



MEMORANDUM

TO: Council

FROM: Chantalle Newell, Executive Assistant

SUBJECT: Presentation Updates

DATE: June 23, 2025

Since April, Council has received three presentations from various organizations. As part of the Council Procedural Policy, the presentations are to be brought back up for decision/discussion at a following meeting. Below are the presentations and their summaries.

We've Got Your Backpacks presentation – Wesleyan Church – April 24, 2025

David Hockley and Rhonda Boudreau were present from the Wesleyan Church to present the “We’ve Got Your BackPacks” program to Council. The program began in November 2022 as a church-led outreach initiative focused on supporting children and families with food insecurity. Inspired by a similar effort in New Brunswick, the team collaborates with seven local schools, which help identify families in need and distribute weekly backpacks filled with groceries. The church remains uninvolved in selecting recipients, relying entirely on school staff. The initiative partners with Superstore for regular grocery orders and receives funding through business sponsorships, grants, donations, and fundraising events, including their National Acadian Day fundraiser at the airport in 2024 where they raised \$5,500. To date, over 1,800 backpacks and \$58,300 worth of groceries have been delivered during the 2024–2025 school year, including holiday gift cards. The program also fosters community among volunteers, who gather each Thursday to prepare and deliver the bags, forming meaningful connections while serving others.

The purpose of the presentation was simply to bring awareness to the program.

Free Store from Evangel Assembly – May 15, 2025

Reverend Cindy Dunnett, Care and Connection Pastor at Evangel Assembly, spoke about the church’s Free Store, which was launched in December 2022 to address food insecurity identified during the COVID-19 pandemic. The program initially started with grocery box distribution, the initiative evolved into a more sustainable model offering free groceries, clothing, and household items at the former Lighthouse Church on Argyle Street.

The store operates monthly on the second Wednesday and has seen consistent growth, now serving people from Yarmouth town, the municipality of Yarmouth, and the municipality of Argyle. The store is staffed primarily by senior volunteers and operates with dignity and confidentiality for clients.



In the most recent month, the store filled 62 requests, serving 160 people (74% adults, 26% children). Year-to-date, 291 requests have supported 807 individuals. About 30% of these are single-adult households. The cost per request averages \$35.

The purpose of the presentation was to raise awareness to the program.

Rural Communities Foundation of Nova Scotia – June 12, 2025

Erika Rolston, Executive Director of Rural Communities Foundation of Nova Scotia was in attendance to present to Council. The Rural Communities Foundation of Nova Scotia (RCFNS) is a federally registered charitable organization dedicated solely to supporting rural communities across the province. With nearly 25 years of experience, the foundation focuses on grant-making, convening, and fund development to address the unique challenges faced by rural populations. As a charity, RCFNS can issue tax receipts, hold land, and manage financial tools that benefit rural initiatives. The foundation currently manages several funds, including the Ukrainian Nova Scotia Resettlement Fund, the Joan Feynman Climate Change Fund, and the Rural Nova Scotia Pride Fund—each designed to address specific needs in rural areas such as refugee support, environmental action, and community inclusion.

A major focus of the presentation was the Dave Gunning Zero Hunger Fund. This fund began by supporting school meal programs and has since evolved to help stock in-school “free stores” with food and essential supplies for students and their families. In 2023, \$100,000 was granted through the fund, including support for schools in the Municipality of Argyle, with the goal of doubling their contribution this year. Any municipal contribution made to the fund will be redirected back to schools within that municipality. The foundation is actively fundraising through municipal grants, corporate sponsors, and public donations.

RCFNS invited Argyle Council to consider supporting the Zero Hunger Fund by providing individual and corporate awareness for the campaign, considering providing a financial contribution, or by hosting a community concert.