

Halifax Regional Municipality

HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL

June 6, 1996

PRESENT:

Deputy Mayor Jack Greenough

Councillors: Bill Dooks

Gordon R. Snow

Ron Cooper

Harry McInroy

Condo Sarto

Clint Schofield

John Cunningham

Jerry Blumenthal

Larry Uteck

Howard Epstein

Russell Walker

Bill Stone

Ron Hanson

Barry Barnett

Bob Harvey

Peter Kelly

Reg Rankin

Jack Mitchell

Absent with Regrets:

Mayor Walter Fitzgerald

Councillors: David Hendsbee

Bruce Hetherington

Graham L. Downey

Stephen Adams

STAFF MEMBERS:

Chief Vince MacDonald, Acting Chief Administrative Officer

Mr. Larry Corrigan, Commissioner, Corporate Services

Ms. Vi Carmichael, Municipal Clerk

Ms. Patti Halliday, Assistant Municipal Clerk

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Deputy Mayor Greenough called the meeting to order.

1.0 CAPITAL BUDGET DISCUSSIONS

Deputy Mayor Greenough reported that requests have been made by the Library, Water Commission and the Spring Garden Road Merchants to make presentations at tomorrow's Council meeting regarding the Capital Budget.

MOVED by Councillors Uteck and Blumenthal that the Library, Water Commission and Spring Garden Road Merchants be allowed to make presentations at tomorrow's meeting.

Discussion followed regarding the amount of time that should be permitted for each of these groups to make their presentation. Councillor Barnet suggested that each group be restricted to five minutes. Councillor Snow felt that this was an important part of the budget process and five minutes was not long enough. Councillor Cooper agreed with Councillor Snow. Councillor Sarto requested if written submissions were available from these groups, they should be distributed to Council members before the meeting. Councillor Barnet added he was concerned by allowing these presentations it could result in many more requests to make presentations and thus slow down the budget process considerably.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Councillor Epstein inquired about a missing capital budget item of \$140,000 to \$150,000 for the Chebucto Road School. He requested that staff find this item and inform him what, if anything, has become of it.

Deputy Mayor Greenough asked Chief MacDonald, Acting CAO, to make some opening comments.

Chief MacDonald reported that, as a result of yesterday's meeting, staff have been trying to put a document together on the initial breakdown of East, West, Central and General as far as where monies are noted in the proposed Capital Budget. This information was made available later in the meeting.

It was agreed that the budget document would be reviewed section by section by Council. Councillor Epstein made a general remark with respect to distribution equity. He felt it was clear that something has to happen in each District. Unless the residents see reasonable steps being taken, they will not be happy. He felt the budget document was out of line of a fair

distribution and stated that other projects need to be found in his District. Chief MacDonald replied that as Council moves through the document, there may be the opportunity to ask individual departments what the criteria was that they adopted in making the selection of projects. If it did not become apparent through the process, then it can be addressed during the summation of the document.

Councillor Barnet expressed concern with the inclusion of the Sackville Multipurpose Facility (Buildings, Community Services, Priority Item #1) in the Capital Budget as these are funds held by the community in trust and have no Capital Budget impact on HRM. Councillor Barnet felt by including this item it appears they are spending more money than is actually being spent. Commissioner Corrigan replied this is an extremely significant project that is being undertaken by HRM, notwithstanding the funding. It has been included in the Capital Budget because the formula used to determine the Capital Budget included cost sharing. Commissioner Corrigan added the net budget is \$54 million, and the debt forecasting was based on the net amount. Councillor Barnet noted there are a number of other projects funded from the same trust fund that do not appear on this document.

Councillor Hanson expressed concern with the urgency to get on with the budget process and the effect delaying it will have on the tendering process. Deputy Mayor Greenough added the construction industry is anxiously awaiting the approval of the Capital Budget as they have already lost two or three months of the construction season and cannot afford further delays.

Councillor Schofield inquired about the \$4.9 million for Dartmouth Cove shown in the Work -in-Progress. Commissioner Corrigan replied this is being paid out of the Pollution Control Funds which is included in the Reserves.

Councillor Schofield noted Chocolate Lake is mentioned several times in the Community Services Section of Buildings. Councillor Schofield added that the lease has expired. He asked if this money is to be spent on land where the lease has expired. Commissioner Corrigan stated staff will check this out.

In response to a question from Councillor Epstein regarding the item Repair Museum Roof (Buildings, Police Services, Priority Item #3), Deputy Chief McKinnon replied the museum is located on the lower portion of the Halifax Police Station. Although the space is currently occupied as a museum, it is prime office space. There have been leaks from the upper deck level for some time which has been also causing some fungus.

In response to a question from Councillor Sarto, Commissioner Greene defined the core area to include Eastern Passage, Cole Harbour, Bedford, Sackville, Halifax and Dartmouth.

Commissioner Greene explained the purpose of the Station Relocation Study. Councillor Cooper inquired as to how response times would be affected by any changes made in location of stations. Commissioner Greene replied the four minute response time could be improved from 73 percent of the municipality up to 81 percent. The relocation of stations would be a ten year plan that would come back to Council.

Councillor Cooper expressed concern with the rush to approve the Capital Budget. He did not feel Council should be put in a position to decide on a budget by tomorrow night. Councillor Cooper felt they should not be pressured by contractors to rush through the process, and as a result, Council may not do a proper job in reviewing the document. Deputy Mayor Greenough noted that it was not so much contractors, rather it was those who work for the contractors who might be out of jobs if this process is not completed with some expedition.

Councillor Stone stated he had great concern with the priority rating of the Community Services (Library) section, specifically the Thomas Raddall Library. It was explained that this was in a category by itself and not rated against the main recreation items. Councillor Stone noted that the library does not have the same kind of section as the museums and historic sites. He asked why the Thomas Raddall Library is not included as a priority in this budget. Ms. Susan McLean, Acting Director, Halifax Regional Library, replied that the priorities have changed slightly from what they submitted. In response to further questions from Councillor Stone, Ms. McLean made the following points:

- ! The Thomas Raddall Library is one of their top priorities.
- ! Some planning work was done on it last year. The initial conceptual drawings were completed for the second floor.
- ! The Thomas Raddall Library has been a priority with the Library for the last three or four years. It was delayed once already due to structural problems at the Captain William Spry Library.
- ! The owner of the building has been holding off renting the space that was going to be part of the expansion.
- ! This branch was anticipated to reach a maximum of 300,000 circulation and is now at 460,000 circulation. It is the busiest branch in Atlantic Canada and is very popular.
- ! Space for expansion to the second floor may be lost if the project does not go forward this year.

MOVED by Councillor Stone that staff reconsider the Thomas Raddall Library Services (Buildings, Community Services (Library), Priority Item 5(95).

There was no seconder to the motion.

On a **POINT OF INFORMATION**, Councillor Blumenthal noted that Council will be hearing a presentation from the Library Board tomorrow. Councillor Greenough added that Council has not heard from HRM staff yet, only Library staff. Councillor Stone stated he will come back to this item at a later time.

In response to a question from Councillor Epstein, Ms. McLean stated the library system would be capable of handing this project if it were moved to this year's Capital Budget.

In response to a question from Councillor Schofield, Mr. Dennis Huck, Superintendent of Facilities, Sackville Sports Stadium, explained what was included in the Sackville Multipurpose Facility (Buildings, Community Services, Priority Item #1).

Councillor Schofield asked if there was an opportunity for some cost recovery in the Dartmouth Sportsplex Roof Repair (Buildings, Community Services, Priority Item #54.) Commissioner Corrigan replied this funding would come out of the HRM budget and there is no direct charge back to the operations of the Sportsplex. Councillor Schofield inquired if the funding for the Wall of Honor will be coming out of the HRM budget and offered to follow up on this.

(Councillors Kelly and Dooks arrived at 4:00 p.m.)

Regarding the Lakeside Recreation Centre (Buildings, Community Services, Priority Item #79), Councillor Rankin requested \$40,000 be added for a total of \$100,000 to allow infrastructure money to be accessed from the Province to accommodate design work for the Lakeside Recreation Centre. The Province has stated they will give \$50,000 towards this project if the HRM comes up with \$100,000. There is currently \$60,000 in an HRM account for this project.

Moved by Councillors Rankin and Mitchell that \$40,000 be added to the Lakeside Recreation Centre (Buildings, Community Services, Priority Item #79) to accommodate the design work.

Discussion followed on what process Council should follow to add items to the budget. Deputy Mayor Greenough suggested using a "wish list" to keep track of items that Councillors wish to have reconsidered for priority items in the Capital Budget. Items on the "wish list" will be reconsidered by Council for addition at the end of the Capital Budget discussion process. After a brief discussion of this suggestion, the process was generally agreed to by Council.

No vote was taken on the motion.

MOVED by Councillors Cunningham and Epstein that the \$40,000 to be added to the Lakeside Recreation Centre (Buildings, Community Services, Priority Item #79) to accommodate the design work, be referred to the “wish list.”

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

In reviewing the Facility Privatization Study (Buildings, Community Services, Priority Item #55), Councillor Barnet stated this should be in the Operations Budget.

MOVED by Councillors Barnet and Epstein that \$30,000 for Facility Privatization Study (Buildings, Community Services, Priority Item #55) be referred to the Operating Budget.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

In response to a question from Councillor Cooper asking what the \$75,000 for LeBrun Centre (Buildings, Community Services, Priority Item #22) was for, Mr. Bob Nauss, Superintendent of Facilities, LeBrun Centre, replied that it was the third phase of a three year program. The first two phases were to do the arena boards. The third phase is to complete renovations to the public washrooms and dressing room areas, repair the outdoor siding and the front entrance. Councillor Cooper asked for explanations of the next two years budgeted amounts. Mr. Nauss replied these are for the roof area and the Life Cycle.

Funds for the Chocolate Lake Centre (Buildings, Community Services, Priority Item #21) were also detailed in response to questions from Councillor Cooper. The Chocolate Lake Centre funding is for upgrading of the parking lot, access to the building and renovations to the weight room.

Councillor Dooks inquired where the plans to expand the Musquodoboit Harbour Library fit into this plan. Ms. McLean replied that this project is moving ahead and there is capital funding, but it is not under the Building Section of the Capital Budget document.

Responding to an earlier question from Councillor Blumenthal regarding Storage Containers (Buildings, Corporate Services, Priority Item #1), Commissioner Corrigan stated these were required due to a storage shortage in the Halifax Compound for inventory. The storage containers will be used for storage of summer inventory such as lawnmowers, grass cutters, clippers, etc.

Councillor Harvey inquired about the renovations to former Halifax City Hall. Commissioner Corrigan noted this item is in the Property Development section of the document.

With respect to some safety and liability issues, Community Services staff requested that the following two items be added to the proposed Capital Budget:

- ! Funding for repairs to the siding at the Centennial Pool in the amount of \$60,000.
- ! Funding for an additional \$32,000 for the Centennial Arena

Moved by Councillors Walker and Sarto that \$60,000 for repairs to the Centennial Pool siding (Buildings, Community Services) be added to the “wish list.”

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Moved by Councillors Kelly and Walker that an additional \$32,000 to be added to the Centennial Arena (Buildings, Community Services) be added to the “wish list.”

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

In response to questions from Councillor Uteck regarding the Public Gardens Lodge Restoration (Buildings, Regional Operations, Priority Item #24), Mr. Quinn stated that this is the canteen building. The funding this year is to make the building structurally sound. Next year the funding will be used to make some renovations to the building based on direction from Council. With regards to cost sharing, the application with the Heritage Branch of the Canadian Parks Service has been put on hold until the revised rules have been established. Some other groups are being approached, such as the Halifax Foundation, regarding possible cost sharing but nothing has been confirmed.

Councillor Barnet inquired why the Sign Shop Upgrade (Buildings, Regional Operations, Priority Item #35) was put into the Building Section of the Capital Budget. Councillor Barnet suggested this item be moved to Equipment. Mr. Quinn replied that this item was submitted along with a number of other projects and the new budget system placed it in the Building Section. However, he agreed that it should probably be under Equipment.

Councillor Schofield suggested that Electronic Gas Sensors (Buildings, Regional Operations, Priority Item #2) be moved to Equipment as well.

Discussion followed regarding the Bus Shelter Program (Buildings, Regional Operations, Priority Item #2) and several Councillors expressed concern that this amount was not

adequate. Mr. Brian Smith noted that they keep a list of requests for bus shelter and this list will have to be revamped for the new municipality.

MOVED by Councillors Epstein and Schofield that an additional \$10,000 be added to the Bus Shelter Program (Buildings, Regional Operations, Priority Item #2).

No vote was taken on this motion.

MOVED by Councillors Hanson and Blumenthal that the motion be amended to change the amount to be added to the Bus Shelter Program (Buildings, Regional Operations, Priority Item #2) to an additional \$50,000 and that this be added to the "wish list."

Councillor Cooper asked Mr. Smith if they took into account what would be needed to bring the "County" area up to the standard of the rest of the area with respect to bus shelters. Mr. Smith replied that this item now looks like a general rate item and additional area rated bus shelters will be obtained. Councillor Cooper asked Mr. Smith if he will be making a recommendation as to where these additional shelters will be placed. Mr. Smith replied they would like to do this through Community Councils or the individual Councillors.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

In regards to a question from Councillor Sarto regarding street signs, Mr. Quinn replied they have had studies of different sign materials and are starting a program of increasing the quality of signs using three grades of sheeting. The highest grade will be used for key signs such as stop signs and the lowest grade will be used for less essential signs.

Councillor Blumenthal asked Mr. Quinn about the Roof, Works Division (Buildings, Regional Operations, Priority Item #39). Mr. Quinn replied that this is the last major section and is the third year of a three year program.

Councillor Blumenthal expressed concern with this item being identified as Halifax North. Mr. Quinn replied that there was staff discussion relating to this as there were projects that were of a general administrative nature. Some staff felt that assigning them to a particular area, when they actually had a regional application, might lead to some interpretation problems.

Councillor Dooks asked if signs in the districts of the outer core area will be the responsibility of the HRM or will they still fall under the jurisdiction of the Provincial government. Mr. Quinn replied that signs in the rural areas outside of the core area will be the responsibility of DOTC,

assuming the agreement is completed. All signage within the core area, with the exception of the 100 Series roads, will be the responsibility of the HRM.

Councillor Mitchell asked if the Salt Storage Shed - Bayers Lake Industrial Park (Buildings, Regional Operations, Priority Item #32) and the Salt/Sand Storage Facility - Woodside Industrial (Buildings, Regional Operations, Priority Item #33) are for the core area or the rural area and if one could be built this year and the other next year. Mr. Quinn replied that the current storage facilities for the HRM are located at the extreme ends of the service area. They could be built a year apart, but there would be an operational cost to split them.

Councillor Snow stated there should be a policy regarding the uniformity of the size of signs that can be used on private roads. Mr. Quinn replied that they will contact the provincial authority regarding having signs made for these roads and bring the issue back to Council for direction.

In response to a question from Councillor Barnet, Commissioner Spencer explained the following two items:

- ! Bench Marking (Community Development, Policy and Planning, Priority Item #1)
- ! Data Acquisition (Community Development, Policy and Planning, Priority item #2)

After Commissioner Spencer's explanation, Councillor Barnet made the following motion.

MOVED by Councillor Barnet that the following items be referred to Operations: Bench Marking (Community Development, Policy and Planning, Priority Item #1); and, Data Acquisition (Community Development, Policy and Planning, Priority item #2.)

Commissioner Spencer explained these two items would be an investment piece in their first year of operation. Any equipment involved in these items would be minor amounts. Commissioner Corrigan also reiterated his definition of capital in the summary part of the Capital Budget document.

Based on this information, Councillor Barnet withdrew his motion.

In response to a question from Councillor Barnet regarding Commercial Area Destination Signage (Community Development, Community Services, Priority Item #4), it was explained that this was a project which originated in the former City of Halifax. The intent now is to move it into the HRM and look at all commercial districts.

Councillor Schofield expressed concern that there are no projects identified for the former municipalities of Dartmouth, Bedford or the County in the Community Development, Community Services Section. In response, Mr. Campbell noted there are items in other sections the Capital Budget for these areas. The Dartmouth BIDC was formed just before amalgamation and did not have enough time to put forward any proposals for Community Development. The other municipalities mentioned by Councillor Schofield do not have BIDCs at this time.

Councillor Kelly inquired if there was any background information available on the items in the Capital Budget. He stated he would like to have a paragraph on each item explaining what they are doing and why they are doing it. Councillor Kelly stated the backup documentation was just as important as the figures. Commissioner Corrigan replied that from the staff's point of view the document is viewed as broad as it gives the "big picture." Councillor Kelly added there is not enough information for Council to do a proper job and have an in-depth look at the budget. Commissioner Corrigan replied that it is possible to give Council any amount of information that they request.

MOVED by Councillors Kelly and Barnet that staff provide a brief synopsis on the backup documentation, line by line of the Capital Budget, with respect to the five W's (who, why, what, when, where).

In discussing the motion, some Councillors expressed concern with rushing through the budget process. Councillor Hanson suggested if Councillors contacted staff directly regarding issues they have concerns about, it would save time in the budget process.

As a result of several inquiries from Council as to the time frame required to provide the information being requested in the motion, Commissioner Corrigan replied that the information exists but staff would have to go back to their Working Papers to provide it in the form Council is requesting. The time required to do this would depend on how much detail Council wants.

MOTION PUT AND DEFEATED.

Councillor Kelly asked if copies of the Working Papers could be provided to the Councillors who wish to have them. By a show of hands, the following Councillors indicated a desire to receive copies of the Working Papers: Reg Rankin, Peter Kelly, Barry Barnet, Bill Stone, Russell Walker, Howard Epstein, Jerry Blumenthal and Ron Cooper.

In conclusion, staff advised that the requested information will be sent to the Councillors' Office tomorrow morning.

Councillor Blumenthal asked if the Gottingen Street 3 Year Action Plan (Community Development, Community Services, Priority Item #2) is to revitalize the street. Mr. Campbell replied that the money is to work on regional infrastructure that is within the area to include working on the Cunard Street Park, some parking signage, some street trees, etc.

Councillor Dooks asked if the rural areas were considered for commercial signage as they do not fit the DOTC rules for commercial signage. Mr. Campbell replied, since amalgamation, they have not predetermined the areas that they should identify. He agreed there are some commercial areas in the rural districts that may need signage, and they will be working closely with Regional Operations and the DOTC on this issue. Councillor Dooks requested that, if possible, the process could be sped up by at least identifying a couple of business areas in the rural districts this year.

In response to a question from Councillor Kelly, Mr. Campbell replied that Downtown Mainstreet (Community Development, Community Services, Priority Item #1) includes street furniture improvements such as benches, litter bins and bicycle racks for downtown Halifax, the Spring Garden Road area and Gottingen Street as well. Councillor Kelly asked if this will be expanded to other areas. Mr. Campbell replied if other BIDs are formed this could occur; or, if regional staff determines there is a need, they could come forward in future capital budgets.

Deputy Police Chief McKinnon reviewed the equipment items for the Police Services. Councillor Hanson stated the Replacement of the A/C Chiller (Equipment, Police Services, Priority Item #1) is a very important item that should be approved as soon as possible.

MOVED by Councillor Hanson that the Replacement of the A/C Chiller (Equipment, Police Services, Priority Item #1) be approved as quickly as possible.

Deputy Mayor Greenough stated that this motion was inappropriate at this point in time. He suggested that if the Capital Budget is not approved in the next few days then this motion could be made. Councillor Hanson was in agreement with his suggestion.

Councillor Hanson withdrew his motion.

A staff report on the 1996/97 Proposed Capital Budget by Area was distributed to members of Council. Ms. Marlene Morrison gave a five minute presentation of this document.

MOVED by Councillors Sarto and Cooper that the meeting adjourn.

Motion put and passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Vi Carmichael
Municipal Clerk