and of itself - we meet for two hours every Wednesday at 7:30 a.m., and we've been doing that for five years.

TINA HENNIGAR: This does come up. I have people asking us because of course they want the tax receipt when they donate to us, which we are still able to do because we go through the Community Foundation of Nova Scotia.

Sometimes I look around - particularly when we apply for grants that we don't qualify for and I look at some of the organizations that are getting the grants, and simply because they are a non-profit, they get money. Sometimes I wonder if it's for the good. Just because you're a non-profit, you might get money, but is it actually for the benefit of the province? I don't know. That's just a question.

We get a lot of people telling us, you're doing good work, keep at it. The one thing - because we do not have a traditional organization, we're very nimble. So when, for example, the Office of Immigration called us and said, we want you to come with us to France and you're going to have to find some money to do it because there is only a certain amount to do it, can you do it in a month?

We sat around a table and we said, how are we going to make this happen? Do the benefits outweigh the risks? Do we do this? To our conversation, we decided yes, we're going to do it because if we don't do it, we won't know if it was valuable or not.

We have that nimbleness that we can do things that need to be done. I think sometimes if you over-structure or if you create a lot of barriers and bureaucracy just for the sake of being a non-profit - maybe it's something to consider. It seems to have been working for us so far. Someone might ask, why don't you be a non-profit? We may say, why can't we find creative ways to fund organizations that are not non-profit. Just a thought.

THE CHAIR: We'll move on to the PC caucus - Ms. Smith-McCrossin.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: So many questions - you've answered some. I was curious about your funding model so thank you for sharing that.

I want to talk a little bit more about your funding, about funding models and also my colleague from the Liberal caucus brought up about the fund that's available to aid with physician recruitment, but I just want to make a comment about that because we've done something very similar in Cumberland. There was no provincial funding available. The municipality stepped up to the plate and contributed \$10,000. Physicians are volunteering their time.

That \$10,000 was long gone. They used that money for branding, creating display items to take to these recruitment fairs. If you look at the amount of money that has been budgeted by the province, it's \$200,000. You think about how many communities in this province are going to be trying to access that money. There are 50 municipalities; even if every municipality tried to access that funding, it's \$4,000 each, which is not a lot of money.

My question to you is: Have you done a budget? What kind of money are you looking for? How can the province do a better job of supporting you both financially and also through their current employee structure of physician recruitment? I would like to know, have you come up with particulars so that we can take that back to our Department of Health and Wellness, which oversees the NSHA? We all know improvements need to be made, and we need to start listening to communities and people like you to find the solutions.

LYNN HENNIGAR: Yes, we had a budget. What we typically do is, we even do what we can when we don't get the money for the budget. I'm trying to recall what it was. I think it was something like \$65,000 to do what we really wanted to do in doctor recruitment, and I can tell you what that is or would have been.

It included attending some of the local recruitment. It included Rural Week and doing a good job at that. Really importantly, it included regrouping with our doctors and having another consultation with them to see where we are now and what else we need to be doing. It included meeting with the public again and doing at least one if not more public sessions on the role that we need to play within that. It also included very tangible things such as the videos and some of the advertising and the branding pieces that we have done.

We were incredibly lucky - we put out a plea to do some videos, and a member of our community gave us \$5,000 to produce our videos. We had a production company that was prepared to reduce their fees to help us get to where we needed to go for those videos. One of our concerns or issues is that it doesn't take a ton of money from sources such as government for community groups to leverage that and do well. Our videos are one of those examples. We did fabulous videos for quite a low dollar value. I know government couldn't have gotten one video, in all likelihood, for that kind of dollar value. That's the difference in a partnership with community groups. We struggle for the branding and the great booths and all that kind of stuff.

We do fairly creative things. We leverage some of what we do. We needed a stand to put our iPad on to show you our videos in our booth. I also happen to be on the board of a community centre that could stand to have a stand in their lobby to tell you what's going on in their building. We found someone to buy the stand, and it's going to be dual purpose. When doctor recruitment or NOW needs it, it's going to leave the building, and the rest of the time it will be in the building.

Those are the kinds of things that we're doing. We do have the budgets, but we work around what we have to work around. We'll do what we can afford to do.

TINA HENNIGAR: I agree with what you're saying, that more money would be needed. However, I don't necessarily agree that every municipality needs to get a portion of the money. I have five municipalities in my area. I don't think that a new doctor really particularly cares where the District of Lunenburg is or Mahone Bay or Bridgewater. We're a county. If Lunenburg County could have a pocket of money, and if Colchester County could have a pocket of money, and Yarmouth County, and so on and so forth. Let's say each chunk is \$10,000 - I don't know what it would look like. Yarmouth County has different needs than I have. They're going to spend that money in different ways than I will - same thing with the Valley and Cape Breton.

It may seem like - say if the amount was \$10,000, that isn't a lot of money. I don't think we should diminish what communities can do with that money. I think what one community will do will be far different from what we will do. I don't think anyone should micromanage that money to say, you have to use it for advertising. I think at the end of the day, if you were to do that with \$200,000, what an incredible toolkit you could have at the end of that, to say this is what all of the communities around our province were doing with this money.

Maybe in a couple years down the road, they can refer to it and say, so and so made bumper stickers saying Practise Here or something like that. These are not going to solve any issues, but they're all creative in terms of doing something a little bit different and not dictating what people can do.

This toolkit, for example, could be really valuable for communities down the road because this issue is not going away. We're going to be recruiting doctors for years down the road.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: I am not assuming that all 50 municipalities are going to ask for the money, but my point was that it doesn't take long to divvy up that money.

With my supplementary, I want to touch on - so you're working hard to recruit but tell me what your current physicians and retired physicians are telling you. How are you going to retain and what message do you want to send - because this is your opportunity - to the provincial government today on what you expect us to do so that you can actually retain those physicians? As you probably are aware, our government is in negotiations right now with Doctors Nova Scotia and the rumour is that negotiations are not going well. What message do you want to send to our province?

TINA HENNIGAR: I would like to send the message that the time we've spent with doctors through our doctor engagement event - we have a number of doctors who sit on our committee and they really have some amazing ideas. Not all of the issues are solvable, but they have some really tangible ideas that can be solved very quickly and very affordably, very efficiently, but they just need to be listened to.

Just as a quick example, a doctor said he really needed a room off-site because he was on call so much. He was like, if I could just have four walls and a bed outside of the hospital. That's easy. We can do that easily, and through the auxiliary it has been done. Not everything has to do with money. Certainly some things are going to have to do with money, but I think if we just actually listened to doctors, they have a lot of ideas on how to help solve a lot of these problems.

LYNN HENNIGAR: Just very specifically, there are a number of practices with physicians and physician recruitment that as a former business person really don't make sense to me. I'm not sure if you're aware or not, but we do not onboard doctors the way you would onboard an executive. The doctor may give the province six months notice that they're leaving. We don't actually post that position until they walk out the door and the door is closed, so there is no one to bring that new doctor up to speed. I cannot imagine what it would be like to be given - here's your office, 2,000 patients, no help, go be a doctor. That's not good practice in any kind of position.

We have rules and interpretation of rules that - I don't know what the actual rule is, but we do have a doctor in our area who had some health issues of his own, and with the changes in Yarmouth and anesthesiology, was very much concerned that his workload was going to get to be heavier than he could handle. He felt he was probably not doing full-time work a justice right at this point.

He went back and said, I would like to work four days a week instead. As an anesthesiologist - we need those in this province. His request was denied. So rather than just losing an anesthesiologist, his wife also happens to be a gerontologist, so Lunenburg County lost two doctors because we weren't able to accommodate what seems from the outside looking in - I don't know enough about it to know whether it was a reasonable denial, but from the outside looking in, it seems pretty unreasonable.

Those are the kinds of things that doctors are telling us. The doctors we have around our table want to be partners in solving this problem. They're not the enemy. They want to be involved. They want to help recruit. They just want to feel valued, like have a fair wage. They also want to have some lifestyle.

We know that we can't replace our traditional fee-for-service doctor one for one with a new doctor who's coming out who wants to actually have a life. We're in this weird position now where the fee-for-service doctor who has been in that position for 40 years knows how to maximize that income and has no interest in being a salaried doctor. The new folks coming out don't want to work that hard.

[2:15 p.m.]

You're in a place where you need to accommodate all of these competing people. It's not easy, but we're going to need to find a way, and we're going to need to find a way that creates the collaborative practice. We have a fabulous example of a collaborative practice in Lunenburg that works really well. We have a collaborative practice in Bridgewater, not so much. The big difference is the collaborative practice in Lunenburg was created by the doctors who work in it. The one in Bridgewater was created by government. It's very much like a law practice or any other kind of partnership - people want to bring themselves together. They don't want to be told, you three now have to work together, and whether you like each other or not doesn't matter. Those are the things that we need to address, in my opinion.



THE CHAIR: Ms. Chender.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: While we're on the topic of doctors, I'll continue on. That's really helpful. The two main things I'm hearing, I'm also hearing in my own community because, even though we're urban, and it's very different, Dartmouth also has experienced one of the most acute doctor shortages. We hear a lot of these same stories, and they sort of fall under two categories, which I think you have covered really well. One is a not particularly responsive or creative bureaucracy, which I think you were just outlining really well. Then the other is actually connected to that, an inability to engage appropriately with community when community actually wants to be at the table.

That community even extends to recruiters. One of the things we have heard in Dartmouth is not only do doctors only get an hour or two at a given clinic or practice, but the recruiters at the private clinics aren't given any contact information. They're not even allowed to follow up. Because Lunenburg County has you, you can liaise with the recruiter and sell the community. In Dartmouth, what a lot of our doctors are finding is, a doctor will come to Dartmouth and Bedford and Halifax, and everyone in Bedford and Halifax will say, don't go to Dartmouth. We're competing within HRM, and there's nobody whose position it is to sell our community. The clinics say they want to sell the community. They want to take someone out for dinner. They want to introduce them. They want to take them to the mosque or the church or have them for dinner, but they can't do that.

My first question is to that point. You guys have really done an amazing job saying, we're the ones, we're the community here, work with us. As you said, that has been successful. You went on the trade mission and all those things. That's incredible. How do you think you're able to do that? What are the lessons? How could government be a better partner for you?

TINA HENNIGAR: I think absolutely there's someone in your community who could be a me. With the money that we're talking about giving out, let's say for example \$10,000 - give that to an advocate, someone who's passionate about the community, and say, maybe this is 20 hours a week or 20 hours a month and come up with a plan. See if you can leverage that in the community. There may be a community fund in your community, and maybe you can have some matching funds or something. I'm not sure how it works.

I have had to go to my municipal units and it's not easy, it is not fun. It's very time-consuming. It's heart-wrenching at times. I pleaded and made the case that you may not believe that this is a municipal issue, but municipalities are out there solving it, or trying, so you need to get at the table. I think you find someone who could do that in your community.

I was at these doctor recruiting events. There are 20 communities from Nova Scotia all selling their communities. I would suggest not finding just the volunteer who happens to have an afternoon. It takes someone with a lot of energy, someone with a lot of passion, someone who can see the assets and think really fast, so when someone says, well, there is really nothing to do in your community, you say, no, there is so much to do.

I'm panelling on Friday with the province for a discussion on this and I listed a whole email of things that should be in a toolkit. I could take an hour of your time just talking about things that we have done. Things like the bike ride and giving samples of products that are made in Mahone Bay in a little gift bag and bottles of wine and things like that - so many ideas - but I wouldn't want to take up all the time. I want Lynn to go.

LYNN HENNIGAR: Tina's the enthusiastic one, so I'm just going to remind her that we don't always get the information that we need either. Our doctor recruiter - we have a new one so I don't know about the new one, but the previous one would say we have somebody coming in two days, what can you do for them? Then you're scrambling to bring it together. NSHA will pay for the doctor, but who pays for everyone else who went to the dinner or did whatever else? Those become really awkward moments in restaurants and places. It's messy.

You don't get information about the family or the spouse. Anyone who moves knows that your partner is part of that. You don't make that decision on your own. So knowing about the children or the partner - are they gay, do they want to be connected to the Muslim community? Who do we need to have in the room to make them feel welcome? Do they want to know about mountain biking? Are they sailors? None of that is provided so it makes it really difficult, even in the hour you've got, to provide the right experience for people and to really be able to recruit.

It's not easy, and it will take someone like Tina who has the enthusiasm to ignore all the negative stuff that I come around and tell you all about. That's where we're talking about partnership. How do we get to be able to do the follow-up because I don't think you get contact information to do follow-up, unless she makes a good enough impression on the kids to get an email or a text number?

TINA HENNIGAR: I enjoy that part of my job - telling them about our community, driving around the community and pointing out different things. I love that part, but I do not believe it is a good use of anyone's time. I think there is a better way to do it. As much as it would pain me to say, no, I'm not going to do it - because I do love doing it - I worry that it is not a good use.

As I was told by a doctor who went to three different clinics, he didn't know one clinic from the next after an afternoon. So instead of confusing people, how can we take that time and really put it to good use and allow the recruiters who have a big job - they have a big job to do - allow them to do that job well and then allow me to do the community welcome well?

I have an example of a doctor who we had a dinner with - an amazing doctor and his wife was a researcher. I did have that intel and I said, I'm going to invite my friend, a researcher from Dalhousie to be at the table. So she was there, it was great. Of course, we asked if she was planning on getting a job or working out of Dalhousie or wherever in the city. She said, no, my research company wants to open up a research facility in Canada. That would have been really great information to have because then I could have had someone in economic development - what are the facilities that are open that are appropriate for that type of research facility?

I think if we communicated well and didn't hold this information so closely to our chest, it would really benefit everyone.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: That's super helpful and it mirrors what I've heard right across the province. Hopefully you can bring that up on your panel, and we can bring that up where we bring things up. I think that information-sharing piece seems like really low-hanging fruit that could be leveraged for positive results.

My other question is - part of the thing that's uncomfortable about this conversation for me is that you have really made an amazing case for the ways in which community can be effective, particularly on the immigration piece generally, that government probably can't be. There are still, to my mind, more things that government could be doing. There are things like information-sharing, but there are bigger things. You just mentioned one. You just said driving people around is probably not a great use of your time. What else do you feel like NOW has taken on in terms of the population growth piece that you probably shouldn't be doing, that government would be better placed to do than you so that you could be left to do the things that you're best at?

LYNN HENNIGAR: This is probably not a satisfactory answer for you, but I'm going to say that we have waded in everywhere we feel like we need to make a difference. I'm not sure that our team in and of itself believes that government should be doing a lot of what we're doing. We feel like government should be a partner in supporting a lot of what we're doing but that it's better done within a community.

If I could use a small example, we used to have a South Shore Regional Enterprise Network, a REN. It folded for a variety of reasons. We did reach out to government at that point and said, this didn't work on the South Shore. I was on council when it was pitched, and there was some pretty good feedback as to why it wasn't maybe the best idea at the time. We went to government and asked, would you consider NOW Lunenburg County as a pilot project, a different way to do community economic development - a completely different way to do community economic development? Is there an opportunity for us to access any of that matching funding?

To be fair to government, they didn't say no. What they said was, you would need to do these core pieces of work that all of our RENs do for us. Unfortunately for us, those key pieces were not a priority for our work, and we would have needed to align ourselves with the two municipalities in our area that were interested in continuing. Perhaps incorrectly, we assumed that meant that the matching funding would match the size of those two communities, and they were two of our smallest municipalities. For us, the return on investment to do the work that the province wanted us to do just wasn't there.

Again, it was one of those situations where the funding came at a cost to what we felt were our priorities, so we chose not to pursue that. I'm not throwing the government under the bus. They tried to meet us where they could. Those are the kinds of issues that come up.

TINA HENNIGAR: The question is what we are doing that government maybe could do, what pieces? This is vague. I apologize.

What we are doing that I believe government could be doing is, we are thinking really creatively, thinking outside of the box. We're being a little bit courageous taking a couple of risks that may or may not pan out. For example, when we went on our cross-Canada tour, I had never driven a camper, ever. My insurance company was not really game to insure me. I have two teenaged boys I left for 36 days - by myself, essentially. That's a big risk. I would like to see government take a couple of risks and be courageous, do things that are a little bit audacious. In my experience, Nova Scotians are thirsty for a bold something.

When I went away, it was shocking how many people would reach out to me, buy me coffee where I was, or get their nephews to meet me at a restaurant to talk about moving to Lunenburg County. There was some excitement, some pride of place, around living here and living in Nova Scotia. I think that they have been wanting that, are really thirsty for it. That's what I think government can be fostering. We just want something to believe in. I think that we have the talent. Nova Scotians have the talent in abundance. We just need leadership to believe in us.

[2:30 p.m.]

THE CHAIR: Mr. Irving.

KEITH IRVING: I believe in you. What you're doing is great. It's on the ground. It's at the community level. From my perspective, you're having great success, both in terms of the outcomes and the vitality of your community that you're expressing. You have people engaged. To me, that's what we build on and what we build from.

You did say a couple of things - I agree, it's all hands on deck. I've inspired you. That's great. There are some people who have been inspired around the province, and you and your group are certainly one. You did say you have been denied the right to recruit, and you have not been given any autonomy to do that. That doesn't seem to be what I have heard.

TINA HENNIGAR: Denied the right to the funding. Is that what you mean?

LYNN HENNIGAR: No, I think you said that, actually.

KEITH IRVING: I'm not trying to challenge the words. It's just that I sense you're recruiting . . .

LYNN HENNIGAR: To the degree we are allowed.

KEITH IRVING: I'll come back to that maybe in the supplementary. That was sort of my question.

What you have conveyed to us is how important municipalities are in this. Your municipality has chosen to step up for doctor recruitment but not step up for Internet. Kings County is stepping up for Internet and not for doctor recruitment. That's frustrating for me. I have similar frustrations that all MLAs have in meeting with a doctor recruiter. You're telling me you haven't taken folks to a winery while you're in the Valley trying to sell the Valley. This doesn't make any sense.

Again, I'm not trying to throw our doctor recruiters under the bus. They have a difficult job and a big region, and they're competing with places around the world. I do agree with you, your intentions of wanting more time.

When I ask those questions, it's, sometimes they're on the QT. These doctors give us short notice, and they want to see everything. They don't just want to see the Valley, they want to see the Valley, Digby, da da da, and they have two days before they have to get back. That's what it seems to be. I don't know if you have run into that kind of thing. I'm just trying to understand where the problem is.

Clearly, I think there are some challenges within the recruiting end of the Health Authority, but I think there are also some inherent problems in this recruiting challenge that we have. Am I misplaced in that? Do you have any ideas on how we foster a system in which we really target doctors to spend a day in a community as opposed to two hours?

TINA HENNIGAR: I apologize. What I meant to say was that we're not given the autonomy to dictate or say how we want to spend the time with the recruiter and the potential doctor. I would love to offer some suggestions on how we spend that time.

Often, they're interested in living in the Fancy Lake area, so I take them up to Fancy Lake and show them some of the properties and where it is. I don't think that that's a good use of my time. I don't think that's a good use of their time. They can see those properties online.

If we only had an hour, let's have wine and cheese at a restaurant or a brew pub or something, and then have these people speaking to folks in the community. I just think that there are better ways we can use that time as opposed to being in a car, driving around, and pointing out where the mall is or where the hockey rink is or the river. Nobody is moving here for that. I believe that every single time we do that is a lost opportunity.

KEITH IRVING: I agree with you. The other point I wanted to make - I appreciate your desire for independence, and I do not want in any way to diminish that or steer you away from that. I think there is a reality of raising funds from the taxpayer. You have probably been told this, but I want to reinforce that when you're taking public dollars, there has to be some accountability, and frankly, that's just the way it is. I would encourage your organization to think about how we can ensure that we operate within that system but maintain those core values.

I know that dilemma. I worked with two NGOs. If you're heavily dependent on government, when government says go this way instead of that way, you're kind of forced to it. My next NGO, we diversified our funding everywhere so if they said jump, we said goodbye, we'll go somewhere else.

I'd encourage you to try to think that forward. You say you revisit every few years. It may not be the way you want to go, but you're doing such good work, I wouldn't limit your ability to do more of it by holding that ground so firmly. I think you can hold that firm here as opposed to right there on the front line. It's just something worth thinking about.

My supplementary question is: How do we get all communities focused like you? You were suggesting to Ms. Chender to find somebody in Dartmouth whose last name ends in Hennigar, basically. We need another of you in all of these communities, with your team behind you. How do we get the story that you have made to inspire others at the community level to replicate what you're doing?

TINA HENNIGAR: As I indicated, when I said there's a Tina Hennigar in every community, it's certainly not me. I do believe I'm not an anomaly. Every community has someone like me or someone similar in the work that I'm doing. Some communities already have them. Nicole Levy is doing it in Pictou County. Also, Guysborough County has someone. In Annapolis, I don't know if it's AIRO that's doing something. Anyway, I think it would be easy to find some of those people. They would rise to the surface.

Interesting, though - after my cross-Canada tour, Prince Edward Island called me. They were having a municipal gathering, a conference, and they wanted me to come out. I did, and I hosted a presentation. Then during the round tables, they basically wanted someone to self-identify in every different community who was going to be the advocate in their community like me - and better than me. Their ideas were even better.

I think if you just get people in the room, and you share the story and just empower people with some ideas - once you give them a few ideas, they'll go off on their own and they'll create even better ideas. They're going to need a little bit of money. They're going to need a little bit of guidance and just the ability. In order to have the ability to do that, we're going to have to sit down in a room with NSHA and community advocates to say, how are we going to maximize all this power and energy that we all have together? It's completely possible, but in order to do it, I think we all have to sit around a table and say, this isn't working right now. How are we going to better utilize all that we bring?

THE CHAIR: We're going to try for one quick round, and if we're fast enough, we might get another one in. One question, and we'll try to be quick. Maybe we can not have so much preamble but direct questions and more direct answers. I'm just trying to get the most out of this. People seem to be really enthusiastic about your responses.

Mr. Dunn.

PAT DUNN: I'll be as quick as possible. You talk about business sense, and there's business decisions and so on. Some are external, and you have no control over them. A real super-quick example - I know this particular gentleman in his early 30s from Nova Scotia who in four weeks' time is going to be a full-fledged family physician. He decided he wanted to specialize in the ER, which is one year. He applied to Dalhousie and two other medical schools in Canada. He got accepted to the two schools outside Nova Scotia and did not even get a phone call from Dalhousie. He's a Nova Scotia resident and said he would probably come back to Nova Scotia. Those types of things are outside of your control, but they're happening. Why? I don't know. It perplexes me why that would happen.

My question is: Under doctor attraction and recruitment, you mentioned the process right now is insufficient. If there was one or maybe two barriers that you could just eliminate to make things flow better for everyone, what would they be?

TINA HENNIGAR: That's for doctor recruitment? Two barriers. One is just access, not having access to these physicians. Secondly would be funding. Even showing doctors around or having a wine and cheese with some people in the community - whatever we decide to do - even taking those students biking, it comes at a cost. Currently, we're fundraising in the community for that, but that's a barrier. Taking them out for sails or going golfing or whatever, I can get some of that, I would assume, with some of our local businesses giving to us, but there still is the cost of my time, the gas, and all of those things. Those are the two barriers - having access and funding.

THE CHAIR: Ms. Roberts.

LISA ROBERTS: I don't believe this is one of your focus areas, but I'm the NDP spokesperson on housing. I did recently have a conversation with a municipal councillor from the Town of Lunenburg. I know it's an issue there, and I know that your work grew out of the Ivany commission, and the province's goal for \$4 billion in tourism revenue came out of the Ivany commission as well. I am concerned that focusing on this one goal is kind of blinding us to some of the corollary impacts, for example, of short-term rentals. I would be interested in anything you have to say around affordable housing and also short-term rentals.

TINA HENNIGAR: It's a huge issue. Every day, at least once a day, I get contacted by people who live in my community who want to stay but can't get housing or people who want to move to the community, but there's nowhere to rent. Even buying is not easy right now in our community, so that is a huge challenge. What I have said when I'm at municipal council meetings, I just tell councillors that we need more development. We need not just one particular type of housing, but we need many different types of development. We need low-income housing. We need it all because we have people who are just not getting served by the current structure of the housing options that we have.

[2:45 p.m.]

I went to a recent Lunenburg engagement event. It was on housing. Our table talked about many different options. There was storage unit housing. There was co-operative housing. A whole slew of different options were discussed, but then there were a few people who said, no, that wouldn't work in our community. Our community would not support this.

What I had said to the table was that we have to stop finding ways to say no and start looking for ways to say yes, because while someone may never live in a co-housing situation, many others may.

Housing is a huge issue. In fact, at this particular event, someone at my table said stop telling people to come here, they're taking up all of our houses. So we need housing.

THE CHAIR: Did you have a second one? Not a second question but a second point.

LISA ROBERTS: Just short-term rentals.



TINA HENNIGAR: Are you talking about Airbnbs? It would be great to have some regulation around Airbnbs. I don't believe that there is right now.

Airbnbs do play a role in communities. Without them, we wouldn't be able to accommodate many of our tourists, but currently in Lunenburg we have a problem with too many short-term rental facilities and not enough long-term facilities.

Actually, I just learned not too long ago that even the film industry - there is a local film that bought up an entire complex so that all of the crew and staff could stay in that facility. So some of those people lost their apartments. I don't know all the details on that, but it's just something that was new to me. I don't know if that answered your question.

THE CHAIR: Ms. DiCostanzo.

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: To bring you back to the other thing. He asked you about the two things and you said funding. I feel like you want the funding, but you're not willing to ask for it. I'm just going to give you a couple of examples. I was one of the founders of Nova Scotia Interpreting Services. It is 20 years old.

I sat and did three funding in three years and without that, there wouldn't be that organization that helped for 20 years. It was my passion and my thinking, and I never saw government as something that boxed me in. I would go to them and say, this is my idea, and they helped me write it so that it fits them. They don't box you in at all - they actually help you.

I saw that interpreting was a way of keeping the immigrants here. I wasn't just giving a service to the new immigrant, but I was helping immigrants stay. So I went with that idea to them. They loved that because we can highlight things they don't see. I have never seen government as something - do you know what they did? They forced me to get money from the private sector, to get references, to get other provinces, what they're doing, before they gave me money. They actually helped me and educated me. Please, don't look at that - it's one-third.

I just had an organization that came in my riding for the Scholastic Chess. They got \$5,000. It's nothing. She told me how much that has helped them - that little \$5,000.

The government is just trying to help you with a small amount. It is still you who has to do all the work and the compassion and get the community. They love that when they have that. They're just going to be a little partner. But that's their system, they have to have you as a non-profit.

LYNN HENNIGAR: I just want to let both you and Mr. Irving know that we meet tomorrow morning at 7:30 a.m. and I can promise you we will have the discussion again. I can't promise what the outcome will be, but it will absolutely be on the agenda tomorrow.

TINA HENNIGAR: I agree, we will definitely be talking about it. One of the things that I don't know that government is aware of is that trying to get those funds - for example, when I applied to the municipality, I applied for five different grants three different times each because of how it was worded or whatever. I also applied for a number of different grants from the government. I just felt after a while I had spent so much time applying for grants and then reporting on the grants and all of the time - there were pages and pages, reams and reams - I thought, I could actually be helping people move here or I could have talked to a doctor about what schooling his daughter needs.

I totally get what you're saying, and we do fill out grant applications, but it can get really disheartening to spend all this time on grant applications and to not get any money, which happens. Sometimes I think, is my job to just fill out grant applications or is it to actually make an impact? While I completely get what you're saying - and we will discuss it - I would hate for my job to now be filling out grant applications for the hope to get a little bit of money.

THE CHAIR: We will do a quick round again. I may have to cut it off, but we'll try to do it because people seem to want to go another round. Ms. Smith-McCrossin.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: This is the Economic Development and Natural Resources Committee and I think we all agree that having physicians and having dependable and accessible physician services in our communities across this province is absolutely essential and directly linked to economic development, as is Internet and broadband.

I'm just going to open it up to you. Is there anything that you haven't shared with us today that you want to make sure you have an opportunity to share with government? I've heard you loud and clear that there needs to be better leadership, the need to be more open and listening to the ideas of the communities and community leaders like yourself, but is there anything else you would like to share with us today about growing the economy here in Nova Scotia based on this committee and the purpose of this committee?

TINA HENNIGAR: We have a low self-esteem issue in Nova Scotia. We don't understand our talents, our own strengths, what we bring, what we could be. It's almost like someone has told us for too long that we can't do it or we're not good enough.

I think we have a huge opportunity for us to see that it is possible - that there is no reason why we can't solve some of these problems that have been solved in Olds, Alberta and other places in the world. We are just as smart. We are just as capable. We are just as talented. The argument of having rocks and boulders and things in the way that are prohibiting us from digging fibre, I just think they're excuses.

We can do this. We've been told in the Ivany report. I think that the community has really stepped up. We may be a little unusual, but there are groups across the province that have done some amazing things, and it's because we were challenged to in the Ivany report. I would just ask all of you sitting around the table to take your own advice - to think with the same amount of inquiry, of creativity.

Just because something has been done the same old way a million times does not mean we have to do it that same old way. I think that the community - they're just dying for something different. It may be a risk, but often risks pay off.

LYNN HENNIGAR: Just to put my business hat on - when I worked in the newspaper industry, it always fascinated me that people could come in with a product from the U.S., from Upper Canada - it didn't really matter where, as long as it wasn't from Lunenburg County, it had to be better than what was here and it was supported almost just because - even if it never got published.

I think there is a tangible thing that government can do, and that's to look to us first. Don't go outside the province for expertise around particular issues unless you're sure it doesn't exist here.

The big example for me would be *Bluenose II*. We actually do know how to build a boat in Lunenburg. If you had just let us build a boat, we'd have had a boat. Those are the kinds of things that - the leadership piece just comes from the community knowing. If we believe our government believes in us, then that starts to change the narrative as well. That would be my key piece. Look to us. Hold us to account. Make us solve our own problems - they're ours.

THE CHAIR: The NDP - Ms. Roberts.

LISA ROBERTS: You referenced a number of times that you're working with five municipal units. One of those is Bridgewater, which is doing phenomenal work around addressing energy poverty and focusing on deep retrofits of the existing housing stock. I wonder if you can comment if that is inspiring other municipalities, if there's an element there of learning across.

TINA HENNIGAR: I still think that there is this element of almost competition between municipalities, even though we may be within a five-minute drive to each other. It's funny because whenever I talk about my municipal units, I try to celebrate the fact that we're five municipal units that are all very different, very close together. Every town has a different flavour, and isn't that wonderful?

But when it comes to working together, it doesn't seem to be as favourable. I have not seen a big outcry of let's celebrate this particular town, which is a shame.

LYNN HENNIGAR: It's kind of another Nova Scotia trait. We don't tend to celebrate success in others. We tend to look at it more with jealousy. Maybe I shouldn't speak for the province, but there is a bit of that in Lunenburg County. If you win the lottery tomorrow, I'm going to be more upset that it wasn't me than thrilled for you. That's a piece that we're trying to change as well. We need to celebrate our successes. Bridgewater has had tremendous success, but I don't think it has gotten the accolades from other municipalities that you would expect it to receive.

TINA HENNIGAR: I don't think we're unusual.

THE CHAIR: We'll go to Ben Jessome.

BEN JESSOME: I just wanted to say, with all due respect to some of the comments from my colleagues with respect to this concept around not-for-profit or not, you need to do what's right for you in Lunenburg County.

Furthermore, you made some comments today about the exchange of personal information around doctor recruitment. I'm going to take that back to our Minister of Health and Wellness that we heard that today. Furthermore, Tina, you sounded very similar to the Premier this weekend in that we need to be confident in our capacity and we need to be continuing to try to punch above our weight.

I think that there is a great deal of enthusiasm throughout this province and our communities, and this is just one great example of that.

THE CHAIR: I'm going to ask the committee to make a short extension to the meeting time so that we can do a bit of business that I overlooked.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

I would like to thank our witnesses today. Can we forgo closing remarks?

TINA HENNIGAR: We can.

THE CHAIR: I think we've heard a wonderful presentation today. You have inspired and pushed a lot of enthusiasm into people. I will be very pleased to read the Hansard script afterwards and review some of the remarks that were made. Thank you very much for coming here.

We just have some short committee work, which I overlooked because we did have to change the agenda. There is a possible change in the witness for the June 25, 2019 meeting. The group that was supposed to come cannot present so the Ecology Action Centre instead of the Green Economy Network. Do we have any discussion about that?

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

That makes it very simple. Our next meeting date is June 25<sup>th</sup>. We have the Department of Business. The topic will be Canadian Solar Industries Association and the Green Economy Network re green jobs and economic development.

DARLENE HENRY (Legislative Committee Clerk): Green jobs is the topic. These are the people coming in, which is now going to be the Ecology Action Centre.

THE CHAIR: Okay, the Ecology Action Centre instead of the Green Economy Network. Some got changed and some didn't.

This meeting is adjourned. Thank you.

[The committee adjourned at 3:00 p.m.]