

**HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
MINUTES
APRIL 11, 2001**

PRESENT: Mayor Peter J. Kelly
Deputy Mayor Jerry Blumenthal
Councillors: Steve Streach
Gary Hines
Ron Cooper
Harry McInroy
Brian Warshick
Condo Sarto
Bruce Hetherington
Jim Smith
John Cunningham
Dawn Sloane
Sue Uteck
Sheila Fougere
Russell Walker
Diana Whalen
Linda Mosher
Stephen D. Adams
Brad Johns
Robert P. Harvey
Len Goucher
Gary Meade

STAFF: Mr. Ken Meech, Chief Administrative Officer
Mr. George McLellan, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
Mr. Dan English, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
Mr. Wayne Anstey, Municipal Solicitor
Ms. Sandra Shute, Assistant Municipal Clerk

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1. **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 9:15 a.m. in the Council Chambers at 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax.

2. **PRESENTATION ON THE PROPOSED 2001/02 BUDGET AND THE RECOMMENDED RESPONSE TO COUNCIL'S PARKING LOT WISH LIST**

The following information was before Council:

- 2001/02 Budget Parking Lot to April 6, 2001
- Parking Lot Wish List and Recommendations re 2001/02 Budget

Mr. George McLellan, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer reviewed the overall principles regarding the 2001/02 budget as follows:

- No change in proposed debt financing as per the multi-year financial strategy.
- No change in the proposed tax rate, i.e. a drop in last year's rate of 1.3%.
- Caution with respect to increasing commitment for on-going expenditures in subsequent years.
- Consideration of substituting for lower priority items in proposed budgets.

Mr. McLellan advised that staff has taken a corporate view with regard to additions from the parking lot, not specific to any area. As well, knowing there is uncertainty with regard to the equalization proposal, staff looked very closely at leverage in terms of operating costs.

With regard to the review of the overall budget, Mr. McLellan advised that staff had:

- Re-examined assumptions, new knowledge of requirements.
- Issue of snow and ice reserve of \$1.2 million which has now been depleted. Staff would like to put \$1.2 million into the reserve from the parking lot over and above the recommendation. This also includes \$200,000 relating to some issues regarding sidewalk snow which were raised during discussions.
- Expenditures reduced by \$1,364,000 - changes in responsibilities for providing the mandatory education commitment.
- Revenues reduced by \$512,000.

This leaves a net increase in capacity of \$851,000 for consideration by Council.

Mr. McLellan then outlined the recommended allocations of:

\$200,000	Street patching
\$275,000	Recreation
\$150,000	Leaf pickup
\$126,000	Organizational support
\$100,000	Transit

Mr. McLellan then explained further what the above allocations would cover. This information can be found as part of the April 11, 2001 submission from staff which was circulated at the meeting.

In conclusion, Mr. McLellan stated staff feels that the principles have been adhered to as outlined and the commitment on the following year's budget has been minimized as much as possible at \$276,000 as a result of the recommendations.

Mayor Kelly asked if the remainder of the parking lot items would be forwarded to staff for next year's review and on what basis.

Mr. McLellan advised that responses have been received from staff on all parking lot issues. Staff would look at them as priority items for next year; however, new priorities could arise in the interim.

Deputy Mayor Blumenthal pointed out that Council had made a promise to the residents regarding the 1.3% and should keep that promise.

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Blumenthal, seconded by Councillor Sloane to recommend approval to Regional Council of the recommendation from staff with regard to the \$851,000 allocation.

Deputy Mayor Blumenthal said he was suggesting, with this motion, that a committee could be set up regarding the items in the parking lot to begin consideration of these early in preparation of next year's budget.

A number of Councillors then spoke in support of the motion but, however, some of those asked for input from staff on items not recommended at this time. The following detail outlines the responses from staff on the issues raised:

- Councillor Goucher - re playground development on Oceanview Drive and upgrade of existing tennis courts to get them in playable shape

There is a \$275,000 allocation recommended for Recreation. Some of this amount would be remaining and staff will be talking to Councillors regarding their requests and considering priorities.

- Councillor Harvey re zamboni.

A machine will be reallocated for the summer by taking a relatively new machine from Devonshire which will allow time to recondition the current zamboni.

- Councillor Johns - re Gloria Avenue playground upgrade.

Gloria Avenue was recognized as a needed facility, like all the other playground requests. Staff's recommendations are before Council for consideration.

- Councillor Walker - request for the budget process to start earlier, preferably by November

Regional Council already agreed to start the process sooner and also involve the public with regard to next year's budget.

- Councillor Sarto - re basketball court for Main Street playground.

It costs \$1,500 for a basketball hoop which meets HRM's standard. It was recommended that \$3,500 go through District Capital.

- Councillor Meade - re no new sidewalks, no new paving, no traffic/road improvements, no storm sewers, no sanitary sewers.

MOVED by Councillor Meade, seconded by Councillor Johns to amend the motion to have \$100,000 for recreation capital projects for District 23, with this amount to be taken out of Street Patching.

After discussion on the amendment, Mayor Kelly called for the question on the amendment.

AMENDMENT DEFEATED.

- Councillor Sloane - re bus shelter advertising. Could Mediacom be requested to advertise on bus shelter and tear down billboards.

Staff could approach Mediacom with a request to put more advertising bus shelters in. The contract with Mediacom requires that existing advertising space be 80% used before they will install any additional advertising shelters. They might not be receptive to the suggestion regarding the billboards, however.

- Councillor Warshick - willing to withdraw the parking lot item - \$418,000 for the municipal campground but this should be kept in mind for next year. Not one single

new field in the proposal. Clarification sought re proposal that might come forward to lease to own an artificial field.

There were no new fields; therefore, none shown in the capital budget. Re artificial field, lease to own, this would have to come back to Regional Council for consideration within the resources available.

Closing the debate, Deputy Mayor Blumenthal stated that Council is making sure it is fiscally responsible to the residents. 1.3% will not be touched, which was a start.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

A report from the Board of Police Commissioners dated April 10, 2001 was before Council.

MOVED by Councillor Harvey, seconded by Councillor Hetherington to recommend that Regional Council receive the recommendation of the Police Commission and make it a record of this meeting, with the proviso that the word "Review" in the recommendation contained in the report from the Board of Police Commissioners dated April 10, 2001 be changed to "Study". MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

MOVED by Councillor Hetherington, seconded by Councillor Uteck to recommend to Regional Council approval of the Capital and Operating Budget at the April 17, 2001 Regional Council meeting with the reduction of 1.3% in the tax rate and to include the \$851,000 allocation.

Councillor Fougere referred to the Community Projects budget re details on wages, salaries and stipends, travel costs and revenue formulas. She was not satisfied with the information provided as it does not break anything out in dollar amounts. Explanations provided in the March 23 report are the same as the base budget figures.

Mayor Kelly directed that the information requested be provided by the end of the week.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Mr. Meech thanked not only Mr. McLellan and the Finance group but, as well, all the other Directors and Managers of various departments who worked on the budget process.

Mayor Kelly also thanked Council and staff for a job well done.

3. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

Sandra M. Shute
Assistant Municipal Clerk