

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

**HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
1996/97 OPERATING BUDGET SESSION
September 3, 1996**

PRESENT:

Mayor Walter Fitzgerald
Councillors: Bill Dooks
Gordon R. Snow
David Hendsbee
Ron Cooper
Jack Greenough
Condo Sarto
Clint Schofield
John Cunningham
Jerry Blumenthal
Graham L. Downey
Howard Epstein
Russell Walker
Ron Hanson
Barry Barnet
Peter Kelly
Reg Rankin
Jack Mitchell

REGRETS:

Councillor Harry McInroy
Bruce Hetherington
Larry Uteck
Bill Stone
Stephen Adams
Robert Harvey

STAFF MEMBERS:

Ken Meech, Chief Administrative Officer
Larry Corrigan, Commissioner of Corporate Services
Ron Singer, Director of Finance
Julia Horncastle, Assistant Municipal Clerk

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1. REVIEW OF OPERATING BUDGET 03

1996/97 OPERATING BUDGET REVIEW

Mr. Ken Meech, Chief Administrative Officer, recapped budget discussions advising it is being proposed to bill the property owner the same amount of tax as in the fiscal year 1995/96. He stated a key issue to be addressed is the proposed increase to Wastewater Surcharge which would result in a \$2.5 million revenue increase.

In response to Councilor Kelly, Mr. Meech advised this would mean an increase to capture the additional \$2.5 million, stating all costs associated with wastewater and storm water management will be captured. The by-law will have to be amended to effect the increase.

Councillor Hanson stated transit operation should not be changed for this budget year. He expressed concern for the Purcells Cove and Stanley Park runs.

Mr. Larry Corrigan, Commissioner of Corporate Services, presented a report outlining the proposed adjustments to the operating budget.

Mr. Ron Singer, Director of Finance, with the aid of overheads, presented options for the collection of the wastewater surcharge.

In response to Councillor Rankin, Council was informed it was being recommended to leave the areas of the former Halifax County and Town of Bedford as is for this year. The increase would be applied to Halifax and Dartmouth with an across the board blended rate being initiated in 1997/98.

In response to Councillor Cooper, Council was informed the surcharge was being recommended for the water serviced areas.

Councillor Kelly suggested making the \$2.5 million adjustment.

In response to Councillor Hendsbee, Council was informed there are approximately 140,000 tax bills generated throughout the Regional Municipality.

In response to Councillor Hendsbee, Council was informed parking rates throughout the Regional Municipality have not been blended to date.

Councillor Epstein suggested cutting \$1 million from the Solid Waste budget for the remainder of 1996.

Councillor Cooper suggested policies be set to deal with issues such as debt load, school rates and transit. He suggested benefits on salaries are too high.

Councillor Kelly suggested staff investigate what amounts were paid out as insurance claims and compare this to the insurance coverage costs. He suggested a "0" based budget for the coming year.

Councillor Hanson suggested the Stanley Park transit service be maintained and a further evaluation and assessment be made before a determination is made to remove the service.

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Greenough and Councillor Sarto that Halifax Regional Council:

Accept staff's recommendation that the existing tax structure remain in place for the fiscal year 1996/97 and approve all of the budget recommendations proposed, with the following exceptions:

- 1. Adjust the total municipal allocation to the Regional School Board to \$75 million**
- 2. Replace \$2 million of "Capital out of Revenue" expenditures with long-term debt**
- 3. Eliminate the \$2.5 million Environmental Control Charge that was to be placed on the tax bill and credited to a Special Reserve Fund**
- 4. Amend the bus route reductions by adopting "Transit Plan C"**
- 5. Reduce, by \$1 million, the reliance on Reserve Funds**
- 6. Allocate an additional \$50,000 to the Police Services budget**
- 7. Increase the Councillor's Office support by \$8,000**

Before a vote was taken on the main motion, the following amendments were placed before Council for consideration:

MOVED by Councillor Hanson and Epstein that Transit Plan "C" be adjusted to accommodate the continuance of the Stanley Park route for an amount of \$26,000.00. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

MOVED by Councillor Rankin and Hendsbee that Council approve \$1.4 million to build up the Solid Waste Reserve equating to \$0.01 per \$100.00 of assessment. **MOTION PUT AND DEFEATED.**

MOVED by Councillor Epstein and Cunningham that Council approve an additional \$30,000.00 for library materials. **MOTION PUT AND DEFEATED.**

MOVED by Councillor Epstein and Mitchell that Council approve an additional \$21,000.00 for school crossing guards. **MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

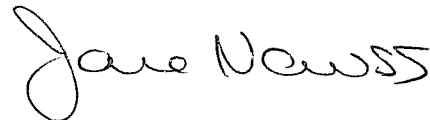
Councillor Epstein suggested non departmental revenue be adjusted to accommodate the approved amounts.

MAIN MOTION AS AMENDED PUT AND PASSED.

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by Councillor Snow and Hanson that the meeting be adjourned. **MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

Meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.



Jane Nauss
ACTING MUNICIPAL CLERK