

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

**COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE
MINUTES
March 7, 2001**

PRESENT:

Mayor Peter J. Kelly
Councillors: Steve Streach
Gary Hines
Keith Colwell
Ron Cooper
Harry McInroy
Brian Warshick
Condo Sarto
Bruce Hetherington
Jim Smith
John Cunningham
Dawn M. Sloane
Sue Uteck
Sheila Fougere
Russell Walker
Diana Whalen
Linda Mosher
Brad Johns
Bob Harvey
Len Goucher
Gary Meade

REGRETS:

Deputy Mayor Jerry Blumenthal
Councillors: Stephen D. Adams
Reg Rankin

STAFF:

Mr. Ken Meech, Chief Administrative Officer
Ms. Patti Halliday, Assistant Municipal Clerk

Table of Contents

1.	Continuation of 2001/2002 Operating Budget Deliberations	3
1.1	Human Resources	3
1.2	Information Services	3
1.3	Metro Transit	4
1.4	Parks and Recreation	6

Mayor Kelly called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

1. CONTINUATION OF 2001/2002 OPERATING BUDGET DELIBERATIONS

1.1 Human Resources

Ms. Betty MacDonald, Financial Services, provided opening remarks with respect to the budget for Human Resources. Mr. Pat Hartling, Director, Human Resources, responded to questions of Councillors.

In response to questions raised regarding funding for training, it was suggested another line item entitled "Corporate Training" could be added for further clarification.

Councillor Hetherington requested a list and total amount for membership dues for all HRM employees. Councillor Colwell requested a list of all HRM departments identifying and explaining those memberships that are essential to employees' actual work and those that are optional.

Responding to a question of Councillor Whalen regarding a comparison of the number of HRM Human Resources personnel to other organizations, Mr. Hartling stated a report had been prepared on this matter and he agreed it could be circulated to all of Council.

At this time, a discussion arose with respect to the budget meeting schedule. It was suggested a meeting be scheduled for Friday, March 9, 2001, commencing at 9:00 a.m. As several Councillors expressed concern with meeting conflicts on that morning and it did not appear there would be a quorum, it was agreed that the March 9th meeting would run from 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m., and an additional meeting would be scheduled for Monday, March 19th, commencing at 9:00 a.m.

1.2 Information Services

Ms. Betty MacDonald, Financial Services, provided opening remarks with respect to the budget for Information Services. Mr. Chuck Keith, Director, Information Services, responded to questions of Councillors.

In response to questions of Councillor Hetherington regarding mileage costs versus the use of an HRM vehicle, Mr. Keith stated a study was conducted on this matter and it was determined that it would be less expensive to pay mileage costs. It was agreed that Council be provided a copy of that study.

Councillor Hetherington also requested a breakdown of how many employees HRM has doing contract services for HRM.

Councillor Sloane asked how many CD burners does HRM own. Mr. Keith responded he did not know off hand and would have to report back with that figure. Mr. Keith stated if any individual or department has a need for additional space on the server, they only need to call the Help Desk and this can be resolved.

1.3 Metro Transit

C A document entitled *Metro Transit - Service Change in Proposed Budget* was circulated to the Committee.

Mr. Dan English, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, provided opening remarks with respect to the budget for Metro Transit. Mr. Brian Taylor, Director, and Mr. Ken Silver, Coordinator, Metro Transit responded to questions.

Councillor Smith expressed concern with the number of Access-a-Bus vehicles, and put forth the following motion:

MOVED by Councillor Smith, seconded by Councillor Uteck, that \$150,000 be added to the parking lot for the purchase and operating costs of an additional Access-a-Bus bus. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Councillor Goucher requested that, in the future, when there is a large increase in a budget line item from the previous year, that staff provide a one line explanation of the cause of this increase.

On behalf of Councillor Fougere, Councillor Uteck raised concern with the lack of bicycle lockers, and put forth the following motion:

MOVED by Councillor Uteck, seconded by Councillor Sloane, that \$10,000 be added to the parking lot for bicycle lockers.

As the figure of \$10,000 was an estimate, Mayor Kelly suggested a firm cost figure be determined for this item.

No vote was taken on the motion.

A request was made to add a Park and Ride site at Exhibition Park to the parking lot. In response to a question of Mayor Kelly, Mr. Taylor stated a cost estimate could be provided for this item, but he noted the problem is having the buses in the fleet service that Park and Ride, as it could not be serviced during the peak hours at this time.

Councillor Sarto expressed concern with the lack of bus shelters in this budget, and put forth the following motion:

MOVED by Councillor Sarto, seconded by Councillor Warshick, that \$50,000 for ten bus shelters be added to the parking lot.

Those speaking in support of the motion made the following points:

- C More bus shelters are needed
- C The advertising bus shelters are revenue generators.

Those speaking against the motion made the following points:

- C There are other more important needs
- C In the last few years, bus shelters have been funded through the district discretionary capital funds.

Mr. Silver noted that Mediacom has exclusive rights to the advertising bus shelters.

Mayor Kelly noted his office has received some complaints about the number of advertising bus benches and stated he would forward this information to Metro Transit.

MOTION PUT AND DEFEATED.

With regards to the current transit survey, Mayor Kelly suggested this survey should probably be conducted with the Access-a-Bus users as well.

Councillor Cooper expressed concern with the lack of a Park and Ride on the east side of the Harbour to serve the thousands of cars coming into Burnside from the Eastern Shore/ Forrest Hills/Colby Village area. Mr. Taylor responded this is a prime area being examined and it is anticipated the survey will identify such needs. Mr. Taylor stated it is hoped the study will be completed in time to incorporate its recommendations into next year's business plan. Councillor Cooper stated he would be interested in having this Park and Ride addressed as soon as possible.

Responding to a question of Councillor Colwell regarding charter service for schools, Mr. Taylor stated there is a charter service available during off peak hours and there is a special school rate. Councillor Colwell asked that this information be provided to Council so it can be forwarded to the schools.

With respect to service to the Burnside Industrial Park, Councillor Smith asked that staff look at the possibility of providing bus service to the park from Windmill Road, as many residents

have been requesting this. Mr. Taylor agreed that this could be examined.

Councillor Cunningham expressed concern with the expectation of Sunday ferry service to be 100 percent cost-recoverable. The Councillor suggested that asking the community to contribute \$34,000 is asking too much, and put forth the following motion:

MOVED by Councillor Cunningham, seconded by Councillor Warshick, that \$34,000 be added to the parking lot for Sunday ferry service. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

For the record, Councillor Streach stated he would like a survey to be initiated to start the process of expanding transit service to his District and to identify how Metro Transit could link up with some of the small van groups so residents could take advantage of Metro Transit service. Mr. Silver stated following the results of the survey it can be determined if this is a possibility that could be explored further.

Councillor Meade inquired about the future of transit service for District 23. In response, Mr. Silver agreed to provide the Councillor with background information on this issue as well as to set up a meeting with the Councillor to discuss this further.

With respect to the transit survey results, Mr. Silver stated the results are being tabulated and will probably be finalized in the next two to three weeks.

Councillor Walker expressed concern regarding Saturday service for Routes 2 and 4, and put forth the following motion:

MOVED by Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor Goucher, that \$48,000 for half-hour Saturday service for Routes 2 and 4 be added to the parking lot. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

MOVED by Councillor Streach, seconded by Councillor Hines, that staff be asked to bring back a report exploring opportunities to enhance transit service to the rural areas of HRM, particularly Musquodoboit Harbour, including the implications of linking up with van pools, and a cost breakdown if the service was to be paid for through an area rate. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

1.4 Parks and Recreation

Mr. Dan English, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, provided opening remarks with respect to the budget for Parks and Recreation. Ms. Karen MacTavish, Director, Parks and Recreation, responded to questions.

Councillor Johns expressed concern with the lack of funding for new playgrounds in this budget. In response, Ms. MacTavish agreed there is a need for new playgrounds, but she stated the budget only allowed staff to address some deteriorating assets. Councillor Johns stated there is a possibility of \$50,000 cost sharing with the Sackville Landfill compensation fund, and stated he would like to add \$20,000 for cost sharing for a park on Gloria Avenue as part of a co-op initiative with a local community group in that area.

Councillor Warshick spoke in support of an artificial sportsfield for Dartmouth, and put forth the following motion:

MOVED by Councillor Warshick, seconded by Councillor Hines, that \$1.1 million be added to the parking lot to develop and build an artificial turf sportsfield on the east side of HRM. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Councillor Warshick noted the revenue for the Shubie Park Campground has increased over the last three years, and put forth the following motion:

MOVED by Councillor Warshick, seconded by Councillor Hetherington, that \$418,600 be added to the parking lot for repairs to the Shubie Park Campground. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Councillor Uteck stated she would like to see St. Mary's Lawn Bowling back on the table for consideration and inquired what the cost figure would be for this. Mr. Blair Blakeney stated he would have to report back with this figure.

Councillor Walker stated if \$100,000 was allocated for trails, it would leverage an additional \$400,000 from the other levels of government.

MOVED by Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor Warshick, that \$100,000 for trails expansion be added to the parking lot to allow for leveraging of additional funds from the other levels of government. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Councillor Harvey expressed concern with the poor condition of the ice cleaning machine at the Sackville Sports Stadium and put forth the following motion:

MOVED by Councillor Harvey, seconded by Councillor Johns, that \$65,000 be added to the parking lot for a new Zamboni for the Sackville Sports Stadium. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Councillor Meade expressed concern with the lack of recreation facilities in District 23 and put forth the following motion:

MOVED by Councillor Meade, seconded by Councillor Harvey, that \$200,000 (\$75,000 for lighting for one ball field, \$75,000 for a tennis court, and \$50,000 for a multi-purpose court) be added to the parking lot for new recreation projects for District 23. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Due to the number of items currently in the parking lot, Mr. George McLellan, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, advised Council it would be beneficial to staff if Council identified which of these items have a higher priority than others.

MOVED by Councillor Johns, seconded by Councillor Meade, that \$200,000 for five new playgrounds in HRM be added to the parking lot. MOTION PUT AND DEFEATED.

Councillor Fougere expressed disappointment that there was not more in the budget for trees. The Councillor also inquired if there were any other methods to treat St. Catherine's field rather than re-sodding. Mr. Blakeney stated staff can reassess this issue.

Councillor Smith expressed concern with information he received that the John MacNeil tot lot was unsafe. Mr. Blakeney responded that he was unaware of this and agreed to look into the matter.

Councillor Colwell expressed concern with the lack of funding for desperately needed recreational projects in North Preston, and put forth the following motion:

MOVED by Councillor Colwell, seconded by Councillor Cooper, that \$75,000 for a lighted multi-purpose pad in North Preston be added to the parking lot. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

MOVED by Councillor Colwell, seconded by Councillor Sloane, that a staff report be requested to examine taking \$75,000 out of the RDA funding to pay for the lighted multi-purpose pad for North Preston. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Councillor Mosher requested that arena rental for ringette in Halifax be taken into consideration for the future. Councillor Mosher raised concern about eight downgraded fields, and Mr. Blakeney agreed to discuss this individually with the Councillor.

Councillor Mosher requested that an analysis be conducted on the Dingle seawall.

With respect to the earlier request for an artificial turf field, Councillor Mosher stated for the same amount of money approximately one existing field in each District could be completely restored, and asked that an analysis be done with respect to this issue.

As it was now 4:00 p.m., the meeting adjourned. It was agreed that the Parks and Recreation discussion would continue at the next meeting.

Patti Halliday
Assistant Municipal Clerk