

# HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

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## HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES JUNE 5, 2001

**PRESENT:** Mayor Peter Kelly  
Deputy Mayor Gerry Blumenthal  
Councillors: Steve Streach  
Gary Hines  
Keith Colwell  
Ron Cooper  
Harry McInroy  
Brian Warshick  
Condo Sarto  
Bruce Hetherington  
Jim Smith  
John Cunningham  
Dawn Sloane  
Sue Uteck  
Sheila Fougere  
Diana Whalen  
Linda Mosher  
Stephen Adams  
Brad Johns  
Robert P. Harvey  
Len Goucher  
Reg Rankin  
Gary G. Meade

**ABSENT**  
**WITH REGRETS:** Councillor Russell Walker

**STAFF:** Mr. Ken Meech, Chief Administrative Officer  
Mr. Wayne Anstey, Municipal Solicitor  
Ms. Vi Carmichael, Municipal Clerk  
Ms. Sherrill Murphy, Assistant Municipal Clerk

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

1.	APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES - MAY 15, 2001 .....	3
2.	APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS AND APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS .....	3
3.	INTERIM REPORT - SUPPLEMENTARY EDUCATION FUNDING TASK FORCE & PRESENTATIONS - HALIFAX REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD & CONSEIL SCOLAIRE ACADIAN PROVINCIAL (CSAP) .....	3

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 p.m.

**1. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES - MAY 15, 2001**

**MOVED by Councillor Hetherington, seconded by Councillor Goucher that the minutes of May 15, 2001 be approved as distributed. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

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

Ms. Vi Carmichael advised that advised that item 4, Provincial Equalization Proposal was being deferred to the Committee of the Whole Council meeting to be held on June 12, 2001.

**The agenda, as amended, was approved.**

**3. INTERIM REPORT - SUPPLEMENTARY EDUCATION FUNDING TASK FORCE & PRESENTATIONS - HALIFAX REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD & CONSEIL SCOLAIRE ACADIAN PROVINCIAL (CSAP)**

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

Councillor Johns declared a possible conflict of interest noting that he was a Library Technician on leave from the Halifax Regional School Board and excused himself from the meeting.

- A report dated May 17, 2001 submitted by Mayor Peter Kelly, Chairman, Task Force on Education Funding, was before Council for consideration. Staff provided a document entitled Education Rates for 2001-2002 with regard to the Task Force recommendation
- Correspondence dated June 4, 2001 to His Worship Mayor Peter Kelly from Francois Marineau, President Conseil Comunaire was distributed to the Council.
- Correspondence dated June 5, 2001 copied to Mayor Peter Kelly from Sharon Beasely, Chair, Chebucto Heights School to Carolyn McFarlene, Member, HSRB, District 5 re supplementary funding.

**1) Presentation - Halifax Regional School Board**

Ms. Sandra Everett, Chair, Halifax Regional School Board (HRSB), addressed the Committee of the Whole introducing Ms. Valerie McLeod and Mr. Richard Morris who would be presenting on behalf of the Board. Ms. Everett noted that a copy of the Halifax Regional

School Board presentation had been distributed to all members of Council.

Ms. McLeod addressed the Committee thanking Council for the opportunity to present and introducing her assistants Mr. John Stewart, Ms. Carmelita Rowe, Principal of Rockingham Elementary and Ms. Janet Gagnier, a parent of a student at Rockingham Elementary.

Ms. McLeod indicated that as Supervisor of Resourcing and with her 16 years of teaching at high school, she was able to say with sincerity that supplementary funding is required. Referring to the graph entitled Halifax Regional School Board General Fund Expenditures included with the presentation, Ms. McLeod briefly reviewed the breakdown of expenditures noting that the vast majority of general fund expenditures are in the School Services area (teachers, programming, materials, etc.). Ms. McLeod indicated that the expenditure of general funds provided a base line education to students within HRM, however, HRSB believes that the students of HRM can do better than the base line.

Ms. McLeod, with the assistance of Mr. Stewart, utilized over head projection and presented HRSB's position regarding supplementary funding. The presentation included the following points:

- Three areas receiving the largest share of supplementary funding are Enhancement to the Core Curriculum, Enhancement of Special Education, Enhancement Activities. Supplementary funding is applied after HRSB system standard has been resourced
- Astral Drive Junior High, the largest HRSB Junior High, used supplementary funding for a library technician
- Eastern Shore District High Family used their supplementary funding to provide Student Services Supports: 80% of Full Time Social Worker and Two Full Time Resource Teachers
- As an example of 2001-2002 needs: In area A (½ Dartmouth and Eastern Shore area) there are 25 significant high needs students entering while only 9 significant high needs students are leaving

A copy of Ms. McLeod's presentation is on file with the Clerk's office.

Ms. Carmelita Rowe, Principal Rockingham Elementary School, briefly addressed Council outlining the use supplementary funding was put to at Rockingham Elementary School and to express her support for supplementary funding. A copy of Ms. Rowe's presentation is on file with the Clerk.

Ms. Janet Gagnier, Chair of the Parent School Association at Rockingham Elementary, addressed Council in support of supplementary funding. Recognizing the controversial nature of supplementary funding, Ms. Gagnier urged Council to remember that a plebiscite resulted

in the majority of HRM citizens voting in favour of supplementary funding. A copy of Ms. Gagnier's presentation is on file with the Clerk.

Ms. McLeod and Mr. Morris, Chief Financial Officer for HRSB, then responded to questions from members of Council.

In response to a question from Councillor Hetherington regarding whether a pie chart similar to the one provided on the general fund was available for supplementary funding, Ms. McLeod indicated that she did not have this pie chart available at this time, but would make it available to Council.

Councillor Uteck thanked the Board and staff for attending today's meeting and noted that one area of significant discussion at the Task Force on Education Funding was the development of performance measurements around the expenditure of supplementary funding. She went on to indicate that she was pleased to have identified the areas in which supplementary funding was spent in the previous year, however, expressed concern that supplementary funding was being used to reduce class size and to maintain equipment. She also expressed concern regarding the level of supplementary funding involved in enhancing the Special Needs Program. Councillor Uteck indicated that these were areas which the Task Force must consider during their discussions.

Council directed further questions to the HRSB regarding the impact of supplementary funding on the core program. Ms. McLeod, explaining the process by which supplementary funding is allocated, noted that approval by the Board of areas for enhancement would come as a recommendation of staff. She went on to describe that staff met with the Principals of schools to review the needs of their particular schools. Included in this discussion with the Principals is what is considered to be globally important to education. Ms. McLeod indicated that after receiving this information, staff make a presentation to senior staff after which a recommendation goes to the Board for decision on areas to be improved. Ms. McLeod indicated that subsequent to approval, she is responsible to ensure that the appropriate dollars are allocated, the staff in place and the program followed. Financial accounting for these dollars is achieved through Mr. Morris's department.

In response to a question from Deputy Mayor Blumenthal regarding whether it would be cheaper for HRM to administer the supplementary funding than HRSB, Mr. Meech indicated that he did not believe that analysis had been done.

Providing background to this matter, Mr. McLellan indicated that the intent was to try to have a more in depth look at this aspect of the HRSB budget. Mr. McLellan further noted that he would anticipate that this component of supplementary funding would be considered by the Task Force on Education Funding.

Responding to a question from Councillor Goucher regarding the allocation of mandatory municipal funding, Mr. McLellan indicated that HRM did not receive back the total dollars contributed (\$59.6 million). Mr. McLellan indicated that the per student average of this funding was less in HRM than in other areas.

Councillor Goucher likened this to educational equalization and suggested that if HRM received back all of the mandatory municipal funding which it contributed there would be probably be \$2 to \$3 million more education funding available.

Councillor Cooper requested a report from HRSB outlining the cost of providing the same level of programming in music and French in the former County and Bedford as is presently enjoyed in Halifax and Dartmouth.

Ms. Everett, responding to a question from Councillor Cooper regarding whether the Board has approached the Province to amend the Municipal Government Act to allow for the distribution of supplementary funding equally across the region, indicated that until such time as Council makes a decision to apply a common rate across the region, the Board would not make such representation.

Responding to a question from Councillor Uteck regarding the impact of maintaining the Halifax/Dartmouth area rate for supplementary funding at last year's level, Mr. Morris indicated that he believed this would provide approximately an additional \$1.3 million and would provide an opportunity to implement further enhancements.

After a further questioning, His Worship thanked HRSB for their presentation

## **2) Presentation - Conseil scolaire acadian provincial (CSAP)**

Mr. Claude Renaud, School Board Member representing Halifax in the Provincial School Board addressed the Committee indicating that he and Mr. Jacques Gagnon, Home and School Member would be presenting today.

Mr. Gagnon addressed the Committee thanking Council for the opportunity to present this afternoon. Mr. Gagnon went on to advise that upon learning of supplementary funding, a sub-committee of local schools had been established including parents, members of Home and School Committees, members of School Advisory Committees, and School Board Members. He went on to note that the purpose of this Committee was not to debate whether supplementary funding is right or wrong, but to achieve equity. If dollars are collected in HRM for the purpose of providing supplementary funding to public schools, then Francophone public schools in HRM are entitled to share that funding.

Mr. Gagnon, indicating his understanding of the complexity of this issue, requested that

Council approve a nominal amount of funding for Francophone public schools as an indication of their goodwill in this matter. He went on indicate that in the longer term he and his Committee are eager to work with Council and the Task Force to arrive at a fair and equitable solution for all.

Mr. Gagnon, referring to the presentation by HRSB, advised that the Francophone public schools in HRM would like to be able to provide the same types of extras to their students. He noted that supplementary funding has been provided to Anglophone public schools since 1991 with none of those funds being allocated to Francophone schools. Mr. Gagnon noted that as a taxpayer of HRM with children attending a Francophone school, his children have not benefitted from one single dollar of supplementary funding.

Mr. Gagnon indicated that at the time of amalgamation, CSAP was involved with discussions relative to supplementary funding. However, CSAP was not considered in the Municipal Government Act. In conclusion, Mr. Gagnon noted that the plebiscite referred to collecting money for public schools and asked that Council not forget that Francophone schools are public.

Mr. Claude Renaud addressed the Committee briefly reviewing the issues before Council noting that the primary stumbling block was the constraints placed on supplementary funding within the Municipal Government Act. He went on to note that the report before Council today does point out that HRM can provide supplementary funding to CSAP under the Education Act.

Mr. Renaud noted that there is not a quick and easy solution. He went on to note that there is a need to identify a long term strategy which would include all public schools as indicated in the Plebiscite. In conclusion, Mr. Renaud indicated that he was not debating the appropriateness of supplementary, but is seeking Council's consideration and demonstration of their belief in equity.

Councillor Cunningham suggested that, as is the case with HRSB, Council should request a report from CSAP outlining the areas in which the Board would utilize supplementary funding.

Mr. Renaud, responding to a question from Councillor Cunningham regarding the possible uses of supplementary funding within the French system, indicated that the Local Committee has developed a wish list of areas in which supplementary funding could/would provide enhancements to present programming. Mr. Renaud noted that one area which comes to mind is pre-school programming to assist children of entitled parents not fluent in French.

Responding to a question from Councillor Streach regarding whether or not students within the French Board received more funding per student than those in the English Board, Mr. Renaud indicated that this was a fair statement. He went on to explain that

administrative costs per student is one area which would differ. Mr. Renaud indicated that base running costs per classroom is probably comparable, however, there are other costs such as administrative costs which would differ. Responding to additional questions, Mr. Renaud indicated that CSAP would maintain that they have insufficient funding to provide the program they are required to provide.

After a further questioning, His Worship thanked Mr. Gagnon and Mr. Renaud for their presentation.

### **3) Interim Report - Supplementary Education Funding Task Force**

Council concurred that consideration of the recommendation be handled in three parts.

The Task Force recommended:

*That Halifax Regional Council:*

1. *Maintain supplementary funding for Halifax at \$11.9 million for the 2001-2002 budget year which would require a 12.3 cent area rate.*
2. *Maintain supplementary funding for Dartmouth at \$5.1 million for the 2001-2002 budget year which would require a 9.7 cent area rate.*
3. *The area rate levied in 2001-2002 for supplementary funding in the former County of Halifax and Bedford be 4.5 cents which equates to \$3.2 million.*

**MOVED by Councillor Uteck, seconded by Councillor Sloane that supplementary funding for Halifax be set as 12.5 million for the 2001-2002 budget year which maintains the 12.9 cent area rate levied in the previous fiscal year.**

A lengthy discussion ensued including the following points:

- Appropriate approach is for the School Board to bring forward a budget which illustrates they require funding at this level. Concern expressed that Council will be linking allocations to a particular area rate
- Efforts to make rate consistent throughout the municipality would be undermined by this motion
- Staff would support a recommendation based on dollar value rather than on an area rate
- An amendment to this recommendation is in order relative to HRSB being accountable for the expenditure of supplementary funding and requiring a mechanism for review



- This amendment broadens the gap between Halifax/Dartmouth & Halifax County/Bedford rather than moving toward reducing that gap
- With the exception of 1996 in which there was a reduction of approximately 4.6%, dollar amounts for supplementary funding have remained steady

**THE MOTION WAS PUT RESULTING IN A TIE VOTE (11 voting in favour and 11 against). MOTION DEFEATED.**

**MOVED by Councillor Hetherington, seconded by Councillor Streach that Halifax Regional Council maintain supplementary funding for Halifax at \$11.9 million for the 2001-2002 budget year which would require a 12.3 cent area rate. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

**MOVED by Councillor Hetherington, seconded by Councillor Smith that Halifax Regional Council maintain supplementary funding for Dartmouth at \$5.1 million for the 2001-2002 budget year which would require a 9.7 cent area rate.**

**MOVED in amendment by Councillor Warshick, seconded by Councillor Sarto that Halifax Regional Council set supplementary funding for Dartmouth at 5.202 million, a 2% increase over last year, which represents a 10 cent area rate.**

A brief discussion ensued and the **MOTION TO AMEND WAS PUT AND DEFEATED.**

**THE MAIN MOTION WAS PUT AND PASSED.**

**MOVED by Councillor Goucher, seconded by Councillor Streach that the area rate levied in 2001-2002 for supplementary funding in the former County of Halifax and Bedford be 4.5 cents which equates to \$3.2 million.**

Councillor Cooper expressing concern regarding the lack of a report detailing how supplementary funds would be spent in the former County of Halifax and Bedford,  
**MOVED in amendment, seconded by Deputy Mayor Blumenthal that supplementary funding for the County of Halifax and Bedford be approved in principle pending receipt of a report detailing how these monies will be spent.**

After a further brief discussion the **MOTION TO AMEND WAS PUT AND DEFEATED.**

His Worship noting that Council had met in Committee of the Whole beyond the time for the scheduled In Camera session, requested that the In Camera session be rescheduled to 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, June 6, 2001. **Council agreed to convene In Camera at 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, June 6, 2001.**

Discussion on the main motion continued with Councillor Rankin indicating that the Plebiscite question was based on the status quo and having requested residents of HRM to express their opinion, he would be following the wishes of the people in as much as he would not support an increase in the area rate.

**MOVED in amendment by Councillor Rankin, seconded by Councillor Meade that the area rate to be levied in the former County of Halifax and Bedford be retained at 3.5 cents. MOTION PUT AND DEFEATED.**

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

Referring to the situation with the public French School Board, **Councillor McInroy MOVED, seconded by Councillor Cunningham that staff prepare a report for Council's consideration outlining what options Council has in terms of directing supplementary funding, in an amount equal to 1% of the amount levied in the County of Halifax/Bedford, to HRM's public French School Board. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

The meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Vi Carmichael  
Municipal Clerk