

## HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

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### HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES

June 24, 2008

PRESENT: Mayor Peter Kelly  
Deputy Mayor Stephen D. Adams  
Councillors: Steve Streach  
Krista Snow  
David Hendsbee  
Harry McInroy  
Gloria McCluskey  
Andrew Younger  
Bill Karsten  
Jackie Barkhouse  
Jim Smith  
Mary Wile  
Patrick Murphy  
Dawn Sloane  
Sheila Fougere  
Russell Walker  
Debbie Hum  
Linda Mosher  
Robert Harvey  
Tim Outhit  
Reg Rankin  
Gary Meade

REGRETS: Councillors: Sue Uteck  
Brad Johns

STAFF: Mr. Dan English, Chief Administrative Officer  
Ms. Mary Ellen Donovan, Municipal Solicitor  
Ms. Julia Horncastle, Acting Municipal Clerk  
Ms. Shawnee Gregory, Legislative Assistant

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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 2:19 p.m.

**2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES - NONE**

**3. HRM DEBT POLICY PROPOSED REVISION**

C A report dated June 17, 2008 was submitted.

Mr. Dan English, Chief Administrative Officer, advised that Ms. Dale McLennan, Director of Finance, would be leaving her position with HRM and he thanked her on behalf of the municipality for her contributions and hard work.

Ms. McLennan provided the presentation on the HRM Debt Policy Proposed Revision. Highlights were as follows:

- C Net debt is funded through the general tax rate;
- C It will be one more year at least (2009/10) before the Multi Year Financial Strategy (MYFS) comes back to Council;
- C It would be best for the current Council to look at the MYFS and debt policy as they have been dealing with it and know it the best;
- C The proposed revision would give staff and Council some extra efficiency dollars, however, the five (5) percent does not have to be taken at all in any given year.

Deputy Mayor Adams entered the meeting at 2:35 p.m.

**MOVED BY Councillor Streach, seconded by Councillor Sloane, that Halifax Regional Council refer any changes on the HRM Debt Policy to a pre-budgetary discussion for 2009/2010.**

Ms. McLennan advised that if this item was referred the MYFS would remain in place, however, the proposed five (5) percent would not be available.

**MOTION DEFEATED.**

**MOVED BY Councillor Fougere, seconded by Councillor Sloane, that Halifax Regional Council approve the revisions to the HRM Debt Policy and Debt Servicing Plan as part of the existing Multi-Year Financial Strategy, and as**

**outlined in the discussion section of the report dated June 17, 2008.**

Councillor Murphy entered the meeting at 2:45 p.m.

A discussion on the motion ensued with Ms. McLennan and Ms. Cathie O'Toole, Director of Infrastructure and Asset Management, responding to questions. The following points were noted:

- C The existing debt policy does not prohibit doing environmentally friendly and efficient types of projects. It simply carves a specific amount out to increase debt for certain efficiencies;
- C Staff already has a large portfolio of energy projects in the five (5) year eco trust plan. Mr. Julian Boyle, Energy Auditor, and Mr. Phillip Townsend, Manager of Capital Projects, are in charge of this venture and will be coming to Council in September to present the energy efficiency projects;
- C The wording of the reserve is very basic and broad.

Councillor Murphy left the meeting at 3:00 p.m.

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

The meeting recessed at 3:12 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 3:25 p.m. with the same members present excluding Councillor Smith.

**4. HALIFAX CENTRAL LIBRARY - BUILDING PROGRAM AND SPACE REQUIREMENTS**

- C A report dated June 16, 2008 was submitted.

Ms. Judith Hare, CEO Halifax Public Libraries and Mr. Rob Marshall provided the presentation on the Halifax Central Library - Building Program and Space Requirements. Highlights were as follows:

- C The proposed library should be looked at as a place of community culture and, therefore, a multi use facility;
- C It will be open for more days of the week and for longer hours than the current library on Spring Garden Road;
- C It will be an environmentally friendly and sustainable building;
- C An auditorium and café were requested during public consultation sessions;
- C The capital cost analysis was not based on a design as there was none as of

- yet;
- C The project will be built over four (4) or (5) years, therefore, funding may be spread out;
  - C As a funding option, a debt financial model would be the preferred approach;
  - C There would be no money attached to the recommendation of approval in principle.

**MOVED BY Councillor Sloane, seconded by Councillor Karsten, that Halifax Regional Council:**

- 1. Approve the Central Library in principle.**
- 2. Direct HRM staff to examine funding options and develop a financial plan for the project.**
- 3. Direct the Halifax Regional Library Board to begin a Request for Proposal process for the provision of architectural services for the new Central Library.**

A discussion ensued with Ms. Hare and Mr. Marshall responding to questions. The following points were noted:

- C The library can receive non profit charitable donations from the public and will give receipts for every gift over ten (10) dollars;
- C Regarding public art and the cultural plan, there will be an exhibition space and large lobby to promote museums and galleries in the area.

Councillor Smith entered the meeting at 3:57 p.m.

Councillor McInroy entered the meeting at 4:00 p.m.

- C The library board will also be exploring corporate funding;
- C Several Councillors expressed concern with the inclusion of an auditorium and café as they deemed them to be unnecessary expenses for a library;
- C The proposed site was part of the Queen Street lands and HRM was currently in talks with the provincial government regarding its purchase for approximately seven million (7,000,000) to nine million (9,000,000) dollars;
- C This project has come out under budget and on time;
- C The two hundred and fifty (250) seat auditorium will accommodate the Jazz Festival which takes place on the proposed site annually. The Spring Garden Road Business Association had expressed their concern over the Festival's future if the library took over the site;

- C There may be an opportunity to include a parking garage;
- C Staff required Council to approve the scope of the project and then, after further analysis, they would come back with funding options.

At this time the item was deferred due to the need to address an emergency In Camera item.

**5. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:29 p.m.

Ms. Julia Horncastle  
Acting Municipal Clerk