

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL MINUTES SEPTEMBER 28, 1998

PRESENT:

Mayor Walter Fitzgerald
Deputy Mayor Reg Rankin
Councillors: Bill Dooks
Gordon R. Snow
David Hendsbee
Ron Cooper
Harry McInroy
Condo Sarto
Clint Schofield
Jerry Blumenthal
Graham L. Downey
Sheila Fougere
Russell Walker
Bill Stone
Stephen Adams
Barry Barnet
Bob Harvey
Peter Kelly
Jack Mitchell

REGRETS:

Councillors Jack Greenough
Bruce Hetherington
John Cunningham
Larry Uteck
Ron Hanson

STAFF MEMBERS:

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

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1. INVOCATION

Mayor Fitzgerald called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. with the Invocation.

2. PROCLAMATIONS

Mayor Fitzgerald proclaimed the month of October, 1998 as Mi'kmaq History Month.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - September 22,1998

MOVED by Councillors Kelly and Stone to adopt the minutes of September 22, 1998. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS AND ADDITIONS/DELETIONS

The Municipal Clerk requested the deletion of agenda item #10.1.2 - Tender 98-030 Purchase of Approximately 100 Sets of Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) and Miscellaneous Optional Equipment - from the agenda.

- 12.1 The Municipal Clerk requested the addition to the agenda of "Legal Matter - Harbour City Homes."
- 12.2 Councillor Blumenthal requested the addition to the agenda of "Request for Staff Report - Fire Services."
- 12.3 Councillor Cooper requested the addition to the agenda of Information Item #5 - Asphalt Curb Replacement - Capital Street Improvement Works.
- 12.4 Councillor Cooper requested the addition to the agenda of Information Item #6 - Tax Structure - Montague Road.
- 12.5 Mayor Fitzgerald requested the addition to the agenda of "Change in October 20 Regional Council Meeting Date."

MOVED by Councillors Blumenthal and Schofield to approve the Order of Business, as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

5. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES - NONE

- 6. MOTIONS OF RECONSIDERATION - NONE
- 7. MOTIONS OF RESCISSION - NONE
- 8. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS - NONE

9. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS

9.1 Petitions

- 9.1.1 Councillor Fougere submitted a petition from residents in the Ralph Devlin Drive area - Westmount Subdivision - on the patching of holes and replacing of curb and gutter sections, requesting this be forwarded to staff.

10. REPORTS

10.1 CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

10.1.1 Tender 97-377 St. Andrews Recreation Centre - Re-Roofing

- A memorandum prepared for Mr. Dan English, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, on the above-noted, was before Council.

MOVED by Councillors Blumenthal and Schofield to:

- a) authorize the award of Tender #97-377 to the lowest bidder, McCarthy's Roofing Limited at a cost of \$91,310.00 including HST;
- b) authorize the transfer of funds in the amount of \$5,770.40 from Capital Account #02-90101, Recreational Heritage Building Upgrade to Capital Account #01-90091, St. Andrews Roof. **MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

10.1.2 Tender 98-030 Purchase of Approx. 100 sets of Self Contained Breathing Apparatus and Misc. Optional Equipment

This item had been deleted at the commencement of the Session.

10.1.3 Tender 98-102 - Provision of Services for Collection and Transportation of Source-Separated Solid Waste from Condominium Properties

- A memorandum prepared for Mr. George McLellan, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, on the above-noted, was before Council.

MOVED by Councillors Stone and Sarto to award contracts for Source-Separated Solid Waste Collection and Transportation Services from Condominium Properties to:

Area	Tenderer	Refuse Collection (Nov./98-Oct. 2001)	Recyclables Collection (Nov. 98 - Oct. 2001)	Total Price-3 years (36 months) (inc. HST)
A-Halifax	BFI Ltd.	\$280,954.20	\$75,513.60	\$356,467.80
B-Dartmouth	BFI Ltd.	\$104,507.40	\$43,649.40	\$148,156.80
C-Bedford	Green Waste Systems	\$ 41,400.00	\$20,700.00	\$ 62,100.00

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Councillor Sarto advised he would speak to members of staff directly regarding any questions he may have i.e. the addresses of those condominiums not included.

10.1.4 Street Closure - Williams Lake Road

- A memorandum prepared for Mr. George McLellan, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, on the above-noted, was before Council.

MOVED by Councillors Stone and Adams to:

- authorize staff to set a date for a public hearing for consideration of Halifax Regional Municipality Administrative Order SC-12, concerning the closure of a portion of Williams Lake Road as shown on the sketch attached to the staff report dated September 17, 1998 and identified as Parcel B on Servant Dunbrack McKenzie and MacDonald Plan No. 7-1219-0;**
- further, subject to approval of the street closure, Parcel B comprising of 3301 square feet as shown on the sketch attached to the staff report dated September 17, 1998, be sold for a unit value of \$3 per square foot unencumbered to David Hansen and Phoebe Hansen. Funds to be**

deposited in the Sale of Land Account. **MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

10.1.5 Street Closure - Green Road, Mount Herman Cemetery

- A memorandum prepared for Mr. George McLellan, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, on the above-noted, was before Council.

In response to enquiries from Councillor Schofield, Mr. Mike Woods, Senior Development Assistant, advised he would provide information on the following:

- a) what has happened to the proposed cul de sac;
- b) will there be a connecting walkway for school children to utilize;
- c) are the 4200 cremation lots and 1000 full plots part of phase 2 only, or are they the total of both phases.

MOVED by Councillors Schofield and Blumenthal to authorize staff to set a date for a public hearing for consideration of Halifax Regional Municipality Administrative Order SC-13 concerning the closure of a portion of Green Road as shown on the sketch attached to the staff report dated September 16, 1998. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Councillor Kelly requested, and Council agreed, to schedule a public hearing to consider Isleview Lane, Bedford, on the same public hearing date as Green Road, Mount Herman Cemetery.

10.1.6 Disposal of Parcel 1, Barrington Street

- A memorandum prepared for Mr. George McLellan, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, on the above-noted, was before Council.

MOVED by Councillors Downey and Blumenthal to approve the sale of Parcel 1 comprising of 1,069 square feet as shown on the sketch attached to the staff report dated September 16, 1998, for the amount of \$6,751.27 plus any applicable taxes and adjustments that may be applicable, unencumbered to Linda A. Moore et al. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

10.1.7 Multi-Year Financial Strategy

Mr. Ken Meech, Chief Administrative Officer

Mr. Meech, addressed Council, referencing the challenges invoked by the amalgamation of the four metropolitan units and Metropolitan Authority. Over the past few years, staff have attempted to provide a seamless transition of services to the citizens of HRM; now it is time to create a sustainable financial base. Reality can now guide the decisions of HRM, rather than anticipated events as outlined in the implementation plans.

Two key concerns are level of long term debt:

- April 1, 1996 = \$226 million (includes outstanding Capital Debt + work in progress commenced by previous units)
- April 1, 1999 = \$380 million (projected).

Mr. Meech stated that staff will provide an accounting of the projected deficit for the current fiscal year (\$19.2 million).

Now was the time to remove the element of surprise with regard to HRM's financial position. Operating daily by crisis management, needs to be overcome as it would be in the better interest of all, to focus on more positive initiatives.

Staff will provide a "snapshot" of HRM's current financial position and a "road map" as to how the municipality will work its way out of this dilemma. This can be achieved through the development of the multi-year financial plan; ongoing initiatives of the Program and Service Review (including Activity Based Costing); through the creation of an organizational culture to shift the focus to results and output; and, senior managers identifying options to mitigate the short term deficit.

The multi-year financial plan represents a blueprint to guide the financial decisions of HRM, now and in the future. Tough choices will have to be made such as the potential for increased taxation, reduction in existing services and service levels, alternative service delivery, and seeking other methods of cost recovery methods (i.e. user fees). The plan also incorporates an accountability component as HRM is committing to specific actions within a specific time frame.

Mr. Meech requested a commitment from both Council and staff, to work as a team towards a solution. Specific activities involved, in bringing about a solution to the financial situation, will be provided to Council in the near future.

Mr. Meech called on Ms. Stephanie Coldwell, retained by the municipality to lead the development of the multi-year financial plan, to address Council.

Ms. Stephenie Coldwell - Framework of the Multi-Year Financial Plan

Ms. Coldwell provided an overview of the multi-year financial strategy. It was noted a Committee was established to work towards developing a framework under which financial decisions, going forward, would be made.

This evening's presentation will deal with proposed objectives and ground rules for long term management and a discussion of the approach. In order to know where the municipality is heading, staff will need to determine where "we have been, and where we are right now" - from a fiscal point of view.

Objectives

- **know the baseline**
√when amalgamation took place, the knowledge base had to be redeveloped (this process is ongoing)
- **anticipate future operating, capital and reserve requirements**
√things should then not have to be dealt with on an immediate basis (only those things that change)
- **reasonably predict tax rates and debt requirements**
√to understand far enough in advance, to make decisions in an appropriate time frame with as broad a consultation as Council wishes, as opposed to on "a crisis" basis
- **to develop targets for service levels with financial implications**
√to identify the link between costs and services and HRM's financial capacity.

Ground Rules

- **business plans (operating and capital)**
√for all services so the basic plan can be reviewed on a regular basis and rolled out to a multi-year strategy for the entire region
- **business case approach for new services or capital projects**
√this identifies the effect on the multi-year strategy
- **the double-entry system**
√if something is added to an approved budget, something has to be removed, so the budget balances.

The Approach

- **four phases**
 - √ looking at where we are first, moving through next budget phase, into a long term strategy
- **everything will be reviewed**
 - √ all operating, capital and service decisions will be open for discussion during the process
- **regular reporting**
 - √ there will be regular reporting to Council over the next nine month period.

Various Phases

- **Phase 1 - Understanding the Climate**
 - √ **trends** - Mr. Bruce Fisher to identify trends and explain the relevancy of those trends in understanding our current fiscal position
 - √ **current forecast** - Mr. Reg Ridgley to present the 1998/99 forecast
 - √ **short term strategies** - Mr. Brian Smith to identify immediate strategies being developed by directors and general managers to mitigate the forecast deficit.
- **Phase 2 - Predicting the Weather (December 1, 1998)**
 - √ **need to identify what we know** - need to identify the baseline - put operating and capital on the same page
 - √ **first draft of the 1999/2000 budgets**
 - √ **identify issues and options** - need to define the decision points in the near term with numbers and words so the decision making process for Council will move forward
 - √ **look at the longer term** - need to look at short term opportunities vs long term so that it is understood where the flexibilities are and to take a brief look at some of the areas where we can identify and use 'best practices.'
- **Phase 3 - Be Prepared (February 16, 1999)**
 - √ **1999/2000 Operating, Capital and Reserve Budgets**
 - √ **issues and options in the longer term** - those decision areas going forward where decisions will be required for the multi-year strategy.
- **Phase 4 - Planning our Future (June 15, 1999)**
 - √ multi-year strategy
 - √ flexible process for change.

Ms. Coldwell introduced Mr. Bruce Fisher, Budget Co-ordinator.

Mr. Bruce Fisher - Understanding the Climate

Mr. Fisher advised that staff examined historical data as far back as 1993/94 and determined a number of trends:

- **revenue is generally flat**
- **non-discretionary costs are growing**
- **services are getting squeezed.**

Referring to an overhead entitled "Total Revenues are Flat," Mr. Fisher noted that despite rate changes and reassessments, there has been no huge growth in total revenues realized. In 1993/94, the assessment had grown by 12 percent, however, tax revenues only increased 5.5 percent.

In reviewing non-discretionary costs (those costs over which the municipality has very little control in the short term - i.e. mandatory education costs, corrections contributions, debt charges, large portion of solid waste, agreements with outside agencies, and hydrant charges), it was determined that since 1993/94, a larger portion of revenues were being used to pay for these costs. Essentially, what appears to be occurring, is that while the revenues stay flat, and while a larger portion goes to pay for non-discretionary items, services tend to become squeezed.

Mr. Fisher noted, on a net budget basis, non-discretionary costs are debt charges which form approximately 50 percent of the budget.

It was noted that capital budgets are generally rising. Reference was made to 1995/96, noting that less than half the capital budget was financed through debt. In 1998/99, almost 85 percent is financed through debt. These debt charges eventually work themselves into operating costs. Council was advised that should the municipality continue on this trend for another seven years, at the level of \$51 million in new debt per year, the debt charges would eventually rise to \$70 million per year.

In summary, although services are being squeezed (it is now known that every dollar in debt financing eventually comes out of operating), if a long term change is planned, all costs can be controlled.

Mr. Fisher called on Mr. Reg Ridgley, Acting Director of Finance.

Mr. Reg Ridgley - The Current Forecast

Mr. Ridgley noted the \$19.2 million figure was determined by utilizing the July 31, 1998 figures and updating them to the current day. Prolonged snow storms, increased crime, increased fire fighting, or a natural disaster, will increase these costs. There are no reserves for these types of events.

Sources of the Deficit include:

1997/98 deficit higher than budgeted	(6.6)
Tax revenue shortfall	(5.1)
Collective bargaining in excess of budget	(4.2)
Amortization of amalgamation costs	(2.3)
Allowance for valuation of receivables	(1.6)
Grants net	(1.9)
Resource recovery & collection containers	1.5
Financing costs (net)	1.9
Other	<u>(0.9)</u>
TOTAL	(19.2)

• **Fiscal Responsibility Indicators**

√ **amortization of amalgamation costs** - the HRM Act requires payments to be made over a five-year period - it is anticipated the legislation will be amended to allow for a longer pay back period

√ **accrual review underway** - costs must be recorded for the period they are incurred not when they are anticipated to be paid

√ **double-entry approach to cost control**

√ **program and service review** - this process must be integrated with the multi-year financial plan

√ **quarterly financial report** - reports to Council will identify the sources of revenue to fund requested expenditures both in the short and long term. Capital expenditures impacting on the operating budget must be identified and tracked.

Mr. Ridgley noted that the multi-year financial plan will contain a program for the creation of retention of reserve assets so that HRM can weather changes, now and in the future.

Mr. Ridgley called on Mr. Brian Smith, Director, Business Operations.

Mr. Brian Smith - Immediate Strategies

Mr. Smith addressed Council, representing the Management Committee (senior management staff). It was noted the Committee is acting now to reduce departmental deficit forecasts.

A challenge has been accepted to target \$5 million in additional savings over the forecasted deficit. Further, a report on short-term strategies is anticipated by October 31, 1998.

The Committee is meeting weekly and undertaking "belt-tightening" such as:

- discretionary items
- appearance items
- seasonal schedules
- revenue collection
- internal accounts
- program efficiencies
- low public impact.

On a longer term, the Committee is reviewing major program area (seven major areas).

It is anticipated that the next report will be presented to EMT prior to being brought before Council. Further, it was noted that the budget process for next year will commence earlier than the norm.

Mr. Smith called upon Mr. George McLellan, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer.

Mr. George McLellan - Wrap Up

Mr. McLellan noted that the presentation this evening sought to reveal simple, but significant, points. The current debt service provision capability is shrinking and is taking place in the face of static revenues, and growing non-discretionary expenses. It must be understood that the debt service situation and some of the major initiatives, all add pressure to the future of HRM.

In trying to fix the problem without addressing the situation, structurally, the services are affected. It is the intent with this project to deal with the problem through a different approach. The need to respond is very clear and will require a formalized agreement between staff, Council and perhaps other agencies.

It must be understood that the relationship between one's finances is no different from

one's health. The municipality must take better care of itself. History to this point has been difficult. The size of this new unit is bigger than anything Council and staff has dealt with in its constituent parts prior to amalgamation. Responsibilities are more diverse and many deal with abstract areas of services. There is no ownership of the whole. Although it is difficult, it is important to recognize that HRM is a bit of "an unwanted child" and we have been forced to take care of that "child."

There is a desire to make the situation better and this is why this Council has asked for a process. Although there are no answers this evening, Council and staff are given to understand what must be done. It is staff's intention to return to Council with a series of presentations. Council and administration are responsible for a healthy community. Our deliberations and priorities must have the power of certainty and this means changing our behaviour.

Council was urged to pursue what is a difficult task - to be known for what it as a Council did not do, and not for what as individuals you did do. Although Council has seen many accomplishments, individual goals are divisive and costly. Only acting together can we avoid jeopardizing the future. This is what is meant by "Council not doing." This also relates to Administration.

This Council can be known as "the one that did not act in a way to damage our tomorrow." Staff respectfully requested that Council consider this as a challenge. Administration will also do its part and it is hoped that these comments are received with an open mind. In closing, Mr. McLellan stressed the "health" of HRM will not be restored overnight.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor Kelly on the deficit (19.2 million), and if a commitment from the Province was included, Mr. Ridgley advised that if a \$5 million commitment was received from the Province, the deficit would decrease by \$5 million.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor Kelly on the multi-year financial plan, and the time frame involved, Mr. McLellan, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, advised it was originally intended to be a five-year plan, however, it is anticipated that a shorter time frame will be involved. It is the desire of staff to change the culture over a quicker period of time.

Mr. McLellan advised that staff will return to Council with a strategy for a longer term (over 5 years) but also one to fall within a 3 year time frame.

In response to a further enquiry from Councillor Kelly as to the quarterly reports, Mr. McLellan advised the reports will not be the same as quarterly financial statements, however, the next presentation will deal with the budget, and the assumptions for the

upcoming year. Further, staff was working on providing substantial information - on a regular basis - to coincide with the financial statements.

Councillor Kelly referenced the Program and Service Review, and the ABC process. The Councillor enquired if staff has considered the possible integration of the Regional Water Commission with the overall operations. Mr. McLellan advised that staff was reviewing this concept. All agendas, however, must be brought into focus to determine if everyone will be willing partners.

Councillor Barnet referenced the capital debt noting that earlier in the presentation, the figure of \$380 million was mentioned with HRM commencing its life with \$226 million in debt. This is a difference of \$154 million, however, Mr. Fisher mentioned \$151 million in new debt. The Councillor enquired as to why the difference.

Councillor Barnet further enquired on the debt repayment over the past three year period. The Councillor understood that \$20 - \$30 million per year would be paid back, in debt, from principle. This would equate to \$60 - \$80 million difference.

Mr. Fisher advised that staff could provide a reconciliation that would provide clarification.

Mr. Meech clarified the situation by stating it is projected that the capital debt will be \$380 million at March 31, 1999. A detailed report will be provided to Council within the next week.

In response to an enquiry from Mayor Fitzgerald, Mr. Meech advised there was \$167 million in issue debt as of March 31, 1996, however, at the time, the previous Councils had already committed millions of dollars more for works in progress.

Councillor Blumenthal referenced the \$19.2 million deficit, enquiring if this includes any funds for contracts (unions). In response, Mr. Meech advised it would include those contracts that have been completed. There is some provision for increases in the estimates, however, it would not equate to what was on the table at the moment.

Mr. Ridgley noted there are funds budgeted for settlements, however, quarterly statements will be forthcoming that would update these figures.

Councillor Hendsbee suggested the Province should come forward with funds to assist in the cost of amalgamation. Further, Mayor Fitzgerald was respectfully requested to ensure due diligence from the Province is received by HRM.

Councillor Harvey stated that the course for the future has been brought forward by staff this evening. The financial problems of the municipality must be solved by those in these Chambers and that Council should not worry about variables that cannot be controlled.

Mayor Fitzgerald thanked staff for their presentation.

11. MOTIONS

11.1 Councillor Blumenthal

Councillor Blumenthal served the following Motion on September 22, 1998.

WHEREAS there is a large area of vacant, underdeveloped land in the vicinity of Gladstone Street and;

WHEREAS this land is adjacent to both the medium density neighbourhood at Windsor Terrace / Pacific Street and Seaforth Street, and the minor commercial area centered on North and Windsor Streets;

THEREFORE, that a plan amendment process be initiated to consider the redesignation and rezoning of the area generally bounded by Almon Street, Clifton Street, North Street and Gladstone Street. The purpose of these amendments is to promote the future development of this area for residential purposes, and for limited minor commercial uses so that the redevelopment of this area is compatible with existing neighbourhood, and to reduce the concentration of major commercial and industrial development in this area.

MOVED by Councillors Stone and Blumenthal to forward this Motion to staff for a report. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

12. ADDED ITEMS

12.1 Legal Matter - Harbour City Homes

This matter was discussed during an In Camera Session held prior to the public session.

MOVED by Councillors Sarto and Stone that the recommendation adopted In Camera, be ratified by Council. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

12.2 Councillor Blumenthal

Councillor Blumenthal requested a staff report from Fire Services on the number of fire fighters on duty, at two specific stations - one in Dartmouth, the other in Halifax.

12.3 Councillor Cooper - Information Item #5 - Asphalt Curb Replacement - Capital Street Improvement Works

Councillor Cooper requested staff clarify a statement made by a member of staff, that asphalt will be replaced with asphalt.

Councillor Stone enquired as to whether repair work could be carried out on a specific area in his District. The Councillor was to speak to staff directly on this aspect.

Councillor Mitchell enquired as to why asphalt was used in the red brick area of Alderney Gate.

12.4 Councillor Cooper - Information Item #6 - Tax Structure - Montague Road

Councillor Cooper requested the Information Report be referred back to staff to be structured as originally requested.

12.5 Change in October 20, 1998 Regional Council Meeting Date.

MOVED by Councillors Blumenthal and Mitchell to change the October 20th Regional Council meeting date to *Monday, October 19*. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

13. NOTICES OF MOTION - NONE

14. ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by Councillors Blumenthal and Dooks to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 p.m. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Vi Carmichael
MUNICIPAL CLERK