

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES September 9, 1997

PRESENT:

Mayor Walter Fitzgerald
Deputy Mayor Jack Greenough
Councillors: Bill Dooks
Gordon R. Snow
David Hendsbee
Harry McInroy
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
Bob Harvey
Peter Kelly
Reg Rankin
Jack Mitchell

ABSENT:

Barry Barnet (Regrets)

STAFF MEMBERS:

Mr. Ken Meech, Chief Administrative Officer
Mr. Wayne Anstey, Municipal Solicitor
Ms. Vi Carmichael, Municipal Clerk
Ms. Patti Halliday, Assistant Municipal Clerk

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Mayor Fitzgerald called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

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

The Municipal Clerk requested the following item be added to the agenda:

7.1 Councillor McInroy - Carlisle Drive Residents' Compensation Claim

Members of Council requested the following items be added to the agenda:

7.2 Councillor Schofield - Dartmouth Play Yards in Schools

7.3 Councillor Blumenthal - School Board Rentals

MOVED by Councillors Hetherington and Sarto that the Order of Business be approved, as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES: July 8 and August 26, 1997

Councillor Sarto noted he was in attendance at the August 26, 1997 Committee of the Whole meeting.

MOVED by Councillors Mitchell and Blumenthal that the minutes of July 8 and August 26, 1997 be approved, as amended.

3. SCHOOL CROSSWALK GUARDS

- A staff report prepared by Vincent J. MacDonald, Chief of Police, regarding the school crosswalk guards, was circulated to Council.

Mr. Mike Christie, Police Services, reviewed the report, noting a letter will be sent to Eagle Security Limited, advising that they will be charged under the penalty clause for the school crosswalk guard absences. The letter will also state there have been other breaches of the contract with regard to training and security clearances. However, Police Services is confident these issues can be resolved.

(Councillors Uteck and Hanson took their places at the meeting at 2:05 p.m.)

Councillor Adams expressed concern with the number of breaches of the contract, stating he is prepared to rescind the contract and award it to Pinkerton.

(Councillor Kelly took his place at the meeting at 2:10 p.m.)

Councillor Blumenthal stated one issue that should be included in the contract is the wage factor. The Councillor cautioned against rescinding the contract right away and suggested waiting to see how the current guards are making out.

Councillor Mitchell stated he did not think the situation was as bad as it seems and agreed with Councillor Blumenthal that the crosswalk guards need to be given a chance.

(Councillor Stone took his place at the meeting at 2:15 p.m.)

Councillor Hetherington cautioned against amending the contract as an increase in pay for the crosswalk guards will increase the cost for Eagle Security Limited. To ensure the crosswalk guard situation is monitored properly, the Councillor suggested a monthly report listing any contract breaches be prepared for Council. Mr. Christie noted a police patrol dropped in on various crosswalk guard locations last week. However, he stated this type of monitoring causes a drain on police resources. Mayor Fitzgerald suggested the schools could be given a phone number to call to report crosswalk guard absences.

MOVED by Councillors Hetherington and McInroy that all schools be contacted to be informed of a designated phone number to call and report crosswalk guard absences and other incidents; further, that a monthly report be provided to Council. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Councillor Schofield suggested the contract should be reviewed after a ten month period, and any concerns can be addressed at that time.

Councillor Epstein stated, based on his calculations, the total cost, in terms of wages, to the contractor is \$462,577.50. Adding benefits (Employment Insurance and Canada Pension Plan) to this amount, the cost probably would not be beyond approximately \$500,000. Therefore, an administrative and profit margin of approximately \$171,000 is built into the bid. Councillor Epstein suggested internal administration of this contract would be much less costly.

Councillor Adams suggested another option would be to revert to the old system where Eagle Security provided crosswalk guards in Dartmouth, and Pinkerton provided them in Halifax. The Councillor stated it is not HRM's responsibility to monitor this program.

Mr. Christie noted conversations have already been held with the School Board, and they are very cooperative; therefore, communication is not anticipated to be a problem. Mr. Christie stated monthly reports can be generated for Council. In response to Councillor Epstein's comments, Mr. Christie stated the largest portion of the \$171,000 is probably supervisor salaries. If HRM were to administer the contract internally, a supervisory system on the road would still be required. Mr. Christie noted if the contract is tendered out again through the school year, the problem of recruiting 172 people would still exist.

Deputy Mayor Greenough noted costs such as equipment, payroll, monitoring, etc., would also have to be included if this service was provided internally. The Deputy Mayor did not believe the difficulties that Eagle has experienced are sufficient to warrant the cancellation of the contract. He suggested that Eagle Security also be requested to provide monthly absenteeism reports for comparison. Council agreed to this suggestion.

Councillor Hetherington noted there is a minimal difference in salaries between a crosswalk guard and a supervisor at Eagle Security. The Councillor suggested that Procurement could break the contract down to four to six zones, rather than locking everything into one bid. At any given time, if there is a penalty, a zone could be withdrawn.

MOVED by Councillor Hetherington and Deputy Mayor Greenough that the staff report regarding crosswalk guards be received and filed. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. VOLUNTEER FIRE RECRUITMENT IN CORE AREA

- An information report prepared by Gary T. Greene, Fire Commissioner, regarding volunteer fire recruitment in the core area, was before Council.

Commissioner Greene reviewed the report for Council. A committee, composed solely of volunteer members from the Core service area, has been meeting to develop a standard that they wish to see for volunteer recruiting, training, compensation and effective utilization. A report from this committee is expected some time this month.

In response to a question from Councillor Hetherington, Commissioner Greene stated, sometime in 1998, Fire Services may come to Council with a program introducing an auxiliary force for Dartmouth which would be comprised of two or three volunteers who would fill in on vacations and sick leave. However, there is still a large amount of work to be done on this program.

Councillor Kelly asked if the Bedford volunteer department has on-going approval to keep the recruitment process going to bring the staffing complement back up. Commissioner Greene replied they have the opportunity to come forward and ask, and, generally speaking, this would be agreeable. However, at this point, the report is almost concluded and most volunteer departments are agreeable to wait for this report.

In response to a question from Councillor Blumenthal, Commissioner Greene stated 52 firefighters took early retirement, 37 from Halifax and 15 from Dartmouth. The minimum staffing for a station is 30 firefighters. In the month of August, Commissioner Greene stated this minimum occurred on eleven days. With respect to recruitment, there is a class of thirty-two that will commence employment on September 29, 1997 with graduation expected on November 25, 1997.

5. POLLUTION CONTROL CHARGES

- A staff report prepared for Larry Corrigan, Commissioner, Corporate Services, and George McLellan, Commissioner of Regional Operations, regarding Pollution Control Charges as defined in By-Law S-100, was before Council for consideration.

Mr. Singer introduced Ms. Siew Kim Secord, Financial Analyst, to Council, noting she has taken over for Ms. Marlene Morrison.

Mr. Singer presented the staff report to Council, which recommended that the Pollution Control charge be set in accordance with Section 3 Subsection (1) of Sewer Charges By-Law S-100, that all metered users of the Commission shall pay an Environmental Protection rate of \$1.16 per 1,000 gallons of water; further, that a Wastewater and Stormwater Management rate of \$.26 per 1,000 gallons of water be paid, for a combined rate of \$1.42 per 1,000 gallons of water.

Councillor McInroy expressed concern with meter water users that do not have access to central sewer or storm water collection systems. Mr. Singer noted Section 7(2) of the by-law states any meter water user that does not have public sewer is exempt from pollution control charges. Mr. Meech added the assumption is if a user does not have sanitary sewer, they will not be charged for the storm water portion.

(Councillor Hendsbee took his place at the meeting at 2:55 p.m.)

Responding to a question from Councillor Uteck, Ms. Secord stated \$1.3 million is approved in the 1997-98 capital program for four projects, but that amount has not yet been spent.

Councillor Blumenthal asked how much money Halifax brought into the pollution control fund. Commissioner Corrigan replied approximately \$30 million came from Halifax and approximately \$15 million came from Dartmouth.

Councillor Blumenthal stated he will not support any further increases for the residents.

Councillor Schofield stated he did not agree with Halifax and Dartmouth subsidizing work in Bedford and the County, if this is the case.

Responding to questions from Councillor Kelly, Mr. Singer stated this process is totally separate from the setting of the water rates by the Water Utility. HRM has an approved budget and by-law, and staff is now recommending harmonization of the rates. Ms. Secord stated the purpose of the environmental protection charge is for the treatment plants and all environmental programs approved in the budget. Councillor Kelly inquired what the total cost of the Halifax Harbour Clean Up Project will be. Ms. Secord replied a solid number is not known yet. She stated she could find out what the time frame will be to get a firm price and report back to Councillor Kelly. Ms. Secord stated the waste water charge is used primarily for the collection system of the waste water and storm water sewer.

Councillor Epstein stated the policy implication here is one that should have been drawn out in the staff report. Council is being told the former cities of Dartmouth and Halifax saved, through the surcharge on the water bills, approximately \$45 million dedicated to harbour clean up. The former town of Bedford and parts of the former County already had some treatment plants in place. Councillor Epstein questioned what will happen to \$45 million. His understanding is that this money was to be used for the Halifax Harbour cleanup on portions of the harbour that have not previously been receiving treatment. If the implication of the report is that the fund will be available to all areas for such things as repairs to the Mill Cove plant, Council needs to be told this. If it is the intention that the \$45 million remains designated to the harbour clean up, it should be explicit in the report. However, Councillor Epstein stated he believes Council is being told the fund is fair game to any projects related to water treatment. If this is the case, he stated the report should be reworked before going to Council.

Mr. Meech stated the assumption is that any major capital expenditures required for the waste water treatment in those other areas where it already exists should be very limited. The bulk of the money would be required for the Halifax Harbour clean up. Councillor Epstein stated Council needs to be told this in the report, including the state of repair of Mill Cove and other existing plants, what is expected in the next ten years, and, stating, therefore, the bulk of this money is likely to be spent on Halifax Harbour Clean up.

(Councillor Walker took his place at the meeting at 3:30 p.m.)

MOVED by Councillors McInroy and Snow that it be recommended to Council that the Pollution Control charge be set in accordance with Section 3 Subsection (1) of Sewer Charges By-law S-100, that all metered water users of the Commission shall pay an Environmental Protection rate of \$1.16 per 1,000 gallons of water; further, that a Wastewater and Stormwater Management rate of \$.26 per 1,000 gallons of water be paid, for a combined rate of \$1.42 per 1,000 gallons of water; further, that staff provide additional information regarding Councillor Epstein's comments regarding its implications.

Councillor McInroy noted another impact is the former County and Town of Bedford are now exposed to increasing costs of harbour clean up on an equal basis with the taxpayers of Halifax and Dartmouth.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

6. TAX INCENTIVES - COUNCILLOR ADAMS

Councillor Adams requested a staff report regarding tax incentives. He depicted a system used in Limerick, Ireland, which offers tax incentives, in the form of reduction, for individuals who are locating their businesses in areas where there is little business now. Councillor Adams stated downtown Halifax is a perfect example. This system would be a way to build up the commercial tax base. Councillor Adams noted there may be issues with regard to the Assessment Act and what can be done to allow this initiative to help in the downtown area. Council agreed to his request for a staff report.

7. ADDED ITEMS

7.1 Councillor McInroy - Carlisle Drive Residents' Compensation Claim

Councillor McInroy requested that this item be dealt with at a future In Camera Council Session with a more detailed report. Council agreed with the request.

7.2 Councillor Schofield - Dartmouth Play Yards in Schools

Councillor Schofield raised the issue of the playground at John Martin School in Dartmouth, noting \$10,000 was put into this playground this year. The Principal received a letter from the School Board stating it would not be responsible for any repairs. Councillor Schofield questioned if the School Board is responsible for this or is HRM. The Councillor noted it is his understanding that staff is currently working on a report on this issue and requested that it be brought to Council as soon as possible.

7.3 Councillor Blumenthal - School Board Rentals

Councillor Blumenthal requested a staff report regarding School Board Rentals. He expressed concern with increased fees for pools, gymnasiums, etc., with the result being cancelled programs. Councillor Cunningham expressed concern with different rates being charged in different areas of HRM. He asked that this be addressed in the staff report as well. Councillor Blumenthal noted in the past Halifax had a reciprocal agreement with the School Board and inquired if this is still in place. Council agreed to the request for a staff report.

8. ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by Councillors Blumenthal and Snow that the meeting adjourn at 3:40 p.m. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Vi Carmichael
Municipal Clerk