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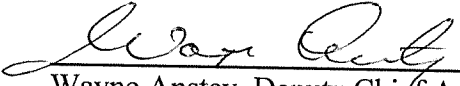
**Halifax Regional Council
February 20, 2007
Committee of the Whole**

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:



Dan English, Chief Administrative Officer



Wayne Anstey, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer - Operations

DATE: February 14, 2007

SUBJECT: Award of Tenders - Grass Cutting and Landscape Maintenance -
Various Locations

ORIGIN

Committee of the Whole, Item 7.12, September 12, 2006.

The Halifax Regional Municipality publicly advertised for tenders for a four (4) year period for Grass Mowing and Landscape Maintenance for various locations across the HRM.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Regional Council authorize:

1. the award of the ten (10) grass mowing and landscape maintenance tenders listed in the background section of this report, with a total award of \$903,930.51 (net HST included) for the period May 1 to November 1, 2007 with funding from Operating Account R710, Grounds and Landscaping as outlined in the Budget Implications section of this report.
2. staff to award the second, third and fourth year of each tender at a total cost of \$903,903.50 (net HST included) per year for the periods May 1 to November 1, of each year. The second, third and fourth year award would be contingent upon an annual performance review and budget allocation.

BACKGROUND

For the past eight years grass mowing and landscape maintenance of HRM's athletic fields, parks, beach areas, playgrounds, walkways, and green spaces has been provided using contractors as an alternative service delivery method. The existing three-year contracts expired in November, 2006.

Tenders were issued on November 29, 2006 for grass mowing and landscape maintenance as follows:

- 06-398 East 1 (Rural) - Athletic Fields (includes Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4)
- 06-399 West 3 (Rural) - Athletic Fields (includes Districts 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 and 23)
- 06-400 East 2 (Core) - Athletic Fields (includes Districts 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9)
- 06-401 West 4 (Core) - Athletic Fields (includes Districts 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17)

- 06-402 East 1 (Rural) - Parks and Green Spaces (includes Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4)
- 06-403 West 3 (Rural) - Parks and Green Spaces (includes Districts 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 and 23)
- 06-404 East 2 (Core) - Parks and Green Spaces (includes Districts 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9)
- 06-405 West 4 (Core) - Parks and Green Spaces (includes Districts 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17)

- 06-406 East Shrub Bed Maintenance (includes Districts 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 19, 20, 21)
- 06-407 West Shrub Bed Maintenance (includes Districts 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17)

DISCUSSION

Over the course of the past number of years, Transportation and Public Works (TPW) has restructured its service delivery practices for HRM grass cutting and landscape maintenance. These services in HRM have been carried out using HRM staff, performance based contractors, and community partnership arrangements. As well, the responsibility lay with the abutting property owners as per Bylaw S-300, Part 2, Section 11, for the maintenance of turf areas between the sidewalk and curb.

The decision to apply a more diverse service delivery approach was based on a number of factors including facility condition, changes in operational focus, customer feedback, and reviews of past maintenance practices. The focus has shifted to utilizing a more skilled approach to turf management (i.e. growing and maintaining grass/turf) rather than mowing. In order to facilitate this shift, it is recommended that the current workforce continue to place its efforts on the more skilled work practices required to improve green space conditions, while contracting out the balance of grass cutting activity.

The recommended approach to the 2007 grass cutting and landscape maintenance program is to continue to utilize a combination of these three (3) resource capabilities:

1. Performance Based Contracts

With the expiration of the previous performance based grass cutting tender in November 2006, staff issued a new series of performance based grass cutting and landscape maintenance tenders. The tenders are designed to ensure the contractors are responsible for work, which comprises the supply of all labour, materials, equipment, fuel, transportation, supplies, supervision, communication requirements, reporting requirements and customer service requirements necessary to perform grass cutting and landscape maintenance services in HRM. The contractors are to perform to a prescribed performance standard which is outlined in the contract:

- ▶ Athletic Fields to a height of between 2 ½ to 4 inches (5 - 10 cm);
- ▶ Parks and Green Spaces to a height of between 2 to 3 ½ inches (4 - 9 cm);
- ▶ Shrub Beds to (A) Service Level (i.e. 6 cuts) and (B) Service Level (i.e. 3 cuts),
- ▶ Weekly inspections and log reports.

Failure to perform will be controlled with various non-performance penalties. Municipal Operations Supervisors will manage the contractors' performance to ensure the desired end result is achieved.

The main advantages of Performance Based Contracts is the accountability of the contractor and predictability for budgeted resources. Since the contracts are a fixed rate for the summer, there would not be the fluctuations associated with variable weather patterns. In addition, contractors have ownership of their inventories, which will eliminate discussions on the question of any damage which may result.

The new maintenance contracts clearly describe the level of services expected. The provision of service by the contractor will be measured according to established service standards and expected levels of performance. The service provision and performance of the contractors will be routinely monitored by Municipal Operations' Contract Supervisors who are dedicated to the evaluation of these contracts and are responsible to ensure the performance of the contractor is acceptable and meets the provisions outlined in the contract. This type of contract will foster collaboration and communication between the Contract Supervisors and the contractors, which is key to the success of these contracts. If any of the aspects of service, communication, reporting and customer service fall below the expected level, appropriate recourse will be administered.

2. In-House Employees and Equipment

In order to maximize in-house resources, HRM employees will be concentrated in the Capital District and several of the major parks, namely Point Pleasant Park, the Public Gardens, Shubie Park, and the Dingle. There are depots and staff housed within these parks which allows for grass cutting service to be easily bundled with all maintenance activity for these particular areas. This allows HRM in-house staff to focus technical expertise in these more visible core regions of HRM, at a higher level of efficiency, due to a lesser need for travel outside the core areas.

3. Community Partnerships

Community Partnerships for upkeep and maintenance of HRM properties (including grass cutting) have been integral to the provision of service by TPW Municipal Operations, particularly in the rural areas. The use of community based groups to provide maintenance services on behalf of HRM essentially began shortly after amalgamation. At that time, HRM was not able or prepared to maintain the level of service in the rural areas that the community expected to receive. Therefore, community groups became organized and provided the service in those rural areas.

The number and basis of partnerships increased substantially at the time user fees for outdoor sport facilities were adopted by Council. At that time, Council recommended that community based partnerships should be encouraged under the premise that the group would provide labour and maintenance to 1) offset the user fees or 2) provide a service above that which HRM was willing or able to provide based on its facility classification system.

Most community based partners receive some form of compensation from HRM for the work they perform on HRM properties. The compensation ranges from approximately \$2,000 to \$48,000 each. However, in some cases, a partner may receive support in the form of materials, rather than a financial contribution.

Issues in 2006 Season

This past summer, there was a more deliberate focus on servicing rather than “over-servicing” the standard, while at the same time combatting a number of uncontrollable challenges. In the eyes of the public, this may have been interpreted as a reduction in service. Hansen reports confirm the public’s interpretation. From January - December, 2005, the total number of Hansen Service Requests regarding grass length (parkland, playgrounds, boulevards, athletic fields, and other HRM open spaces) was 270; this number rose to 486 in 2006. Staff are of the opinion that under-servicing was not the determining factor in this increase; however, staff do acknowledge that there are areas within the program where the level of service and contract management can be improved.

School Properties

There is a Service Level Agreement established between HRM and HRSB, whereby HRSB essentially pays HRM to manage the grass cutting contracts for the schools on its behalf. As in any client/service provider relationship, the HRSB establishes the standard by which HRM carries out the service (i.e. how much they're willing to pay), which for the past agreement was eight (8) cuts per season (between May and November). HRM in turn did a tender call for this specific contract based in this service level.

When the contract came up for renewal for 2007, staff took the opportunity to review the service agreement with representatives of HRSB. From those discussions, the decision was made to increase the service level to match HRM’s servicing standard of 2 - 3 ½ inches (4 - 9 cm). It is

hoped that this increased servicing will be more in keeping with HRM-based standards and thus more palatable to the surrounding community.

School Board custodial staff have been, and will continue to be, responsible for litter pickup and general maintenance of the school yards.

Bylaw S-300

According to Part 2, Section 11 of Bylaw S-300 (Streets), “abutters, except where grass cutting and maintenance service is provided by the Municipality, shall maintain any grass which is between the sidewalk and curb closely clipped and to a height not greater than six inches and shall keep such areas in good order including raking and renewal of the grass as necessary”.

Previous to the last contract, and before this particular bylaw was enacted, the former City of Dartmouth and Town of Bedford were able to provide this service as part of the regular operational practise. However, due to the continual expansion of the servicing area, it has become necessary for HRM grass cutting and turf maintenance to focus solely on HRM-owned lands. These measures are designed to provide a consistent level of service for all citizens in the municipality.

This change in responsibility resulted in some confusion by constituents in the Dartmouth and Bedford/Sackville areas. To address this problem, staff began a process of mailing educational-based letters to residents and businesses who were found to be in violation of Bylaw S-300. The intent is to continue with this educational approach in 2007 through the development and distribution of marketing materials, so that citizens will become fully aware of their responsibilities with respect to turf maintenance.

With respect to enforcement of Bylaw S-300, staff is working towards developing an appropriate process whereby:

- ▶ an inspector would identify the problem to the abutter (either oral or written) and offer a reasonable time frame to comply. This is discretionary and typically ranges from immediate to seven (7) days, depending on the violation.
- ▶ if there is no compliance after the stated time frame, a Summary Offence Ticket is issued.
- ▶ if there is still no compliance after the issuance of a Summary Offence Ticket, HRM may arrange to mow the said property and bill the abutting owner.

Weather

Rainfall amounts in HRM for the months of May, June, and July 2006 were 124.5 mm, 219.3 mm and 180.5 mm respectively. According to Scotia Weather Services, this compared to average rainfall normal values based on climate period 1971 - 2000 of 110.8 mm, 107.8 mm and 107.4 mm. (Refer to Attachment A for further details.)

For June and July in particular, this indicates rainfall amounts of approximately double the normal average. There were a total of eight (8) days in June and 17 days in July with no rainfall.

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The sheer amount of rainfall (particularly in June) hampered efforts to meet grass cutting standards. Even on the eight days that it did not rain, it was often not prudent to have mowers and larger gear operate, as this ran the risk of causing damage to the turf.

By August, the weather patterns started to clear, and grass cutting service was able to resume at a normal rate, with an appropriate service level being met.

Right of Way Maintenance

During the past season, there were a number of complaints due to maintenance issues within the street right of way (a total of 52 Hansen Service Requests). These were essentially weed-related problems with the sidewalks, curbs, and centre median as opposed to turf management i.e. weeds growing between the sidewalk and curb. This is a particular problem at centre medians and in areas where “monolithic” curb has been installed at the roadside.

Maintenance of this nature is not currently part of the grass cutting contract.

Staff is currently researching materials and methods for combatting this issue, such as utilizing horticultural vinegars or other substances that fall within the guidelines dictated by Bylaw P-800, Respecting Pesticides, Herbicides, and Insecticides. Staff is proposing testing of these approaches for the 2007 season to ensure effectiveness. From there, a larger program can be developed.

Tender Award Summary

The following bids were received, evaluated and recommended by TPW - Municipal Operations in conjunction with Finance - Procurement. Tenders for Athletic Fields were called on November 29, 2006 and closed on January 19, 2007. The following bids, net HST included, were received:

Tender	Company	For one (1) year Total Bid (including net HST)	For four (4) years Total Bid (including net HST)
06-398 East 1 - Rural Athletic Fields	Edmonds	\$ 70,834.38 *	\$ 283,337.53 *
	Integrated Property Solutions	\$ 84,809.71	\$ 339,238.84
	Teak Tree	\$ 113,358.18	\$ 453,432.73
	Never Greener	\$ 118,307.26	\$ 473,232.68
06-399 West 3 - Rural Athletic Fields	Changing Seasons	\$ 100,326.13 *	\$ 401,304.52 *
	Integrated Property Solutions	\$ 115,961.49	\$ 463,845.96
	Never Greener	\$ 122,276.86	\$ 489,107.46
	Edmonds	\$ 134,825.90	\$ 539,303.62

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	Protek	\$ 142,421.73	\$ 569,686.93
	Teak Tree	\$ 169,520.13	\$ 678,080.52
06-400 East 2 - Core Athletic Fields	Edmonds	\$ 87,500.93 *	\$ 350,003.73 *
	Integrated Property Solutions	\$ 100,369.57	\$ 401,478.28
	Protek	\$ 123,623.51	\$ 494,494.04
	Never Greener	\$ 144,131.62	\$ 576,526.48
	Teak Tree	\$ 180,471.19	\$ 721,884.77
06-401 West 4 - Core Athletic Fields	Never Greener	\$ 134,987.00 *	\$ 539,948.03 *
	Integrated Property Solutions	\$ 139,672.59	\$ 558,690.36
	Edmonds	\$ 150,572.97	\$ 602,291.88
	Changing Seasons	\$ 154,109.21	\$ 616,436.84
	Teak Tree	\$ 198,169.96	\$ 792,679.85

Tenders for Parks and Green Spaces were called on November 29, 2006 and closed on January 19, 2007. The following bids, net HST included, were received:

Tender	Company	For one (1) year Total Bid (including net HST)	For four (4) years Total Bid (including net HST)
06-402 East 1 - Rural Parks and Green Spaces	Integrated Property Solutions	\$ 70,300.69 *	\$ 281,202.76 *
	Edmonds	\$ 72,844.01	\$ 291,376.04
	Teak Tree	\$ 90,707.23	\$ 362,828.93
	Humphreys	\$ 119,357.06	\$ 477,428.26
06-403 West 3 - Rural Parks and Green Spaces	Never Greener	\$ 81,210.69 *	\$ 324,842.77 *
	Edmonds	\$ 119,253.63	\$ 477,014.54
	Integrated Property Solutions	\$ 134,457.70	\$ 537,830.80
	Teak Tree	\$ 200,600.54	\$ 802,402.18
	Humphreys	\$ 224,854.64	\$ 899,418.58
06-404 East 2 - Core Parks and Green Spaces	Edmonds	\$ 144,285.52 *	\$ 577,142.09 *
	Integrated Property Solutions	\$ 229,862.67	\$ 919,450.71
	Teak Tree	\$ 251,642.75	\$ 1,006,571.00

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	Humphreys	\$ 514,766.13	\$ 2,059,064.50
06-405 West 4 - Core Green Spaces	Never Greener	\$ 148,290.61 *	\$ 593,162.46 *
	Edmonds	\$ 217,466.71	\$ 869,866.85
	Integrated Property Solutions	\$ 381,696.45	\$ 1,526,785.80
	Teak Tree	\$ 441,796.97	\$ 1,767,187.80
	Humphreys	\$ 483,654.68	\$ 1,934,618.70

Tenders for Shrub Beds were called on November 29, 2006 and closed on January 19, 2007. The following bids, including net HST, were received:

Tender	Company	For one (1) year Total Bid (including net HST)	For four (4) years Total Bid (including net HST)
06-406 East Shrub Bed Maintenance	Changing Seasons	\$ 25,857.25 *	\$ 103,429.00 *
	Teak Tree	\$ 27,693.11	\$ 110,772.45
	Edmonds	\$ 30,850.80	\$ 123,403.20
06-407 West Shrub Bed Maintenance	Changing Seasons	\$ 40,337.31 *	\$ 161,349.24 *
	Edmonds	\$ 42,425.54	\$ 169,702.16
	Teak Tree	\$ 52,903.93	\$ 211,615.73

* **Recommended bidder**

The scope of work for this tender generally consists of all equipment, labour and material necessary to perform summer grass cutting and landscape maintenance services for HRM owned green spaces. These tenders will form a performance base contract.

Optional unit prices per square metre have been established for one time cutting (note: these are at HRM's request only). This price, though not identified as a reward criteria, is required in order to be able to deal with any additions to the asset inventory. Optional unit prices for rose hedge pruning, shrub bed mulching, and additional occasional work were provided and are to be used at HRM's request only.

The Tender is May 1 to November 1 inclusive each year of a four (4) year period.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

Funding for the approximately \$903,930.51 will be available from Account R710, Grounds and Landscaping, pending approval of the 2007/08 Operating Budget.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

ALTERNATIVES

An alternative is that the grass mowing service could be performed by HRM staff. However, to do so would force a shift back to past practices in the area of maintenance instead of moving forward in the planned direction. The overall improvement strategy would not be as effectively implemented as the resources that would have been applied to the skilled work or turf management would be placed back onto the less skilled work of grass cutting.

Having grass cutting services performed inhouse would also prove to be more costly to the taxpayer. To illustrate, there would be a staff requirement of an additional 50 - 60 FTE's for a seven (7) month period. Including benefits, the total cost for labour would be between \$1,300,000.00 and \$1,600,000.00. This is in accordance with the wage rates stipulated in the CUPE Collective Agreement and does not include overtime or the capital costs of acquiring additional equipment nor the operating cost of maintaining that equipment.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment "A" - Scotia Weather Services Inc. - Rainfall Amounts by Day for Halifax, 2006.

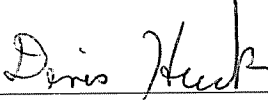
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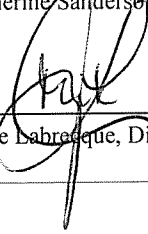
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A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.html> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

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Mike Labrecque, Director - Transportation and Public Works, 490-4855

Attachment "A"

Rainfall Amounts by Day for Halifax as recorded at Shearwater Airport

Day of Month	May 2006 Rainfall Amount (mm)	June 2006 Rainfall Amount (mm)	July 2006 Rainfall Amount (mm)
1	9.6	2	0
2	0	15.1	0
3	3.2	16.9	0
4	0	17.6	28.5
5	0	0.6	0.7
6	17	0	0
7	0.7	15	0
8	0	12.5	0.7
9	4.4	0.7	4.7
10	0	2	0.6
11	0	10.4	11.6
12	0	0.7	13.9
13	0	0	46.1
14	0	4.5	0.6
15	0	36.1	0
16	58.4	0	0
17	0	0	0
18	0	0	0
19	17.7	0	0
20	0.6	2.8	0
21	0	0.7	22.8
22	0.6	0.6	7.5
23	0	0.6	32.9
24	0	28.9	9.3
25	0	23.2	0
26	9.4	0.7	0
27	1.4	0	0.6
28	0	0	0
29	0.6	16.5	0
30	0	11.2	0
31	0.9		0
Monthly Total (mm)	124.5	219.3	180.5
Rainfall Normal values based on climate period 1971-2000	110.8 mm	107.8 mm	107.4 mm

Prepared by: Scotia Weather Services Inc

Date: 29-Nov-06