

GRANTS COMMITTEE
MINUTES

JANUARY 9, 2012

- PRESENT: Councillor Barry Dalrymple, Chair
Councillor Russell Walker
Councillor Brad Johns
Councillor Jim Smith
Councillor Peter Lund
Mr. Geoff Baker
Mr. David Woo
Mr. Andrew Higdon
Ms. Kate Watson
- REGRETS: Councillor Jennifer Watts
Mr. Darren Watts
Ms. Lori Wozney
- STAFF: Ms. Peta-Jane Temple, Team Leader, Tax, Grants and Special
Projects
Ms. Chris Newson, Legislative Assistant

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1. CALL TO ORDER

Councillor Dalrymple, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:06 p.m. in Halifax Hall, 2nd Floor City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – October 3rd and December 5th, 2011

MOVED by Councillor Jim Smith, seconded by Mr. Andrew Higdon that the minutes of October 3rd and December 5th, 2011, as presented, be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

MOVED by Councillor Walker, seconded by Mr. David Woo that the agenda, as presented, be approved. 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 Proposed Co-location of 211 Information and Referral Service (211 Nova Scotia)

The December 19, 2011 staff report was before the Committee.

MOVED by Councillor Lund, seconded by Councillor Smith that the Grants Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Council approve the terms and conditions, as outlined in Table 1 of the December 19, 2011 staff report, to co-locate the 211 Non-Emergency Information and Referral Services (211 Nova Scotia) at Halifax Regional Municipality's Call Center and Dispatch Services at 21 Mount Hope Avenue, Dartmouth, and execute a formal Memorandum of Agreement with 211 Nova Scotia based on these terms and conditions.

Mr. Mike Myette, Executive Director, 211 Nova Scotia, and Mr. Brad Anguish, Director, HRM Community and Recreation Services, responded to questions of clarification from the Committee and provided the following information:

- February 2013 is the start date for the 211 Nova Scotia service, however; staff will commence moving into the leased space in a few months
- 211 Nova Scotia is a not for profit that does work primarily from provincial grants although part of the 211 requirement in Canada is that they also receive funding from other sources

- Cost recovery for utilities used for the square footage, as outlined in the report, is the amount HRM will receive from the province
- 211 Nova Scotia may possibly renew their lease with HRM in three years time; the lease includes provision for 180 days (six months) notice to vacate the premises
- growth to the HRM Call Centre can be accommodated even while locating 211 Nova Scotia in the existing space
- there will be four (4) service persons with positions added for anticipated growth, up to twelve (12), over the next three years
- 211 Nova Scotia will operate five days a week, twelve hours per day, with a seamless transfer of calls to another call centre (somewhere in Canada) during the off hours.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

7.2 By-law T-228 Tax Exemption for Non-Profit Organizations 2011-2012

The December 16, 2011 staff report was before the Committee.

Ms. Peta-Jane Temple, Team Leader, Tax, Grants and Special Projects provided a brief overview of the report.

Ms. Kate Watson entered the meeting at 1:22 p.m.

Ms. Temple explained that the Committee may choose not to approve the proposed recommendations as there is a risk in presuming a budget increase for next year's program.

MOVED by Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor Smith that the Grants Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Council approve:

- 1. The renewal of tax exemption status for the 2011-2012 fiscal year for 135 organizations (276 properties) as listed in Table 2 (Attachment 2), for a total cost of \$2,210,611;**
- 2. The renewal of tax exemption status for the 2011-2012 fiscal year for the 41 organizations (42 leased properties) as listed in Table 3 (Attachment 3), for a total cost of \$471,192;**
- 3. The reinstatement of 4 organizations (4 properties) for the 2011-2012 fiscal year as detailed in Table 4a (Attachment 4) for a total cost of \$9,335;**
- 4. The addition of 12 organizations (15 properties) for the 2011-2012 fiscal year as detailed in Table 4b (Attachment 4) for a total cost of \$78,005;**

5. **An increase in level of exemption for 5 organizations (6 properties) for the 2011-2012 fiscal year as detailed in Table 5 (Attachment 5) for an increase in cost of \$22,426;**
6. **The removal of 19 organizations (22 properties) in 2011-2012 as detailed in Table 6a and 6b (Attachment 6) for a combined saving of \$145,727;**
7. **The decline of 26 applicants (32 properties) as detailed in Tables 7a, 7b and 7c (Attachment 7);**
8. **The deferral of 33 applicants (337 properties) as detailed in Attachment 8;**
9. **The records management amendments as detailed in Attachment 9; and**
10. **Proposed schedule amendments to By-law T-228 to reflect recommendations set out in Attachments 2 through 9 above as detailed in Attachment 10.**

Ms. Temple responded to questions of clarification from Members of the Committee and provided the following information:

- tax exemptions are a true cost to the municipality as there is no revenue received to cover that loss; the funds utilized are from the program budget, however; the program budget is not indexed therefore any increase must be discussed during Council's annual budget deliberations.
- in regard to Attachment 3, page 23, staff require more clarity on leased properties therefore this matter needs to be addressed in the policy in regard to equity issues.

Councillor Smith retired from the meeting at 1:36 p.m.

- in regard to the waiting list, the majority of applicants are new requests; those at the commercial rate would be considered first as they would be paying more taxes.
- the tax exemption program is intended to assist potentially at risk individuals, however; the non profit housing cooperatives who have been on the waiting list do not necessarily target low income families.

The Committee requested that Tables 5 and 6 be revised to provide more clarity in regard to: Table 5: the increase to be paid by HRM and the resulting reduction to the applicant; Table 6: those groups being removed from the program for 2011/12 due to non compliance will now pay the full amount which results in reduced cost to HRM.

The Committee requested that Table 6b, page 38, be clarified in regard to the Rocky Lake Development property and whether or not the taxes owing have been paid following the sale of the property.

In response to a question by Councillor Lund, Ms. Temple explained that the rationale for deferring those groups on the deferral list, the majority of which are non profit housing cooperatives, would be due to the pending program redesign and/or budgetary issues.

Discussion ensued on the proposed recommendations.

MOVED by Councillor Walker, seconded by Mr. Geoff Baker that the Grants Committee recommend Halifax Regional Council approve 100% tax exemption for the Titans Gymnastics & Trampoline Club, AAN 10113075, 40 Broom Road, Dartmouth in the amount of \$13,210, pending future decision of Halifax Regional Council in regard to a detailed policy criteria.

Ms. Temple explained the required amendments to the other schedules as a result of this motion including the new balances.

Councillor Dalrymple commented that he was not in support of the motion as many sport groups are not receiving any tax exemption. He advised that he would support a 50% conversion but not 100% tax exemption at this time.

Councillor Walker explained that a recommendation to conversion (50%) had been put forward in the past, however; the group expressed concern that they were not being treated equally with other gymnastics clubs who received 100% exemption status.

In response to a question raised by Ms. Watson, Ms. Temple advised that transition grants, removal of 100% tax exemption to 50% or less, has occurred in the past. Recommended 100% tax exemption one year does not guarantee 100% tax exemption each year. Membership based clubs are not necessarily tax exempt.

MOTION TO AMEND PUT AND PASSED.

Discussion ensued on the proposed recommendations.

MOVED by Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor Lund that the Grants Committee request that staff forward correspondence to the Fultz Corner Restoration Society clarifying the chronology of the tax matter and that a copy of the correspondence be included in the records management amendments as detailed in Attachment 9 of the December 16, 2011 staff report. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

A vote was then taken on the amended main motion as follows:

MOVED by Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor Smith that the Grants Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Council:

- 1. Approve the following amendments to By-Law T-228:**

- a) The renewal of tax exemption status for the 2011-2012 fiscal year for 135 organizations (276 properties) as listed in Table 2 (Attachment 2 of the December 16, 2011 report), for a total cost of \$2,210,611;
- b) The renewal of tax exemption status for the 2011-2012 fiscal year for the 41 organizations (42 leased properties) as listed in Table 3 (Attachment 3 of the December 16, 2011 report), for a total cost of \$471,192;
- c) The reinstatement of 4 organizations (4 properties) for the 2011-2012 fiscal year as detailed in Table 4a (Attachment 4 of the December 16, 2011 report) for a total cost of \$9,335;
- d) The addition of 12 organizations (15 properties) for the 2011-2012 fiscal year as detailed in Table 4b (Attachment 4 of the December 16, 2011 report) for a total cost of \$78,005;
- e) An increase in level of exemption for 6 organizations (7 properties) for the 2011-2012 fiscal year as detailed in revised Table 5 (attached as Attachment 2 to this report) for an increase in cost of \$13,210;
- f) The removal of 19 organizations (22 properties) in 2011-2012 as detailed in Table 6a and 6b (Attachment 6 of the December 16, 2011 report) for a combined saving of \$145,727;
- g) The decline of 26 applicants (32 properties) as detailed in Tables 7a, 7b and 7c (Attachment 7 of the December 16, 2011 report);
- h) The deferral of 32 applicants (336 properties) as detailed in Attachment 8, revised Table 8 attached as Attachment 4 to this report;
- i) The records management amendments as detailed in Attachment 9; and the letter dated January 10, 2012, to the Fultz Corner Restoration Society attached as Attachment 5 to this report;
- j) Proposed schedule amendments to By-law T-228 to reflect recommendations set out in Attachments 2 through 9 above as detailed in revised Attachment 10 as amended on January 9, 2012 and attached to this report as Attachment 6.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

- 8. **ADDED ITEMS - NONE**
- 9. **NOTICES OF MOTION - NONE**
- 10. **NEXT MEETING DATE – February 6, 2012**
- 11. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:06 p.m.

Chris Newson
Legislative Assistant

INFORMATION ITEMS

1. Upcoming Agenda Items:
 - a) Recurring Annual Awards – Draft Process – ***early spring 2012***