

**HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
2001/2002 OPERATING BUDGET
MINUTES
March 9, 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 Sloane
Sue Uteck
Sheila Fougere
Russell Walker
Diana Whalen
Stephen Adams
Robert Harvey
Reg Rankin

ABSENT
WITH REGRETS: Deputy Mayor Jerry Blumenthal
Councillors: Linda Mosher
Brad Johns
Len Goucher
Gary Meade

STAFF: Mr. George McLellan, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

Ms. Vi Carmichael, Municipal Clerk
Ms. Sherryll Murphy, Assistant Municipal Clerk

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

1. CONTINUATION OF 2001/2002 OPERATING BUDGET DELIBERATIONS

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

Dan English, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer briefly reviewed the highlights of the Regional Planning Budget . He advised that the main focus of the Planning and Development budget is Regional Planning. In fact, a presentation will be made to Council in the near future relative to how staff envisions HRM moving forward with the concept of regional planning

Mr. English went on to note that a \$100,000 savings had resulted from the merging Regional and Community Planning. He noted that this savings was actually a reduction in consulting staff. Mr. English advised that the proposed budget includes monies for a Land Use By-Law Compliance Technician as a pilot project. Allocation have also been made for three new commercial building inspectors, which is completely offset by the increase in building permit fees. The proposed budget also includes additional funds for the Land Information System. In closing, Mr. English indicated that the proposed budget represented a \$269,000 increase over the last year's approximately \$4 million budget.

Referring to the capital budget, Mr. English noted that issues related to capital cost contributions and over sizing along with the street scape program are the major components of the proposed Regional Planning capital budget.

Mr. Dunphy, Director Planning and Development Services and his staff responded to a variety of questions from members of Council.

In response to a concern from Councillor Hetherington regarding the amount of time By-Law Enforcement Officers are occupied doing paperwork, Mr. Dunphy indicated that steps have been taken to reduce the administrative work of By-Law Enforcement Office including eliminating the need for By-Law Enforcement Officers to process tenders. This work is now completed by Community Projects. Community Projects has also requested a modification of \$50,000 representing administrative support to the By-Law Enforcement Officers.

In response to continued concern from Councillor Hetherington, it was agreed that a staff report be prepared clarifying the amount of time By-Law Enforcement Officers actually spend in the office completing paperwork.

In response to a question from Councillor Walker regarding the revenue line item, Environmental Protection/Waste Water, Mr. Dunphy indicated that as a result of the

reorganization subsequent to Alignment 2000, staff involved in approval/inspections process within Public Works and all the budget (both costs and revenues) associated with those people were transferred to Planning and Development. This line item represents that portion of revenue which was allocated to cover staff costs relative to lateral inspections.

Councillor Walker requested a report on how the revenue line Environmental Protection/Waste Water was calculated.

Councillor Colwell asked what process has to be put in place to ensure that when the Building Permit is issued the applicant has his/her street number in place. By way of background Councillor Colwell advised that efforts are being made to ensure street numbers are posted in the rural areas to smooth emergency response. Councillor Colwell indicated that if HRM could institute such a process it would speed the process and be of great benefit to emergency services.

Mr. Dunphy indicated that he would consult with Emergency Services and prepare a report in this regard.

Clarifying the agenda for this afternoon's meeting, His Worship Mayor Kelly suggested that Public Works be dealt with on Monday, March 19, 2001, to which Council agreed.

Councillor Walker referred to line C430 and C440 on page 183 and asked if these figures include revenues of \$382,700 and expenditures of \$432,700 within the Community Projects budget proposal (Page 26).

After a brief explanation from staff and further discussion, Councillor Walker requested a report clarifying exactly what was included in the figures found in lines C430 and C440, Page 193.

Councillor Cooper expressed concern regarding illegal dumping and requested that Council be provided a report periodically regarding the status of illegal dumping incidents.

RCMP

George McLellan, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, advised that included within this budget was \$200,000 for a study in the area of police services. Briefly outlining the purpose of the study, Mr. McLellan indicated the study would look at ways to provide the appropriate metrics for police service in the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM). The study will respond to questions such as the appropriate ratio of officers per population, appropriate boundaries and what services to centralize with the Province or RCMP. Mr. McLellan indicated that the study would be conducted in the context of a continued

commitment to providing police service jointly - the Regional Police and the RCMP.

Mr. McLellan indicated that the proposed budget represented a 2.5% increase over last year. He went on to note that HRM would be approaching the Province regarding issues around dispatch and trying to streamline that process. Mr. McLellan indicated that the budget provided for four additional officers in recognition of suburban growth.

Superintendent Ferguson, RCMP responded to a variety of questions from members of Council.

Councillor Walker expressed concern over the lack of detail provided relative to the cost of the service provided to HRM by the RCMP and requested that staff seek from the Province a break down of these costs.

Mr. McLellan indicated that it was staff's intent to provide a report to Council which would outline areas of redundancy proposed for discussion with the Province. The goal being to reduce redundancy and increase officer compliment.

Following a brief questioning and discussion, Councillor Walker requested a report from staff identifying exactly where revenues from licenses, permits and fines is accounted for within the 2001-2002 budget.

In response to a question from Councillor Hines regarding ratio of officers to population in other suburban/rural areas, Superintendent Ferguson indicated that based on RCMP standards, ratios are in line. However, taken against municipal policing there is a significant difference.

MOVED by Councillor Hines, seconded by Councillor Streach that one additional RCMP officer at a cost of \$84,000 be added to the parking lot for consideration.

A brief discussion ensued and the **MOTION WAS PUT AND PASSED.**

REGIONAL POLICE SERVICE

Mr. McLellan reviewed the highlights of the proposed budget noting that the thrust of the overall appropriations are to create a more proactive force in strategic areas. He went on to note that the budget provides for an additional 10 officers - four in the area of repeat offender/high risk and six in the area of community problems/Problem Solving Task Force. Mr. McLellan went on to note that the proposed budget also provides for a downtown detail during peak periods, evidentiary storage and forensic ID requirements, telephone/surveillance equipment, additional clerical support for the Training Division, a fleet mechanic and death benefit liability. Referring to the capital budget, Mr. McLellan

indicated there was a \$200,000 appropriation for a finger print capture station, \$710,000 fleet replacement, \$546,000 fleet replacement (unmarked vehicles) and \$2,000,000 for the CAD/RMS project.

Chief David MacKinnon responded to various questions from members of Council.

Responding to questions from Councillor Warshick relative to the construction of a divisional building in Dartmouth around the Wyse Road area, Chief MacKinnon indicated that the monies for this project would be realized through the Sale of Land Account and consequently he could not provide a firm start date for this project. Mr. Labrecque, General Manager, Building Management Services, indicated that staff was hopeful that the monies would accrue to the account by the end of March 2002.

Councillor Warshick, noting that as it appeared that the \$1.5 million allocated to this project this year may not be used this year, **MOVED, seconded by Councillor Hetherington that item #25, Dartmouth Patrol Office, Page C-3 be referred to the parking lot.**

Councillor Uteck introduced a Point of Order noting that monies could not be reallocated from the Sale of Land Account for other than land projects.

Mr. Labrecque clarified that monies from the Sale of Land could not be pre-committed, however, based on forecasts the monies required for this project would be available March 2002. He further noted that if longer term space was to be required for Police in the Spicer building than these costs should also be considered when contemplating the possible removal of this item from the budget.

A lengthy discussion ensued after which His Worship called for the vote requesting a showing of hands. Seven (7) voted in favour and seven (7) against, **MOTION DEFEATED.**

2. ADJOURNMENT

4:00 p.m. His Worship, as previously agreed to by Council, declared the meeting adjourned noting that discussion of the Regional Police Services budget would continue on Monday, March 19, 2001.

Vi Carmichael
Municipal Clerk