

EXECUTIVE STANDING COMMITTEE  
MINUTES

January 28, 2013

PRESENT:

Mayor Mike Savage, Chair  
Deputy Mayor, Reg Rankin

Councillors: Linda Mosher, Vice Chair  
Russell Walker  
Matt Whitman  
Bill Karsten  
Steve Craig  
Brad Johns

STAFF:

Mr. Richard Butts, CAO  
Ms. Marian Tyson, Acting Director, Legal Services  
Mr. Matt Godwin, Legislative Assistant

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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. in Council Chambers, Halifax City Hall.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – December 10, 2012**

**MOVED by Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor Rankin that the minutes of December 10, 2012 be approved as presented. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

**3. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS AND APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS**

Additions:

- 8.1 Branding – Councillor Mosher
- 8.2 Staff Council Communication – Councillor Johns

**MOVED by Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor Johns that the agenda be accepted as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

**4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES – NONE**

**5. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS – NONE**

**6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS – NONE**

**7. REPORTS**

**7.1 Review of the Summer Regional Council Schedule**

A copy of the 2013 Regional Council meeting schedule was before the committee.

**MOVED by Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor Mosher that the 2013 Regional Council schedule be recommended for approval as presented.**

The Clerk provided background on why the schedule is being considered at this time.

Councillor Johns indicated his support for scheduling an additional meeting on August 20<sup>th</sup> or 27<sup>th</sup>. He noted that while Councillors work throughout the summer, there is a perception that Council takes a one month holiday during this time. He also noted the possibility that items may come up in the summer and the meeting can always be cancelled if it's unnecessary.

Councillor Walker indicated his support for an additional scheduled meeting on August 27, 2013.

Councillor Mosher indicated her opposition to the addition of the added day as Councillors work throughout the August break in the Council schedule. This time is also valuable for Councillors to engage in constituency work.

An amendment to the motion resulted in the following on the floor:

**MOVED by Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor Johns that the 2013 Regional Council schedule be recommended for approval as amended with an additional meeting day being added on the 27<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2013. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

Councillor Mosher was in opposition to the motion.

## **7.2 By-law Enforcement on Weekends – Councillor Mosher**

Councillor Mosher offered background on this, indicating its origin at the January 21, 2013 meeting of the Halifax and West Community Council. She also notes this has been a priority outcome for the CAO.

Deputy Mayor Rankin thanked Councillor Mosher for bringing the item forward. He indicated the ongoing issue relating the absence of by-law enforcement officials between Friday and Tuesday. While the police may at times address issues, there are many concerns which go unattended during the weekend and the only recourse for residents is a complaint line. The provision of by-law enforcement staff on weekends speaks to HRM's prioritization of good public service. He admits there may be scheduling or labour challenges, but that an investigation should be done.

Councillor Walker indicated he is aware of the police managing complaints over the weekend.

Councillor Mosher noted there are a number of issues over the weekend that go unaddressed, for example geothermal and construction activity in her area. Some infractions may deliberately take place during this window as it is known that there are no by-law enforcement staff on duty. HRM needs better weekend services.

Councillor Karsten suggests that he would support a staff report to investigate the possibility of retaining by-law enforcement officers over the weekend.

**MOVED by Councillor Mosher, seconded by Deputy Mayor Rankin that staff return to the committee with a report investigating the possibility of employing by-law enforcement officers on Saturdays, Sundays and Mondays.**

The Clerk noted that the Executive Standing Committee does have jurisdiction over by-law matters.

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

## **8. ADDED ITEMS**

### **8.1 Branding – Councillor Mosher**

**MOVED by Councillor Mosher, seconded by Councillor Walker that staff provide a presentation to the Executive Standing Committee the on the value of creating a stronger, more contemporary and consistent branding program for HRM, along with recommendations for a strategy to develop and implement such a program, as well as potential costs.**

Councillor Mosher brought the issue forward in 2006 and argued that a rejuvenated brand for HRM is more relevant than ever. She noted the CAO's efforts have improved HRM's external communications, but that HRM has had the same brand since amalgamation and the time has come for a more consistent brand to facilitate tourism, business and immigration. She argues HRM has many strengths, but these are not serviced by the city's current brand.

### **MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

### **8.2 Councillor Johns**

Councillor Johns spoke to his dissatisfaction with the frequency and level of communication between staff and members of Council. He cites the Regional Council schedule and the re-designing of the Council Chambers as instances where Councillors were not consulted in advance of decisions being made by staff.

In addition, he refers to the recent decision to remove specialist staff from the HRM service office at the Acadia School. Councillors were not consulted on this and advised at a very late hour. This is an important service location for residents and provides service to more than 70,000 people.

Councillor Craig was also indicated that he would appreciate information as soon as possible from staff on significant changes. He notes his experience on the Board of the Canadian Cancer Society, whereby Board members are consulted and given an opportunity to discuss changes.

The CAO clarifies that the front-desk service at the location will not change and only staff at the back-end are being moved. Regional Council sets policies and direction, such as the application, and this change is an implementation change related to delivery. The only people being affected are staff, not the public.

Councillor Whitman advised that he received the communication about staffing changes over the weekend and the invitation to the meeting on Monday. However, he noted it is very difficult for Councillors to change their schedules on such short notice. He echoed Councillor Johns' frustration. If service-delivery is being affected Councillors and the public need to be made aware. However, he appreciated the CAO's response.

Councillor Karsten indicated his support for Councillor Craig with respect to information being made readily available to Councillors from staff. He appreciates the role staff have to make decisions on an operational level and has mentioned in the past the need for clarification on Council's role in this regard. He argues some latitude needs to be granted to staff to find operational efficiencies, which the CAO has done since being hired. He reiterated his support for Councillor Johns' comment regarding more information being made available to Councillors.

Councillor Johns indicated it is Council's responsibility to provide direction to the CAO. He notes a need for greater consultation with members of Council. Had he been consulted on the service change in Sackville he would have argued that the office exists as a function of commitments made at amalgamation to provide consistent service across HRM. He believes there is a perception issue as well.

Councillor Johns further referenced the decisions made regarding concerts in Halifax which Councillors had no input on and the issues that stemmed from that process.

The Mayor indicated that Councillors should work together and work together with staff. He offered to meet with Councillor Johns regarding his concerns. The issue of communication between Councillors, staff and residents is very important.

The Mayor adjourned the public portion of the meeting at 10:44 a.m. and the committee voted to move In Camera.

## **9. IN CAMERA**

### **9.1 APPROVAL OF MINUTES – December 10, 2012**

This matter was dealt with In Camera.

### **9.2 Personnel Matter – Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) Review Process**

This matter was dealt with In Camera.

### **9.3 Personnel Matter – Nominations to Boards and Committees of Council**

This matter was dealt with In Camera.

## **10. NEXT MEETING DATE – February 25, 2013**

## **11. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Matt Godwin  
Legislative Assistant