

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

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HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE  
MAY 12, 1998

PRESENT

Mayor Walter Fitzgerald  
Deputy Mayor Rankin  
Councillors: Bill Dooks  
Gordon R. Snow  
David Hendsbee  
Ron Cooper  
Jack Greenough  
Condo Sarto  
Bruce Hetherington  
Clint Schofield  
John Cunningham  
Jerry Blumenthal  
Graham L. Downey  
Larry Uteck  
Howard Epstein  
Russell Walker  
Bill Stone  
Ron Hanson  
Stephen Adams  
Barry Barnet  
Bob Harvey  
Peter Kelly  
Jack Mitchell

ABSENT

Councillor Harry McInroy

STAFF MEMBERS

Mr. Ken Meech, Chief Administrative Officer  
Mr. Wayne Anstey, Municipal Solicitor  
Ms. Jane Nauss, Assistant Municipal Clerk

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Mayor Fitzgerald called the meeting to order at 2 p.m.

1. **SUPPLEMENTARY EDUCATION FUNDING**

Ms. Norma Kennedy, Chair, Halifax Regional School Board, introduced Dr. Don Trider, Chief Executive Officer of the Board, to Council. Ms. Kennedy referenced Supplementary Funding noting it was important that Council has all the information on same, and be aware of the impact it has on the system. It was suggested that Supplementary Funding exacerbates the inequity of education throughout the system and that a level of taxation be considered for the former Halifax County and Town of Bedford areas.

Dr. Trider addressed Council introducing Mr. David Gray and Ms. Geraldine MacSween as well as various members of the Board.

Information entitled "Supplementary Funding" prepared by the Halifax Regional School Board, was distributed to Council.

Mr. Gray referenced the information, particularly the breakdown of figures on page 2. It was noted the Board averaged the excess cost on a per square foot and per pupil basis for both of the former cities (Halifax and Dartmouth). Examples (1995/96 District School Board figures were used for the 1997/98 Supplementary Funding breakdown) were provided:

**Property Services Basis (Halifax)**

Halifax	\$5.05 (cost per gross square foot)
Provincial Average	\$3.97
Excess	\$1.08 times 2.3 million gross square feet = \$2.4 million. <b>(1)</b>

**Cost per Pupil Basis (Halifax)**

Halifax	\$798.00
Provincial Average	\$478.00
Excess	\$320.00 times 14,336 (enrollment) = \$4.6 million. <b>(2)</b>

The factors (1) and (2) were averaged which equals \$3.5 million.

Property Services Basis (Dartmouth)

Dartmouth	\$4.95 (cost per gross square foot)
Provincial Average	\$3.97
Excess	\$0.98 times 1.3 million gross square feet = \$1.3 million. <b>(1)</b>

Cost per Pupil Basis (Dartmouth)

Dartmouth	\$596.00
Provincial Average	\$478.00
Excess	\$118.00 times 10,680 (enrollment) = \$1.3 million. <b>(2)</b>

The factors (1) and (2) were averaged which equals \$1.260 million. It was noted that \$281,000 was added to adjust for use of regional dollars to address supplementary funding reductions in an earlier draft of the budget (this being the reason for the \$1.541 figure - property services - in the supplementary funding list). In essence, these monies are being paid back to the Regional Staffing Formula.

Last year's position of the Board was that if supplementary funding dollars are not available for property services and, if the costs are higher in the former Cities of Halifax and Dartmouth, the Regional Staffing Formula would be impacted, affecting all schools. However, Halifax and Dartmouth area schools would be able to add staff back through supplementary funding, but the County would not. In other words, the County would be subsidizing Halifax and Dartmouth in terms of the staffing formula.

Mayor Fitzgerald thanked Mr. Gray for his presentation.

Dr. Don Trider, CEO, noted it appeared that supplementary funding was being thought of as a "city thing." To clarify, Dr. Trider advised if monies are removed from property services, these dollars are left behind for other programs in Halifax and Dartmouth. These funds are then considered General Operating Expenditures; without new revenue, teachers will be displaced, across the region.

In Halifax and Dartmouth, there is an option to replace those teachers through supplementary funding. These dollars have remained behind for "extras." The cost moves into the General Operating Expenditure column. Theoretically, the County area bears the cost of this withdrawal. Council was respectfully requested to take this into consideration.

Dr. Trider suggested that both Council and the Board needs to work together in order to move out of this situation. A Supplementary Funding Committee has been established, which plays an important role in this process. The Committee will have to address a

suggestion that the Province also be involved.

In closing, Dr. Trider addressed the suggestion of auditing the Board's reports. The Board shares detailed information with Council as to how supplementary dollars are spent. It is anticipated that an audited statement will be provided next year with respect to supplementary funding expenditures.

Mayor Fitzgerald thanked Dr. Trider for his comments.

Councillor Uteck enquired if the former County schools were on the Provincial average as far as property services was concerned (costs per square foot and per student). In response, Mr. Gray advised they were either at the average or slightly below the average.

Councillor Uteck enquired if the \$1.08 increase relates to more specifically to the age of buildings or a decision to keep schools open. In response, Mr. Gray advised there was a factor in terms of excess square footage. Reference was made to cost per pupil and the fact that the differential was \$4.6 million in the former City of Halifax which indicates there was a substantial amount of excess space. On the Dartmouth side the costs for space and pupils were virtually the same; there was not an excessive amount of excess space.

Councillor Uteck expressed concern that he could not relate as to how these figures would break down and enquired if taking the average of the two was an acceptable accounting procedure. In response, Mr. Gray advised it is a measure utilized by the Province.

Councillor Uteck further enquired if this also related to the cost of maintenance of the buildings and personnel. In response, Mr. Gray advised that salaries and benefits of custodial and maintenance staff would be included, as well as capital expenditures.

Councillor Uteck enquired if Halifax was paying more funds, than the former County, to maintain their buildings, as far as personnel was concerned. In response, Mr. Gray advised it was a factor as Halifax and Dartmouth custodians and maintenance personnel were paid higher than the former County area, on average. However, as previously mentioned, this factor will decrease due to a common collective agreement.

Councillor Uteck noted that although the Board has advised these figures were the most recent ones available, he enquired if the costs for custodial and maintenance staff are no longer valid in Halifax as the service has been privatized. In response, Mr. Gray advised that when the new collective agreement is signed, there will be the same labour cost across the region. When these figures were put together, however, this

was still a factor - in the future, these figures (difference in wage rates) will not be included in the calculation.

Councillor Uteck referenced the total \$5 million allocated for property services, enquiring what percentage was for personnel. In response, Mr. Gray advised just over 50 percent (approximately \$2.5 million). The Councillor further enquired on the difference (percentage) between the County area (at the present time) and the former Cities of Halifax and Dartmouth before the services were privatized. In response, Mr. Gray advised that although he could not provide detailed information at this point in time, the difference between salary and non-salary within each of the former Boards were relatively the same. Mr. Gray advised this information could be provided.

Councillor Uteck advised that although he agreed, in principle, with supplementary funding, he looked forward to receiving this information.

Councillor Blumenthal advised he did not agree with supplementary funding. The Councillor referenced the closure of schools in the north end of Halifax and enquired if there has been any movement towards the realization of new schools. In response, Dr. Trider advised that with the focus of the Board on growth areas, it has been difficult to concentrate on other parts of the region. Although there had been additions made to a list which had been forwarded to the Department of Education, he was not aware that new schools were being considered in the Councillor's area.

Councillor Blumenthal advised he would support supplementary funding, at the same dollar value as last year, with two conditions: (a) that a detailed budget be prepared, and (b) that a percentage of funds be provided directly to each school.

Councillor Schofield advised that the Province should review the legislation that permits supplementary funding in Halifax and Dartmouth, as it is not working. Supplementary Funding should be turned over to the Regional School Board, to be distributed equitably across the region. This would create a consistent level of education, across the board.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor Schofield as to the makeup of the Supplementary Funding Committee, Dr. Trider advised the membership was comprised of School Board and HRM Council representatives, as well as the involvement of Mr. Ken Meech, CAO (or his designate), and himself (or his designate).

Councillor Stone referenced regionalization of services and enquired if this meant that supplementary funding would be spread throughout the region. In response, Dr. Trider advised in the negative. The Board wishes to obtain equity of programs and services across the region, however, the dollars are left behind to develop new programs and

services in Halifax and Dartmouth. Therefore, reaching an equitable playing field is an illusive pursuit in this regard.

Councillor Stone stated that those individuals who contribute to supplementary funding want to be assured that the funds are realized in enhanced programs. In response, Dr. Trider advised the dollars are moving in that direction. It is the intention of the Board to develop a more detailed audit for the next reporting which will provide confirmation of this.

Councillor Stone understood that the schools receive an allotment and enquired if this was at a higher level in Halifax and Dartmouth, than other schools in the region. In response, Dr. Trider advised that in the Dartmouth area, a portion of the supplementary funding was used to provide a per student grant.

To continue, Ms. MacSween stated if the enquiry was - "Does Halifax and Dartmouth receive a different student base number compared to the former County area" the response would be in the negative - there is no extra money that has been costed other than what had been costed in the previous budget.

Councillor Stone referenced "Teachers' Centre" enquiring if the allocation was provided through supplementary funding. In response, Ms. MacSween advised in the affirmative. Further, the centres were utilized by the teachers in Halifax and Dartmouth. Meetings - on a regional basis - were also held in the centres. Councillor Stone suggested that regionalization of the system, should not be carried out on the back of supplementary funding.

Councillor Greenough advised that traditionally, education has been provided through supplementary funding. Further, if Halifax and Dartmouth are contributing funds to supplementary funding, those monies should be used in Halifax and Dartmouth. If the system is to be regionalized, then the funds should be derived from the entire region.

Councillor Greenough referenced an earlier comment - "if a certain amount of supplementary funding was not to be used for maintenance, that cost would be transferred to the general formula which in turn causes a reduction in teaching staff across the region, however, in Halifax and Dartmouth, supplementary funding could be used to re-hire these teachers i.e. the County would be subsidizing Halifax and Dartmouth" - noting this was difficult to understand.

The Councillor suggested the former County area could also re-hire these teachers if supplementary funding was available. Therefore, the former County area could not be subsidizing the system in Halifax and Dartmouth. In closing, the Councillor advised he would be supporting continuing the same level of funding as last year, with the

understanding that the Board will attempt to ensure these dollars will be utilized to enhance the level of programming and quality of education, in both Halifax and Dartmouth.

Councillor Sarto advised he would be supporting supplementary funding.

Mayor Fitzgerald referenced " Primary Day" - \$683,000 (Halifax) and \$544,000 (Dartmouth). Dr. Trider advised these funds ended in January, 1997 when the Board moved to the full Primary day across the region. These funds will be available for other special programs in Halifax and Dartmouth. Primary Day will be the greatest contributor to other activities (i.e. certain amount to schools).

Councillor Hanson enquired if the recent Provincial announcement on realignment of funds would have an impact on the mandatory funding formula. Dr. Trider advised he was not in a position to respond as logistics were still being deliberated upon. The Councillor expressed concern that the mandatory funding level could increase. In response, Dr. Trider advised he would provide information when it became available, however, the municipality may have access to the information before the Board.

Councillor Stone requested Council consider giving supplementary funding at a 10 percent level, on a per capita basis, to the schools. In response, Dr. Trider advised this would negatively impact some of the programs. Further, concern was raised with an external body supplying the funds (HRM), making these types of rigid decisions. Further, Dr. Trider suggested these types of ideas could be best pursued through the Supplementary Funding Committee.

Councillor Stone requested the Board determine what is considered extra programs for Halifax and Dartmouth. This information should be made available for everyone i.e. parents, residents, Council. A report, at some point in time, as to where the funds will be spent for this year, would be beneficial. The Councillor suggested the municipality hold the funds back until it is determined where the funds will be spent.

In response, Dr. Trider advised this is where the role of the Supplementary Committee was important. Although the Board respects the wishes of Council, this type of request, ties the hands of the Board. Both Council and the Board need to work together, to move towards the regionalization of services.

Councillor Downey advised that although he supports supplementary funding, he could not support the 10 percent level. This would have a negative impact on the schools in his District. The Councillor suggested the Board should determine where the funds should be spent. Reference was made to Bloomfield and Alexander Schools and the fact they should never have been closed.



Councillor Downey suggested if the Primary Day is cut (\$683,000 - Halifax), then the funds should go towards the schools that are the most in need.

Mayor Fitzgerald referenced Property Services, noting \$5.6 million was spent in maintenance costs. Councillor Downey enquired as to which schools were involved with these costs.

Councillor Greenough referenced approximately \$700,000 in additional funds, allocated to the Board last year. The Board was under the impression it would receive the same level of funding as the year before (\$75 million), however, the total allocation was actually \$75.7 million. The Board was going to cut back the bussing program, however, they were requested to utilize a portion of the \$700,000 to reinstate the same level of bussing service. With any remaining funds, the Board was requested to allocate monies - per student - per school. The Councillor enquired if the same level of bussing service would continue in the former City of Dartmouth.

In response, Dr. Trider advised this would be the case, however, the Board would request an unencumbered Motion.

Councillor Greenough referenced the fact he was not on the Supplementary Funding Committee.

Councillor Schofield referenced a number of schools in his District that required maintenance of play areas, particularly Harbourview School (fencing). The Councillor suggested the funding be cut by 10 percent so that the problem can be better resolved by the Supplementary Funding Committee.

MOVED by Councillors Blumenthal and Hetherington to approve Supplementary Education Funding at the present dollar level with the following conditions:

- a) receipt of an accountability budget; and
- b) a portion of the supplementary funding dollars be distributed to all schools in the former Cities of Halifax and Dartmouth.

In speaking to the Motion, Councillor Cunningham advised he could support the supplementary funding level, but could not support the two conditions. The Board should be responsible for the distribution of the funds.

Councillors Walker and Hendsbee took their place at the meeting (3:30 p.m.).

Councillor Hetherington supported the Motion, noting however, if nothing is implemented next year, there could be a 10 percent cut in funding.

Councillor Uteck supported Councillor Cunningham's comments noting that Council simply wants an accurate accounting to determine any weaknesses. Further, Council has no business in telling the Board where the funds should be allocated. The Councillor stated he could not support the second condition of the Motion.

Councillor Stone supported the Motion and wanted to have a say as to where the funding will be allocated. Further, the Councillor advised one area within his District had busing problems where on one side of the street the children are bussed, and those on the other side do not. Also, the parents of those who cannot travel to school by bus have to pay for their children to stay at school for lunch.

Councillor Stone advised he would like to sit on the Supplementary Funding Committee, as well as Councillor Greenough.

Councillor Greenough advised that over the next few years, wage parity will be reached between the teaching staff. Once implemented, there is the potential for the monies now being used for maintenance to be transferred to the general formula. This will free up supplementary funding for its intended use. The Councillor requested assurance from the Board, that this will be an objective.

Councillor Greenough enquired if the Province has advised where they stand in terms of the mandatory funding level. Dr. Trider advised he has no information at this present time. The Councillor suggested this Motion be tabled pending the level of mandatory funding.

Councillor Walker advised he could support the Motion, however, if the mandatory funding level changes, this could be a problem for all Council.

Councillor Cunningham enquired how he could support the supplementary funding portion of the Motion, but not the remainder. In response, Mr. Wayne Anstey, Municipal Solicitor, advised an amending Motion to remove the unwanted conditions, would be in order.

A brief discussion ensued on the Motion on the floor. Councillor Hetherington clarified the Motion states the municipality will give the same amount of funding as last year.

Mr. Ken Meech, Chief Administrative Officer, advised as the excess funding is actually deemed to be an area rate, should there be an increase in mandatory funding, the cost will have to be recovered from the entire region.

Councillor Hetherington suggested this Motion be deferred, pending receipt of all information.

**MOVED** by Councillors Hetherington and Greenough to defer the supplementary funding issue pending receipt of all information from the Department of Education. **MOTION DEFEATED.**

A Motion to amend the Main Motion was put on the floor.

**MOVED** by Councillors Cunningham and Greenough to amend the Motion by removing the two conditions. **MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

A vote on the Main Motion, as amended, was in order.

Councillor Blumenthal requested his Main Motion be removed from the floor. In response, Mayor Fitzgerald advised the Motion, once made, belongs to the Council and therefore stays.

**MOVED** by Councillors Cunningham and Uteck to approve Supplementary Education Funding at the present dollar level. **MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

2. CONTINUE - 1998/99 CAPITAL BUDGET DELIBERATIONS

&

3. CONTINUE - 1998/99 OPERATING BUDGET DELIBERATIONS

**MOVED** by Councillors Kelly and Blumenthal to defer discussions on the 1998/99 Capital and Operating Budgets to May 19, 1998 - 10:00 a.m. **MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

4. ADJOURNMENT

**MOVED** by Councillors Kelly and Blumenthal to adjourn the meeting at 4:20 p.m. **MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Original Signed

 **Jane Nauss**  
**ASSISTANT MUNICIPAL CLERK**