

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

---

HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL  
COMMITTEE OF WHOLE  
MINUTES

April 3, 2012

PRESENT:

Mayor Peter Kelly  
Deputy Mayor Bill Karsten  
Councillors: Steve Streach  
Barry Dalrymple  
David Hendsbee  
Lorelei Nicoll  
Gloria McCluskey  
Darren Fisher  
Jackie Barkhouse  
Jim Smith  
Mary Wile  
Jerry Blumenthal  
Dawn Sloane  
Sue Uteck  
Jennifer Watts  
Russell Walker  
Debbie Hum  
Linda Mosher  
Stephen Adams  
Brad Johns  
Robert Harvey  
Tim Outhit  
Reg Rankin  
Peter Lund

STAFF:

Mr. Richard Butts, Chief Administrative Officer  
Ms. Kirby Grant, Acting Municipal Solicitor  
Mr. Martin Ward, Acting Municipal Solicitor  
Ms. Cathy Mellett, Municipal Clerk  
Ms. Sherryl Murphy, Acting Municipal Clerk  
Ms. Chris Newson, Legislative Assistant  
Ms. Jennifer Weagle, Legislative Assistant

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. BUDGET DELIBERATIONS ..... 3  
COMMUNITY AND RECREATION SERVICES continued..... 5  
MOTION PUT AND PASSED..... 12

## **1. BUDGET DELIBERATIONS**

Mayor Kelly called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

### **TRANSPORTATION & PUBLIC WORKS**

Mr. Ken Reashor, Director, Transportation and Public Works, following his earlier presentation on April 2, 2012 on the Transportation and Public Works budget/business plan, responded to questions from Members of Council.

Councillor Lund inquired whether there were sufficient funds in the snow clearing budget to maintain the current service standard.

Councillor Smith entered the meeting at 10:07 a.m.

In response to questions raised by Councillor Hum in regard to the cost of diversion for solid waste, Mr. Reashor confirmed the cost as \$193 per tonne not \$198 per tonne.

In response to questions raised by Councillors Hum and Sloane in regard to the current waste management system and possible methods to reduce costs, Mr. Richard Butts, Chief Administrative Officer, explained that, as previously directed by Council, staff are reviewing the solid waste management strategy for efficiencies, including new technology options, while keeping environmental protection and diversion as the key priorities.

Councillors Hendsbee, Barkhouse and Harvey entered the meeting at 10:15 a.m.

In response to questions raised by Councillor Lund, Mr. Reashor explained that:

- an additional \$300,000 has been added for road shoulder repair work
- no deadline has been confirmed by the province for the conversion to LED street lighting; a report will be presented to Council in the near future on the conversion program.

Councillor Rankin noted that part of the \$193 per tonne diversion cost included debt servicing, therefore; while the debt remains there would be no guarantee that increased diversion would reduce costs.

In response to a previous question from Councillor Blumenthal, Mr. Reashor advised that the dollar amount for fuel for Transportation and Public works, with the exception of the transit fleet, is \$1.1 million for diesel and \$2 million for gas.

Councillor Blumenthal clarified that he had requested the total fuel expense for the municipality not just the Transportation and Public Works department.

Committee of the Whole recessed at 10:41 a.m.

Committee of the Whole reconvened at 10:50 a.m.

**MOVED by Councillor Adams, seconded by Councillor Mosher that Halifax Regional Council approve, as circulated, the 2012/13 Proposed Operating and Project Budgets.**

Councillor Adams explained that Council could make any necessary changes to the budget throughout the year.

**MOVED by Councillor Adams, seconded by Councillor Mosher that the question be now put. MOTION PUT AND DEFEATED.**

Discussion ensued on the main motion to approve the proposed budget as presented.

**MOTION PUT AND DEFEATED.**

The 2012/13 budget deliberations continued with a presentation by the Halifax Public Library business unit at this time.

## **LIBRARY**

A copy of the Halifax Public Libraries 2012/13 budget presentation was before Council.

Ms. Judith Hare, Chief Executive Officer, Halifax Public Libraries, presented an overview of the Halifax Public Library 2012/13 budget/business plan.

In response to questions from members of Council, Ms. Hare advised that:

- funding has been confirmed from the federal government for a study on rural library service; the study focus in HRM will be on the Musquodoboit Valley area and will be underway soon
- the library is one of the primary providers of English Second Language learning in the municipality; the new central library will include a large area dedicated to language learning and literacy upgrading.

Mayor Kelly thanked Ms. Hare for her presentation.

The 2012/13 budget deliberations continued with a presentation by the Community and Recreation Services business unit at this time.

Councillor Johns entered the meeting at 11:55 a.m.

## **COMMUNITY AND RECREATION SERVICES**

A copy of the Community and Recreation Services 2012/13 budget presentation was before Council.

Mr. Brad Anguish, Director, Community and Recreation Services, provided an overview of the 2012/13 Community and Recreation Services budget/business plan. He reviewed the composition of the recently restructured business unit that has reduced 9.5 management positions into 5 as follows: Municipal Compliance, Development Approvals, Regional Recreation and Culture, Community Recreation and Culture and Citizen Contact Centres. He noted that the 2011/12 projection column can be struck as they are currently \$2 million under budget not over. He also noted that the figure under budget impacts shown as \$1.46 million should be \$1.94 million. Mr. Anguish reviewed the proposed increased fees for HRM arenas. He clarified that from this point forward rate increases for recreation will be brought to Council for approval. He then reviewed the proposed 311 service for the Citizen Contact Centres sector. In regard to the Community Recreation and Culture sector, the move is toward asset ownership wherein the department will oversee facilities in communities. Mr. Anguish noted that although federal funding has been discontinued for the Youth Advocate Program, HRM will continue the program with more information coming to Council for review this fiscal year.

Committee of the Whole recessed at 12:06 p.m.

Committee of the Whole reconvened at 1:00 p.m.

### **COMMUNITY AND RECREATION SERVICES continued**

Mr. Brad Anguish, Director, Community and Recreation Services, responded to questions from Members of Council .

Councillors Outhit, Johns, Mosher and Hum arrived at 1:06 p.m.

Responding to questions from Councillor Smith, Mr. Anguish provided clarification regarding ice time at the Bowles and Grey Arenas.

At the request of Councillor Smith, Mr. Terry Gallagher, Manager, Facility Development, discussed the renovation plans for the Dartmouth Sportsplex.

Councillor McCluskey inquired when the financial statements for the BMO Centre and the Canada Games Centre would be made available. Mr. Anguish advised that the financial statements would be reported in May. He also advised that staff could provide a list of users of the Bowles and Grey Arenas.

Councillor Streach arrived at 1:23 p.m.

In response to an inquiry regarding whether there are Municipal Compliance and By-law staff available on weekends, Mr. Anguish advised he would look into this.

Mr. Anguish provided details of the implementation plan for the HRM 311 phone service, which is planned to take place between November 2012 and February 2013. He indicated that Council will be updated.

Councillor Uteck requested that staff report back to Council on the allocation of a surplus recreation area rate; specifically, how residents would like these surplus funds to be handled (ie. returned to residents or reinvested in facilities).

Responding to an inquiry from Councillor Uteck, Mr. Anguish advised that he would get back to Council with a response as to whether the By-law/Fire/Building Official team will remain in place to deal with emergency situations such as dangerous and unsightly situations.

Councillor Uteck further requested that staff continue to work on the development of reports regarding fines for non-compliance (stop work orders) relative to By-laws.

Mr. Anguish responded to further questions from Members of Council relating to the Community and Recreation Services budget.

Mayor Kelly thanked Mr. Anguish for his presentation.

## **PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

A copy of the Planning and Infrastructure 2012/13 budget presentation was before Council.

Mr. Peter Stickings, Acting Director, Planning and Infrastructure, provided an overview of the 2012/13 Planning and Infrastructure budget/business plan.

Responding to questions from Councillor Dalrymple regarding the Gordon R. Snow Community Centre, Mr. Terry Gallagher, Manager, Facility Development, advised that he would obtain figures for the Councillor regarding the total cost of the Centre, what has been paid to date, what is left on the area rate, and what remains in the \$1 million improvement fund.

Councillor Blumenthal commented that he intends to contribute \$65,000 from his district capital funds toward accessibility improvements for the Needham Centre, and asked for confirmation of additional funding in the Planning and Infrastructure budget toward this goal of making the first floor and pool of the Needham Centre accessible. Mr. Stickings indicated that the combined funding will ensure that the first floor is accessible and will provide for door operators and a wheelchair lift for the pool.

Responding to an inquiry by Councillor McCluskey regarding the HRM owned Metro Park facility in downtown Halifax, Mr. Stickings indicated that staff will provide her with a report on the business case for the sale and/or retention of the facility, on a confidential basis.

Mr. Stickings responded to further questions from members of Council regarding the Planning and Infrastructure budget.

Councillor Watts spoke in support of local trails groups and regional trails.

**MOVED by Councillor Watts, seconded by Councillor Adams, that Regional Council transfer the funding designated for variable message signage in the capital budget to the regional trails active transportation capital budget.**

Mr. Stickings indicated that the variable message signage is a capital project being delivered under Transportation and Public Works.

Mr. David McCusker, Regional Transportation Manager, advised that a joint presentation between HRM and Halifax Harbour Bridges is scheduled to be provided to the Transportation Standing Committee at the end of April, which will help Councillors to understand the purpose of variable message signage.

#### **MOTION WITHDRAWN.**

Councillor Rankin requested that staff advise whether HRM has a sufficient supply of land zoned Light Industrial. Mr. Stickings advised that staff will get back to the Councillor with figures.

Councillor Karsten commented that he hopes the Mount Hope/Shearwater Connector Road will come before Council to be addressed within the year.

Councillor Dalrymple suggested that there needs to be a planning committee set up to re-evaluate the zoning in the Aerotech Business Park.

Mayor Kelly thanked Mr. Stickings for his presentation.

Committee of the Whole recessed at 3:15 p.m.

Committee of the Whole reconvened at 3:30 p.m. with the same members present with the exception of Councillor Streach.

#### **FISCAL SERVICES**

A copy of the Fiscal Services 2012/13 budget presentation was before Council.

Mr. Bruce Fisher, Manager, Financial Policy and Planning, provided an overview of the 2012/13 Fiscal Services budget/business plan.

Mr. Fisher responded to questions from members of Council regarding increased commercial tax assessments.

At the request of Councillor McCluskey, Mr. Fisher commented on payment in lieu of taxes (PILT), specifically with regard to the Citadel Hill assessment appeal which is before the Supreme Court. A decision is expected in June.

Mr. Fisher responded to questions from Councillor Outhit regarding Council's options for helping small businesses with increasing commercial tax bills.

Councillor Fisher requested that staff provide Council with information on the third-party appeal process; for example, does a tenant of a mall need the support of their landlord to appeal a commercial assessment? He also inquired as to the success rate of a third-party appeal. Mr. Bruce Fisher advised staff will get back to Council on this subject.

Responding to an inquiry from Councillor Watts, Mr. Stickings advised that staff will get back to Council with further information on why the Barrington Heritage District Financial Incentives have decreased by \$50,000.

Discussion ensued with members of Council commenting on commercial and residential property taxes.

Mayor Kelly indicated that a report to Council on this subject is forthcoming. He thanked Mr. Fisher for his presentation.

### **FINANCE AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT)**

A copy of the Finance and Information Technology 2012/13 budget presentation was before Council.

Mr. Greg Keefe, Acting Director, Finance and Information Technology Services/Chief Financial Officer provided an overview of the 2012/13 Financial Services budget/business plan.

Mr. Keefe responded to questions regarding hardware and software corporate upgrades and retraining.

Mayor Kelly thanked Mr. Keefe for his presentation.

**MOVED by Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor Rankin, that Regional Council waive the three remaining business unit presentations and go directly to budget debate. MOTION DEFEATED.**

Committee of the Whole recessed at 5:04 p.m.

Committee of the Whole reconvened at 6:00 p.m.



## **HUMAN RESOURCES**

A copy of the Human Resources 2012/13 budget presentation was before Council.

Ms. Cathi Mullally, Director, Human Resources, provided an overview of the 2012/13 Human Resources budget/business plan.

Ms. Mullally responded to questions from Members of Council regarding challenges facing Human Resources, including handling retirement succession planning and attracting a diverse workforce.

Responding to questions from Councillor Uteck regarding recent retirements of senior management employees being filled with term “acting” positions, Mr. Richard Butts, CAO, advised that several of these positions were filled by retired provincial government employees to maintain momentum of the business units, while efforts are made to have the positions permanently filled. The acting positions will generally be for six months to one year.

Ms. Mullally responded to questions about how the attendance support program works, and clarification between replacement planning (external hires) and succession planning (investing in current employees).

Responding to questions from Councillor Karsten about maintaining a healthy and productive workplace for employees, Ms. Mullally indicated that an employee engagement survey will be developed to be released in June of 2013.

## **LEGAL SERVICES AND RISK MANAGEMENT**

Mr. Richard Butts, CAO, welcomed Ms. Marion Tyson, Q.C., Acting Director, Legal Services and Risk Management, who was in attendance. He noted that Ms. Tyson started her position on Monday.

A copy of the Legal Services and Risk Management 2012/13 budget presentation was before Council.

Mr. Richard Butts, CAO, provided an overview of the 2012/13 Legal Services and Risk Management budget/business plan.

Councillor Hendsbee indicated that he would have liked to have a break down of the case load and work load for legal services, as well as case resolution timelines, data on the amount of in-house legal services vs. legal services contracted out, and the cost of proceedings.

Mr. Butts commented that Legal Services have the resources HRM needs to do the work. External services last year included 1700 paralegal hours and 300 lawyer hours.

At the request of Councillor Fisher, Mr. Butts commented on the By-law review process, noting that two by-laws will be reviewed this year.

### **CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE**

A copy of the Chief Administrative Office 2012/13 budget presentation was before Council.

Mr. Richard Butts, CAO, provided an overview of the 2012/13 Chief Administrative Office budget/business plan.

Responding to an inquiry from Councillor Hendsbee, Mr. Butts advised that HRM has been unable to fill the African Nova Scotian Affairs Coordinator position, and are currently looking at different strategies to partner with other organizations to honour that commitment.

Councillor Watts requested that the results from defining and measuring Key Performance Indicators for each business unit be shared with Regional Council by way of an Information Report.

Councillor Watts commented on the need for improved routine disclosure of information and needed improvements to the HRM website to make it easier for residents to find the information they need. Mr. Butts indicated his support for a routine disclosure and open data policy.

Councillor Uteck requested clarification on the following budget line items:

- Clarification on budget line item 6919 “special projects”;
- Clarification on budget line item 6936 “staff relations”;
- Clarification on line item 6201 “telephone” under Municipal Clerk, as to why the increase from \$17,978 to \$65,000; and
- Clarification on budget line item 8001 “transfer outside agencies” under the CAO’s Office.

Mr. Butts advised that staff will get back to Council with clarification on these four budget line items.

Councillor Uteck requested that there be improved communications avenues for Councillors including the opportunity for press releases. Mr. Butts advised that the new Manager of Communications plans to meet with Council soon to identify their needs related to communication.

Responding to questions from Councillor Hum, Mr. Butts advised that the total amount allocated for Councillors district capital funds will be divided by 16 instead of 23 with the reduction in seats for the upcoming election. The matter of the number of Councillor

support staff is being dealt with by the Executive Standing Committee and will be brought to Regional Council in the near future.

Mayor Kelly thanked Mr. Butts for his presentations.

**MOVED by Deputy Mayor Karsten, seconded by Councillor Walker that it is hereby resolved that Halifax Regional Council approve:**

a) **the Operating Budget in the amount of \$788,752,200 gross expenditures (which includes \$667,707,200 in municipal expenditures including the reserve withdrawals specified in the Operating and Project Budget), \$585,143,400 in property tax revenues (including area rate revenues) and \$203,608,800 in other revenues be approved;**

b) **the Project Budget in the amount of \$131,600,000 be approved;**

c) **the general rates of taxation on commercial and business occupancy be set at**

**(i) \$3.084 for the urban area;**

**(ii) \$3.084 for the suburban area; and**

**(iii) \$2.733 for the rural area**

**And applied to the taxable assessment of the property;**

d) **the general rates of taxation on residential and resource property be set at**

**(i) \$0.661 for the urban area;**

**(ii) \$0.645 for the suburban area; and**

**(iii) \$0.639 for the rural area**

**And applied to the taxable assessment of the property;**

e) **that Council approve the Metro Transit Annual Service Plan and that the tax rates associated with Transit Taxation be set at**

**(i) \$0.051 for the Regional Transportation tax rate;**

**(ii) \$0.105 for the Local Transit tax rate**

**And applied to the taxable assessment of the property;**

- f) (i) the boundary of the urban, suburban and rural areas is as delineated in the “Tax Structure Map” as outlined on page 4 of the Proposed Operating Budget 2012/13 document;  
  
(ii) the boundary of the Regional Transportation area includes all properties within communities included within the “Regional Transportation map” as outlined on page 5 of the Proposed Operating Budget 2012/13 document;  
  
(iii) the boundary for the Local Transit area includes all properties within 1km walking distance of any HRM transit stop.
- g) Supplementary Education, under Section 80 of the Halifax Charter, shall be set at the rate of \$0.037 to the residential and resource assessment and at \$0.110 to the commercial assessment including business occupancy;
- h) Fire Protection rates shall be set at the rate of \$0.025 for all residential and resource assessment and at \$0.075 to the commercial assessment including business occupancy; for properties which are within 1,200 feet of a hydrant that is designed and operated for public fire protection purposes.
- i) the final tax bills will become due on Wednesday, October 31, 2012;
- j) the interest rate on the Special Reserve Funds, designated as requiring interest under Section 121(2) of the Halifax Charter, be set at the rate of return on funds invested by HRM for the period April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2013;
- k) the interest rate on the Pollution Control Reserves be set at the rate of return on funds invested by HRM for the period April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2013;
- l) the interest rate on all reserves except for those identified in j) and k) will be set at the rate of return on funds invested by HRM for the period April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2013;
- m) that staff return to Regional Council with a proposed Business Case for a Multi-District Facilities Reserve before July 3, 2012; and
- n) that the Mayor write the Property Valuation Services Corporation (PVSC) requesting their assistance in analyzing commercial taxation trends including, but not limited to, assessment data and metrics for individual properties such as the valuation of land, buildings and improvements and the square footage of individual structures.

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

**4. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:01 p.m.

Cathy J. Mellett  
Municipal Clerk