

**GOVERNANCE AND DISTRICT BOUNDARY REVIEW COMMITTEE
MINUTES
May 20, 2010**

PRESENT: Mayor Peter Kelly, Chair
Councillor Jerry Blumenthal
Councillor Barry Dalrymple
Councillor Peter Lund
Councillor Linda Mosher
Councillor Reg Rankin
Mr. Wayne Anstey
Councillor Gloria McCluskey

GUESTS: Councillor Outhit

STAFF: Ms. Cathy Mellett, Acting Manager/Clerk
Ms. Mary Ellen Donovan, Municipal Solicitor
Ms. Sara Knight, Solicitor
Mr. Paul Morgan, Sr. Planner
Mr. Ken Lenihan, GIS Technician
Ms. Alva Robinson, Data Analyst
Ms. Linda Grant, Administrative Clerk Assistant
Ms. Sherrill Murphy, Deputy Clerk

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by His Worship Mayor Kelly in the Media Room, City Hall at approximately 11:15 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - May 12, 2010

Councillor Rankin noted that on page 4, paragraph 3, reference to the Provincial perspective should be removed.

MOVED by Councillor McCluskey, seconded by Councillor Dalrymple that the minutes of the May 12, 2010 meeting of the Governance and District Boundary Review Committee, as amended, be approved.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

MOVED by Councillor McCluskey, seconded by Councillor Dalrymple that the agenda, as distributed, be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

In response to concerns expressed by members that Council was required to make a decision regarding the size of Council, Ms. Mellett noted that Council had made the decision on the process to be followed and pointed out that regardless of who made the recommendation, Council would ultimately have to make the decision.

Ms. Knight noted, in response to a concern from Councillor McCluskey that other municipalities are not undertaking a boundary review, that HRM and Cape Breton Regional Municipality are both conducting boundary reviews out of phase with the rest of the municipalities in the province, which completed their reviews in 2006 and are therefore not required to do so this year. HRM and CBRM have been ordered by the UARB to submit the results of their reviews by December 31, 2010.

4. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS

4.1 Discussion re Council Size - Phase 1 Consultation

- A Supplementary Information report dated May 14, 2010 was before the Committee

The following motion was placed at the previous meeting and was now before the Committee for consideration:

MOVED by Councillor Rankin, seconded by Councillor Dalrymple that the size of Regional Council be reduced.

Councillor Rankin indicated that the Committee first had to determine if there was a will to reduce Council and then decide upon the appropriate number of Councillors. He pointed out that the move to amalgamation was not based on public consultation, but felt sure that it had been based on 'community of interest'. The Councillor noted that 15 years after amalgamation he believed it was time to adopt a broader approach and recast Council.

Councillor Rankin referred to the Oath of Office taken by Councillors pointing out that the Oath referred to the best interests of HRM and not individual Districts. He suggested that it was Council's wish to be a policy body rather than an administrative body tied up in the minutia of by-laws and tenders. Councillor Rankin pointed out that different interpretations can be given to the public input and suggested, based on the input, that Council could determine to retain the status quo or make changes.

Councillor Rankin noted that survey results indicate a lack of leadership on the part of Council. He noted that approximately 1/3 of the Districts have a population greater than what is provided for in a 23 member Council. Consequently, certain Districts are demonstrating that a smaller Council is possible. Councillor Rankin noted that he did not believe the residents of these Districts are indicating their Councillors are not representing them properly, nor are the Councillors indicating they are unable to do their jobs. Councillor Rankin indicated that he supported a smaller Council more conducive to policy making. He further noted that he hoped the motion on the floor would lead to a motion identifying a concrete reduction.

Mr. Wayne Anstey, DCAO for Operations joined the meeting at 11:31 a.m.

Councillor McCluskey suggested that Council could be more effective as it exists. However, she noted that she would not be adverse to a smaller Council.

Councillor Mosher expressed concern regarding the minimal public input noting that there was no clear conclusion as to what citizens actually desired. She indicated more input was required. Councillor Mosher went on to agree that residents do believe that Council is ineffective and appear to be getting caught up in the minutia. Councillor Mosher pointed out that many of the things discussed by this Committee, for example, consent agendas, giving more power to Community Council, a more effective Chair, would increase the effectiveness of Council.

Councillor Mosher noted that she is not adverse to a smaller Council, however, resident expectations may make it difficult. Councillor Mosher suggested going back to residents to determine if they would want a staff member handling their concerns rather than their Councillor. Councillor Mosher went on to point out that a number of items which appear on the Council agenda could be dealt with at Community Council or by the Executive Management Team during the review of the agenda.

Councillor Mosher indicated that she believed the Councillor position must be a full time position noting that certain Councillors serve on more committees than others. She further indicated if Council is to be reduced and Council to work on policy issues,

the role of elected persons in handling constituent concerns must change. Councillor Mosher further indicated that Community Council boundaries must be considered under a reduced Council and noted that her preference would be for four (4) Community Councils of five (5) Councillors.

Councillor Blumenthal agreed with Councillor Mosher noting that he would prefer to deal directly with his residents. He noted that Community Councils should be dealing with local issues leaving Regional Council to deal with more broad based issues. He went on to indicate that the Committee had not received the consultation they expected and suggested more public input was needed.

Councillor Dalrymple noted that Community Council works very well and is much more people centred than Regional Council. He cautioned that when determining Community Council boundaries consideration should be given to driving distances and lumping urban, rural and suburban Districts together. He expressed concern that under the present system two Councillors served on two Community Councils and cautioned that this be avoided.

Councillor Dalrymple went on to note that unlike the previous two speakers, he believed he had heard and seen enough to support a slightly smaller Council. He noted that he supports more powers to Community Council and indicated that new District boundaries should ensure that all Districts have close to the same population.

Councillor Lund indicated that he was not adverse to reducing Council, however, staff and Council should be cognizant of the impact of drastic change to boundaries on residents. He suggested that boundary changes would be more upsetting than a reduction in Councillors.

Following a further brief discussion the **MOTION WAS PUT AND PASSED.**

MOVED by Councillor Rankin, seconded by Councillor Lund that Halifax Regional Council be reduced to 19 Councillors.

Councillor Rankin referred to the Population and Voter Counts spreadsheet distributed to members of Council at the April 30, 2010 Environics presentation and noted the total number of voters will be what the UARB will consider in its decision. Referring to the 2012 projection, Councillor Rankin indicated that if the number of Councillors is recast to 19 the total population per District would be approximately 17,000. Councillor Rankin pointed out that there are seven (7) Districts already with that population or greater.

Councillor Rankin went on to note that when setting Councillor salaries, the cities used for comparison were not within Nova Scotia. The basis for determining those salaries was similar jobs and a population of approximately 25,000 per seat. The Councillor noted that the average number of seats in those cities is 15. Councillor Rankin then went on to note that he had chosen 19 because it was half way between the 15 seats that he would prefer and the existing 23 seats. Concluding his remarks, Councillor

Rankin indicated that he believed a Council of 19 would be more conducive to policy making and provide opportunities for a stronger team. He noted that he did not believe that 20 or above would be seen as a change.

Councillor Mosher noted that the Committee had already given direction to staff to focus on 18 seats and above. She went on to indicate that Councillor salaries were established by an independent arms length Committee and the comparison to the benchmark cities was not apples to apples (i.e. Compensation for Committees, how many staff support Councillors, etc.). The Councillor went on to indicate that she did not agree with the justification for 19 noting that a 20 member Council could be more effective and provide for four (4) Community Councils of five (5) members. Councillor Mosher indicated she would not support 19, but be happy to bring a motion reducing the number of Councillors to 20.

Councillor Dalrymple noted that 20 Districts was within the 10%+/- change directed. He noted that he was comfortable with four (4) Community Councils of five (5) members.

Councillor Blumenthal noted that most discussions regarding the size of Council do not consider the geography of HRM. HRM encompasses a large and diverse geographic area which can cause challenges. Councillor Blumenthal noted that she would not support 19, but was willing to support 20.

MOTION DEFEATED.

MOVED by Councillor Mosher, seconded by Councillor Dalrymple that Halifax Regional Council be reduced to 20 Councillors plus the Mayor with four Community Councils made up of five Districts.

Councillor Mosher noted that a reduction to Council will impact HRM's representation at UNSM, where HRM is already under represented based on population. Councillor Mosher noted that there are a number of small communities with disproportionate number of Councillor representatives (i.e. for a town of 350, 5 Councillors). She suggested that the Province should be urged to undertake more amalgamations.

Councillor Lund noted that he has served on a number of Boards of Directors and 15-16 members is the most effective number. Councillor Lund noted, however, that he would support 20.

In response to a request from Councillor Outhit to speak, the following motion was placed:

MOVED by Councillor Rankin, seconded by Councillor Lund that Councillor Outhit be permitted to speak to this matter. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Councillor Outhit noted that reference had been made to HRM having fewer votes on UNSM with this proposed reduction and requested clarification of the UNSM role in HRM policy.

Ms. Mary Ellen Donovan, Municipal Solicitor, indicated that UNSM has no role with regard to HRM policy issues.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

MOVED by Councillor Mosher, seconded by Councillor Blumenthal that the Governance and District Boundary Review Committee recommend that HRM Councillor positions be deemed full time.

Ms. Donovan indicated that it was not legally possible to deem Councillor's positions to be full time as the Charter does not require the positions to be full time.

Given the Solicitor's ruling, **the Chair declared the motion to be out of order.**

5. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS

5.1 Correspondence - None

5.2 Petitions - None

5.3 Presentations - None

6. REPORTS

6.1 Overview of Possible Community Council Boundaries

This matter will be considered at the next meeting of the Committee,

7. ADDED ITEMS - None

8. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting is to be determined.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at approximately 12:45 p.m.

Sherrill Murphy
Deputy Clerk