



**GRANTS COMMITTEE
MINUTES
November 3, 2014**

PRESENT: Councillor Russell Walker, Chair
Councillor Barry Dalrymple, Vice Chair
Councillor David Hendsbee
Councillor Whitman
Mr. Donald Dodge
Ms. Kate Watson
Mr. Darren Watts
Mr. Francis Glover

REGRETS: Mr. Jason Cooke

OTHERS PRESENT: Councillor Jennifer Watts

STAFF: Ms. Peta-Jane Temple, Team Leader, Tax, Grants & Special Projects
Mr. Bruce Fisher, Manager, Financial Policy and Planning
Mr. Peter Greechan, Community Developer
Mr. Andre MacNeil, Sr. Financial Consultant
Ms. Shelly Hutt, Program Technician, Grants & Contributions
Ms. Krista Vining, Legislative Assistant

The following does not represent a verbatim record of the proceedings of this meeting.

The agenda, supporting documents, and information items circulated to Grants Committee are available online: <http://www.halifax.ca/boardscom/bccgrants/Grants141103agenda.php>

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m., and adjourned at 3:08 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – October 6, 2014

Mr. Watts asked that the discussion regarding to an option for a zero tax relief rate (item 7.1.1) be included in the minutes.

MOVED by Councillor Dalrymple, seconded by Mr. Dodge that the minutes of October 6, 2014 be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

3. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS AND APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS

A brief discussion was held on whether to bring forward Information Item 1 respecting Community Grants Program: Delinquent Reporting Update 2014. The Committee agreed that no discussion was required at this time.

MOVED by Councillor Dalrymple, seconded by Councillor Whitman that the Order of Business be approved as presented. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES – NONE

5. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS – NONE

6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS – NONE

7. REPORTS/DISCUSSION

7.1 STAFF

7.1.1 Rural Transit Funding Program 2014/2015

The following was before the Committee:

- Staff recommendation report dated October 7, 2014

Ms. Patricia Hughes, Supervisor, Service Design & Projects, Metro Transit provided an overview of staff's recommendation outlined in the October 7, 2014 staff report, and responded to questions on the funding request made by Musgo Rider and the 2014-15 projected funding outlined in the financial implications section of the October 7, 2014 staff report.

MOVED by Councillor Hendsbee, seconded by Councillor Whitman that the Grants Committee recommends that Halifax Regional Council approve the funding application submitted by Musgo Rider under Administrative Order Number 2014-012-ADM Respecting Grants for Rural Transit.

A brief discussion was held with staff responding to additional questions around the Rural Transit Funding Program.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

7.1.2 Tax Relief to Non-Profit Organizations: New Applications, Renewals, and Proposed Amendments for 2014-15 Fiscal Year

The following was before the Committee:

- Staff recommendation report dated October 14, 2014

Ms. Peta-Jane Temple, Team Leader, Tax, Grants & Special Projects noted two corrections to Schedule 26, Attachment 6 of the October 14, 2014 staff report:

- page 24, MacDonald House Association/NS Natural Resources Lease should read *31/05/2017* not 2014
- page 25, Musquodoboit Harbour Heritage Society/NS Natural Resources Lease should read *Open* not Unknown as there is no expiry date

Ms. Temple further advised that recommendation #8, page 1 of the October 14, 2014 staff report was to be withdrawn and alternatively staff, in consultation with Legal Services, would provide a supplementary report to Regional Council in conjunction with the Grants Committee report. This report will address the organizations currently on the By-law who do not meet the requirements of Administrative Order 2014-001-ADM.

MOVED by Councillor Dalrymple, seconded by Mr. Watts that the Grants Committee recommends that Halifax Regional Council approve:

- 1. The removal of eight (8) organizations from the tax relief program as detailed in Attachment 2 of the October 14, 2014 staff report, effective April 1, 2014, for a combined saving of \$42,921;**
- 2. The addition of Cross-Roads, Flip Flop, Fresh Start, Peninsula, Kabuki, Longhouse, McIntosh Run, Rooftops and Spryview non-profit housing cooperatives as detailed in Attachment 3 to Schedule 30 of the October 14, 2014 staff report, effective April 1, 2014, conditional upon payment of any prior year arrears or a signed payment plan, at a combined cost of \$59,384;**
- 3. The addition of the Dartmouth Yacht Club, Halifax Refugee Clinic, Hammonds Plains Fire Hall & Community Centre Association, LWF Firemen's Association (3214 Highway 2), and Purcell's Cove Social Club (505 Purcell's Cove Road), PAC Autism Nova Scotia, and the Bridge Centre for Arts & Technology as detailed in Attachment 3 to Schedule 29 of the October 14, 2014 staff report, effective April 1, 2014, conditional upon payment of any prior year arrears or a signed payment plan as applicable, at a combined cost of \$49,184;**
- 4. The removal of one (1) property owned by the Second Stage Housing Association from Schedule 29 and the addition of this same property to Schedule 28, as listed in Attachment 3 of the October 14, 2014 staff report, effective April 1, 2014, at an estimated cost of \$7,730;**
- 5. The decline of thirteen (13) applications as listed in Attachment 4 of the October 14, 2014 staff report;**
- 6. The decline of twenty-eight (28) requests for an increase in level of tax relief as listed in Attachment 5 of the October 14, 2014 staff report;**
- 7. The renewal of full or partial tax relief for (571 properties) in Schedules 26 to 30 as listed in Attachments 6 to 10 of the October 14, 2014 staff report, effective April 1, 2014, conditional upon payment of any prior year arrears or a signed payment plan as applicable, for a combined total cost of \$3,087,574;**

8. Reinstatement of that portion of property leased to a for-profit interest for the Dartmouth Non-Profit Housing Society (Schedule 26) and the Canadian Red Cross (Schedule 29) of the October 14, 2014 staff report, effective April 1, 2014.

The Committee entered into discussion on the motion with staff responding to questions respecting recommendation #6, the decline of twenty-eight requests for an increase in level of tax relief as identified in Attachment 5 of the October 14, 2014 staff report.

In regard to the Musquodoboit Harbour Lions Club's request for an increase in the current level of tax relief from 50% to 100% exempt, Councillor Hendsbee made reference to the other Lions Club's receiving 100% tax relief and expressed that Musquodoboit Harbour Lions Club should receive the same level of exemption.

MOVED by Councillor Hendsbee, seconded by Councillor Dalrymple that recommendation #6 be amended and the Grants Committee award the Musquodoboit Harbour Lions Club's request for an increase in current level of tax relief from 50% to 100% exempt (Attachment 5 of the October 14, 2014 staff report).

Mr. Francis Glover entered meeting at 1:31 p.m.

A brief discussion was held on the amendment and the nature of services the Musquodoboit Harbour Lions Club provides to the community. Ms. Temple and Councillor Hendsbee responded to questions of clarification on the food bank being operated out of the Club's building.

MOTION TO AMEND PUT AND PASSED.

The motion before Council now reads:

MOVED by Councillor Dalrymple, seconded by Mr. Watts that the Grants Committee recommends that Halifax Regional Council approve:

- 1. The removal of eight (8) organizations from the tax relief program as detailed in Attachment 2 of the staff report dated October 14, 2014, effective April 1, 2014, for a combined saving of \$42,921;**
- 2. The addition of Cross-Roads, Flip Flop, Fresh Start, Peninsula, Kabuki, Longhouse, McIntosh Run, Rooftops and Spryview non-profit housing cooperatives as detailed in Attachment 3 to Schedule 30 of the staff report dated October 14, 2014 effective April 1, 2014, conditional upon payment of any prior year arrears or a signed payment plan, at a combined cost of \$59,384;**
- 3. The addition of the Dartmouth Yacht Club, Halifax Refugee Clinic, Hammonds Plains Fire Hall & Community Centre Association, LWF Firemen's Association (3214 Highway 2), and Purcell's Cove Social Club (505 Purcell's Cove Road), PAC Autism Nova Scotia, and the Bridge Centre for Arts & Technology as detailed in Attachment 3 to Schedule 29 of the October 14, 2014 staff report, effective April 1, 2014, conditional upon payment of any prior year arrears or a signed payment plan as applicable, at a combined cost of \$49,184;**
- 4. The removal of one (1) property owned by the Second Stage Housing Association from Schedule 29 and the addition of this same property to Schedule 28 as listed in Attachment 3 of the staff report dated October 14, 2014, effective April 1, 2014, at an estimated cost of \$7,730;**
- 5. The decline of thirteen (13) applications as listed in Attachment 4 of the staff report dated October 14, 2014;**

6. **The decline of twenty-seven (27) requests for an increase in level of tax relief as listed in Attachment 5 of the staff report dated October 14, 2014 and award the Musquodoboit Harbour Lions Club's request for an increase in current level of tax relief from 50% to 100% exempt;**
7. **The renewal of full or partial tax relief for (571 properties) in Schedules 26 to 30 as listed in Attachments 6 to 10 of the staff report dated October 14, 2014, effective April 1, 2014, conditional upon payment of any prior year arrears or a signed payment plan as applicable, for a combined total cost of \$3,087,574;**
8. **Reinstatement of that portion of property leased to a for-profit interest for the Dartmouth Non-Profit Housing Society (Schedule 26) and the Canadian Red Cross (Schedule 29) of the staff report dated October 14, 2014, effective April 1, 2014.**

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

A further correction was noted later in the meeting by Mr. Andre MacNeil, Sr. Financial Consultant to Schedule 29, Attachment 9 of the October 14, 2014 staff report, that Fung Loy Kok Institute of Taoism's three properties had been sold.

7.1.3 Tax Relief: Proposed Program Redesign – staff presentation – Mr. Bruce Fisher, Manager, Financial Policy & Planning

The following was before the Committee:

- A copy of the staff presentation

Mr. Bruce Fisher, Manager, Financial Policy and Planning delivered a presentation to the Committee, outlining Option 3b: an addition of a second maximum tax of \$2,500 for smaller Community Non-Profits which would limit the tax of small to medium-sized Community Non-Profit properties to that of a single-family home. It was noted that this second maximum tax would not apply to the Low-Income Homeowner program.

The Committee reviewed the impacts to Community Non-Profits based on Option 3, a maximum of \$20,000 for Community Non-Profits and Option 3b as presented, with staff responding to questions.

During the discussion, the Committee directed staff to provide the following information for their next meeting:

- Options 3, a maximum of \$20,000 for Community Non-Profits and 3b, a maximum of \$2,500 for smaller Community Non-Profits
- an additional option of a zero non-profit tax relief rate
- suggestions around the phase-in/transition approach and projected dates for the program redesign
- the number of Community Non-Profits currently in arrears on their property tax

It was noted that the Committee would also discuss consultation strategy at their next meeting.

7.1.4 Non-Profit Tax Exemptions – Comparison of Programs Across Canada – staff presentation – Mr. Bruce Fisher, Manager, Financial Policy & Planning

The following was before the Committee:

- A copy of the staff presentation

In response to an earlier request for information, Mr. Andre MacNeil, Sr. Financial Consultant presented a comparison of programs across Canada for non-profit tax exemption programs. He noted that staff looked at the differences in context, eligibility/scope, scale and application process, and the benchmarking cities

were based on similar demographic and economic profiles: St. John's, Quebec City, London, Regina, Victoria, Winnipeg, Edmonton and Moncton. It was also noted that Quebec City does not have a non-profit tax exemption programs. Mr. MacNeil and Mr. Bruce Fisher, Manager, Financial Policy and Planning responded to questions on the information presented.

Councillor Hendsbee suggested that this information be presented to Regional Council before the proposed Tax Relief Program redesign is brought forward for recommendation.

8. ADDED ITEMS – NONE

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Monday, November 3, 2014, 1:00 p.m., Halifax Hall, City Hall

9.1 2015 Proposed Meeting Dates

The following was before the Committee:

- 2015 proposed meeting schedule

MOVED by Mr. Watts, seconded by Councillor Whitman that the Grants Committee approve the 2015 Proposed Meeting Schedule as presented. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:08 p.m.

Krista Vining
Legislative Assistant