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# Office of the Auditor General of Nova Scotia

Financial Statements  
For the Year Ended March 31, 2020



**Office of the Auditor General of Nova Scotia  
Financial Statements  
March 31, 2020**

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## Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

The accompanying financial statements are the responsibility of management of the Office of the Auditor General of Nova Scotia. Management has prepared the financial statements in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards. Management is responsible for the reliability and integrity of the financial statements.

The Office maintains a comprehensive system of internal control including an appropriate code of conduct, written policies and procedures, and an organization structure that segregates incompatible duties. It has designed its system of internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that transactions are recorded and executed in accordance with legislation and required authority, that assets are properly safeguarded, and that reliable financial records are maintained.



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Auditor General of Nova Scotia



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## Independent Auditor's Report

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### **To the Executive Committee of Office of the Auditor General of Nova Scotia Opinion**

We have audited the financial statements of Office of the Auditor General of Nova Scotia ("the Office"), which comprise the statement of financial position as at March 31, 2020, the statements of operations and accumulated surplus (deficit), statement of changes in net debt and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Office as at March 31, 2020, and its results of operations, its change in net debt and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards.

### **Basis for Opinion**

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements* section of our report. We are independent of the Office in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Canada, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

### **Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements**

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Office's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Office or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Office's financial reporting process.

### **Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements**

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.



As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Office's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Office's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Office to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

*BDO Canada LLP*

Chartered Professional Accountants

Dartmouth, Nova Scotia  
May 29, 2020

**Office of the Auditor General of Nova Scotia**  
**Statement of Financial Position**  
**As at March 31, 2020**

	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>
<b>Financial Assets</b>		
Petty cash	\$ 250	\$ 250
Accounts receivable (Note 9)	112,775	92,641
Due from government (Note 3)	114,017	74,662
	227,042	167,553
 <b>Liabilities</b>		
Accounts payable	66,598	55,637
Accrued liabilities	20,854	1,186
Accrued salaries, benefits and vacation (Note 4)	274,491	211,885
	361,943	268,708
 <b>Net Debt</b>	 (134,901)	 (101,155)
 <b>Non-financial Assets</b>		
Prepaid expenses	36,897	31,206
Tangible capital assets (Note 5)	98,004	69,949
	134,901	101,155
 <b>Accumulated Surplus</b>	 \$ nil	 \$ nil
Commitments (Note 6)		
Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on our Results and Operations (Note 10)		

The accompanying notes are an integral part of the financial statements

**APPROVED ON BEHALF OF THE OFFICE:**



Auditor General of Nova Scotia

**Office of the Auditor General of Nova Scotia**  
**Statement of Operations and Accumulated Surplus (Deficit)**  
**Year Ended March 31, 2020**

	<b>2020 Budget (unaudited)</b>	<b>2020 Actual</b>	<b>2019 Actual</b>
<b>Revenues</b>			
Professional fees	\$ 475,000	\$ 431,100	\$ 428,750
<b>Expenses</b>			
Amortization (Note 2)	nil	24,973	25,248
Membership dues	70,000	54,744	53,868
Office lease and taxes	190,000	187,758	187,758
Office supplies	72,000	19,147	20,819
Other services	63,000	34,125	35,891
Parking	6,000	5,850	5,760
Professional services	272,000	184,972	215,550
Salaries and benefits	3,895,000	3,791,445	3,422,125
Staff training	90,000	103,592	107,431
Telecommunications	20,000	15,116	16,414
Travel	80,000	52,610	57,792
	<u>4,758,000</u>	<u>4,474,332</u>	<u>4,148,656</u>
<b>Net Expenses before Government Contributions</b>	4,283,000	4,043,232	3,719,906
Government contributions (Note 7)	4,283,000	4,059,560	3,629,195
<b>Annual Surplus (Deficit) before Transfers</b>	<u>\$ nil</u>	16,328	(90,711)
<b>Transfer to (from) General Revenue Fund (Note 3)</b>		<u>16,328</u>	<u>(90,711)</u>
<b>Annual Surplus (Deficit)</b>		nil	nil
<b>Accumulated Surplus (Deficit), beginning of year</b>		<u>nil</u>	<u>nil</u>
<b>Accumulated Surplus (Deficit), end of year</b>		<u>\$ nil</u>	<u>\$ nil</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of the financial statements

**Office of the Auditor General of Nova Scotia**  
**Statement of Changes in Net Debt**  
**Year Ended March 31, 2020**

	<b>2020 Budget (unaudited)</b>	<b>2020 Actual</b>	<b>2019 Actual</b>
Annual surplus (deficit)	\$ nil	\$ nil	\$ nil
Acquisition of tangible capital assets	(37,000)	(53,028)	(28,391)
Amortization of tangible capital assets (Note 5)	nil	24,973	25,248
	<u>(37,000)</u>	<u>(28,055)</u>	<u>(3,143)</u>
Acquisition of prepaid expenses	nil	(36,897)	(31,206)
Use of prepaid expenses	nil	31,206	25,761
	<u>nil</u>	<u>(5,691)</u>	<u>(5,445)</u>
<b>Increase in Net Debt</b>	<b>(37,000)</b>	<b>(33,746)</b>	<b>(8,588)</b>
<b>Net Debt, beginning of the year</b>	<u><b>(101,155)</b></u>	<u><b>(101,155)</b></u>	<u><b>(92,567)</b></u>
<b>Net Debt, end of the year</b>	<u><b>\$ (138,155)</b></u>	<u><b>\$ (134,901)</b></u>	<u><b>\$ (101,155)</b></u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of the financial statements  
The Office does not budget for certain non-cash items such as amortization

**Office of the Auditor General of Nova Scotia**  
**Statement of Cash Flow**  
**Year Ended March 31, 2020**

	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>
Cash Flows from:		
<b>Operating Activities</b>		
Surplus	\$ nil	\$ nil
Items in earnings not involving cash		
Amortization	24,973	25,248
Change in non-cash working capital balances		
Accounts receivable	(20,134)	(12,510)
Due from government	(39,355)	(18,374)
Prepaid expenses	(5,691)	(5,445)
Accounts payable	10,961	23,332
Accrued liabilities	19,668	(3,652)
Accrued salaries, benefits and vacation	62,606	19,792
	53,028	28,391
<b>Capital Activities</b>		
Additions to tangible capital assets	(53,028)	(28,391)
Change in cash during the year	nil	nil
Cash, beginning of year	250	250
	250	250
Cash, end of year	\$ 250	\$ 250

The accompanying notes are an integral part of the financial statements

**Office of the Auditor General of Nova Scotia**  
**Notes to Financial Statements**  
**March 31, 2020**

**1. Purpose**

The Office of the Auditor General is an office of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly which serves to help the House hold government accountable for its collection, expenditure, and stewardship of public funds. The Office is not subject to income taxes because it is a public sector entity. The mandate and authorities of the Office are provided by the Auditor General Act.

**2. Significant Accounting Policies**

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards. The following are significant accounting policies adopted by the Office.

- (a) *Cash* – consists of a petty cash float provided by the Province of Nova Scotia.
- (b) *Revenue Recognition* – The Office recognizes professional fee revenues to recover costs for the audits it performs on certain public sector organizations. These revenues are accounted for in the period that the audits are conducted.
- (c) *Harmonized Sales Tax* – The Office does not record Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) in its financial statements because all HST collected and paid is reimbursed to the Province of Nova Scotia.
- (d) *Tangible Capital Assets* – Furniture, equipment, and leasehold improvements with an individual cost greater than or equal to \$500 are capitalized and amortized over their useful lives. Those assets with a cost less than \$500 are expensed on the Statement of Operations. Tangible capital assets are recorded at historical cost less accumulated amortization.

Tangible capital assets are purchased through the Office's annual appropriation approved by the House of Assembly. Any contributed assets are separately disclosed in the year of acquisition.

- (e) *Amortization* – Starting in the year of acquisition, furniture, equipment, and leasehold improvements are amortized on a straight-line basis over their estimated useful lives as follows:

Furniture and equipment	10% per year
Computer equipment	25% per year
Leasehold improvements	over term of lease

**Office of the Auditor General of Nova Scotia**  
**Notes to Financial Statements**  
**March 31, 2020**

**2. Significant Accounting Policies (continued)**

(f) *Employee Future Benefit Plans*

*Pension Plan* – All eligible employees of the Office are covered by the Nova Scotia Public Service Superannuation Plan (PSSP), a multiemployer defined benefit pension plan. Changes to the plan governance structure and plan amendments in 2014 transferred responsibility for the PSSP to the Public Service Superannuation Plan Trustee Inc. (PSSPTI). Contributions are required by both employees and the Office to cover current service cost.

Pursuant to legislation currently in place, the Office has no legal or constructive obligation to pay further contributions with respect to any past service or unfunded liability of the plan, nor does the Office have access to any surplus that may arise in the plan. Consequently, the Office applies the defined contribution method of accounting for the plan.

The Office's contribution to the plan is expensed during the year in which the services are rendered and represents its total pension obligation. Contributions are a defined amount based upon a set percentage of salary.

- i) *Vacation Benefits* - The cost of vesting vacation benefits is determined using the employee's current salary and accumulated vacation time.
- ii) *Public Service Award* – Full-time employees of the Office are eligible to receive the Public Service Award pursuant to the Civil Service Act. Payment for this award is the responsibility of the Province of Nova Scotia.

The awards are based on the number of years of service of the employee and are earned at the rate of one week's pay for every year of service, to a maximum of twenty-six weeks. In 2015, government announced it would phase out the Public Service Award but that it would honour service amounts accumulated to August 11, 2015. In 2017-18, government extended a one-time option to eligible civil servants to receive a lump-sum payout in place of the Public Service Award. The election period for the service payout closed on March 16, 2018 and the awards were paid in 2018-19. The Office's costs, and any assets or liabilities related to the Public Service Award, are not included as part of the Office's budget and are accounted for by the Province of Nova Scotia in its consolidated financial statements. As such, there is no net impact on the Office's financial statements for the settlement of the Public Service Award.

- iii) *Retirement Health Plan Benefits* – Retirement health plan benefits are a liability of the Province of Nova Scotia and have no impact on the financial statements of the Office.

**Office of the Auditor General of Nova Scotia**  
**Notes to Financial Statements**  
**March 31, 2020**

**2. Significant Accounting Policies (continued)**

- (g) *Government Contributions* – The appropriations from the General Revenue Fund are recognized as government contributions as authorized by the Legislative Assembly and used to fund the Office’s operations.
- (h) *Financial Instruments* – Accounts receivable, accounts payable, accrued liabilities, and due to/ from government are measured at cost. The carrying amount of each of these financial instruments is presented on the Statement of Financial Position. These instruments have no significant exposure to interest rate, credit, or liquidity risks.
- All financial assets are tested annually for impairment. When financial assets are impaired, impairment losses are recorded in the Statement of Operations.

**3. Due from Government**

The Office, similar to many Crown entities, does not maintain a bank account. All funds are held with the Province of Nova Scotia. The Due to/ from government represents the net balance owing to/ from the Province of Nova Scotia. The net balance owing to/ from the Province of Nova Scotia is impacted by the annual surplus/ deficit and other revenues/ expenses incurred in the current year but not received or paid by government until a subsequent period.

Annual surplus/ deficits arise as a result of transactions recognized by the Office in one period and appropriated from government in another period (e.g., prepaid expenses, tangible capital asset transactions, certain accruals). These annual surplus/ deficits are transferred to/ from government’s General Revenue Fund in the year in which the surplus/ deficit arises.

Year end accounts receivable related to audits of public sector organizations, accounts payable to suppliers, and the payroll accrual are examples of revenues and expenses incurred and charged against the appropriation from government in the current period, but not received or paid by government until a subsequent period.

	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>
Due from government, beginning of year	\$ 74,662	\$ 56,289
Annual deficit (surplus)	(16,328)	90,711
Year end receivables/ payables/ accruals	55,683	(72,338)
Due from government, end of year	\$ 114,017	\$ 74,662

**Office of the Auditor General of Nova Scotia**  
**Notes to Financial Statements**  
**March 31, 2020**

**4. Accrued Salaries, Benefits and Vacation**

*Salaries and Benefits* – The Office accrued \$174,050 (2019 - \$140,793) for salaries and benefits earned by employees before the end of the year but paid after year end.

*Vacation* - The Office accrued \$100,441 (2019 - \$71,092) for vested vacation benefits. The amount was determined using the employee’s current salary and accumulated vacation time.

**5. Tangible Capital Assets**

	-----2020-----			---2019---	
	Furniture and equipment	Computer equipment	Leasehold improvements	Total	Total
<b>Cost</b>					
Opening cost	\$ 198,605	\$ 81,436	\$ 21,041	\$ 301,082	\$ 273,945
Additions	34,460	18,568	nil	53,028	28,391
Disposals	nil	nil	nil	nil	(1,254)
Closing cost	233,065	100,004	21,041	354,110	301,082
<b>Accumulated Amortization</b>					
Opening balance	174,562	52,699	3,872	231,133	207,139
Disposals	nil	nil	nil	nil	(1,254)
Amortization expense	7,570	15,650	1,753	24,973	25,248
Closing balance	182,132	68,349	5,625	256,106	231,133
<b>Net Book Value</b>	<b>\$ 50,933</b>	<b>\$ 31,655</b>	<b>\$ 15,416</b>	<b>\$ 98,004</b>	<b>\$ 69,949</b>

**6. Commitments**

The Government of Nova Scotia has entered into a lease agreement on the Office’s behalf for office space. The agreement expires in 2023. Commitments for lease payments and associated operating costs for the next three fiscal years are estimated to be:

2020-21	\$ 225,648
2021-22	\$ 225,648
2022-23	\$ 18,804

**Office of the Auditor General of Nova Scotia**  
**Notes to Financial Statements**  
**March 31, 2020**

**7. Government Contributions**

The Office is funded through annual budgetary appropriations approved by the House of Assembly. Government approved an appropriation of \$4,283,000 for 2019-20 (2019 - \$4,237,000). The Office charged expenses of \$4,059,560 (2019 - \$3,629,195) against the appropriation. Any unused appropriation cannot be carried forward for use in subsequent years.

The Office's threshold for capitalizing assets differs from the Province of Nova Scotia's threshold. The annual budgetary appropriation approved by the House of Assembly includes provision for purchases of supplies that are expensed by the Province of Nova Scotia but meet the Office's threshold for capitalization. \$37,000 of the \$72,000 budget for Other supplies shown on the Statement of Operations and Accumulated Surplus (Deficit) is for the purchase of assets that meet the Office's capitalization threshold of \$500. This \$37,000 budget for the acquisition of tangible capital assets is shown on the Statement of Changes in Net Debt.

The annual appropriation does not include a provision for amortization.

**8. Retirement Benefits**

Employees of the Office are members of the Nova Scotia Public Service Superannuation Plan which provides defined pension benefits to employees. The Nova Scotia Pension Services Corporation manages the day-to-day operation of the plan investments and benefit administration. The Office is not responsible for any unfunded liability, nor does it have access to any surplus that may arise in the plan. The Office's responsibility with regard to this plan is limited to its contributions. The plan is funded by equal employee and employer contributions. The contribution rate is set by PSSPTI pursuant to the legislated funding policy and is set for a five-year cycle. The Office's expense in relation to retirement benefits amounts to \$314,760 (2019 - \$288,599).

**9. Related Party Transactions**

(a) *Business Transactions* - The Office of the Auditor General of Nova Scotia is related to all Government of Nova Scotia departments, provincial crown corporations, agencies, boards, and commissions as a result of common ownership. The Office enters into transactions with these organizations in the normal course of business measured at the exchange amount, which is the amount of consideration established and agreed to by the related parties. The Office is mindful of its independence and objectivity when entering into any such transactions.

**Office of the Auditor General of Nova Scotia**  
**Notes to Financial Statements**  
**March 31, 2020**

**9. Related Party Transactions (continued)**

(b) *Funding and Specific Disclosure* - The Office's sources of funding are through an annual appropriation provided by government and the billing of professional fees for certain audit work performed. The Office does not bill government for the audit of its consolidated financial statements (the Public Accounts of Nova Scotia) or for performance audits the Office conducts.

*i) Revenues and Receivables* - During the year the Office received professional fee revenues of \$431,100 (2019 - \$428,750) from related parties, of which \$109,150 (2019- \$90,000) was included in accounts receivable at year end.

*ii) Annual Appropriation* - The Office's annual appropriation approved by the House of Assembly is discussed in Note 7.

(c) *Services Provided with no Charge* - The Province of Nova Scotia has centralized some of its administrative activities for efficiency and cost-effectiveness purposes. As a result, the Province of Nova Scotia uses a shared services model so that one governmental unit performs services for other units without charge. The costs of such services as payroll processing, cheque issuing, and information technology support provided by the Province of Nova Scotia are not recognized in the Office's financial statements.

**10. Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on our Results and Operations**

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic. In response to the declaration and the first presumptive cases being identified in the province, the Government of Nova Scotia advised departments, including the Office of the Auditor General, to put business continuity plans into action. The Office closed its physical office location on March 16, 2020 and employees switched to staying at home to do their work. It was able to provide services, realize assets and discharge liabilities in the normal course of business.

With employees working from home, the Office revised certain protocols to ensure continuity of business and respond to any implications on operations and year-end procedures. Minimal costs were incurred to establish proper work-from-home conditions for employees. Interim financial statement audits which were nearing completion in mid-March were able to be completed, thus having little impact on the Office's revenues earned from professional fees. Administratively, approvals which previously had been provided on a paper document were now provided via email.

There is still great uncertainty surrounding the COVID-19 virus. Looking ahead, and with no date set for switching from working from home to returning to the physical office, the Office expects to be able to carry out its year-end financial statement audits, its performance audits, and administrative activities. The Office does not anticipate any additional pressures on its 2020-21 budget arising as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.