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**Halifax Regional Council**  
**June 19, 2007**

**TO:** Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

**SUBMITTED BY:**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan English", written over a horizontal line.

Dan English, Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** June 13, 2007

**SUBJECT:** Fire - Purchase of Fire - Rescue Boat / Reserve Withdrawals

**ORIGIN**

Staff

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Regional Council:

1. Approve an increase to the 2007/08 Capital Budget (project CVJ00703) in the amount of \$230,000, which includes the non-refundable portion of HST, for the purchase of: One (1) Fire-Rescue boat with funding in the amount of \$230,000 to be provided from Q206 - Fire Vehicle & Equipment Reserve.
2. Approve the withdrawal of \$230,000.00 from Q206 - Fire Vehicle & Equipment Reserve.

## **BACKGROUND**

Currently Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency have in service one water-craft that is utilized for emergency responses around the Halifax Harbour. The primary role for this 'Fire Boat' is fire suppression and mitigation of emergencies on the HRM shoreline, focussing in the Halifax Harbour. Emergency responses would include structural fires along the HRM waterfront where a road apparatus could not be used, marina's / yachting clubs, water craft fires, and when requested to assist HRPD in body recovery.

Our current harbour rescue / fire boat is a 24 ft Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat (RIB) which has been modified to accept a fire pump and monitor. Although the boat was put in service in 1999, HRFE made the acquisition in 2001, modifying the boat to accept a fire pump and monitor gun. The boat has been in continuous service since 2001, engaged in harbour rescues, the suppression of small water craft fires, and the suppression of dock and wharf fires at the periphery of the harbour and surrounds. Maintenance costs on the current vessel have spiked in the last year with constant repairs to the super structure and navigational aides, and the recent replacement of an engine. The fire pump installed does not meet the minimal pumping standards for fighting operations and it lacks the distance and water flow required in order to maintain a shoreline fire suppression operation

## **DISCUSSION**

Rigid Hull Inflatable boats (RIB) have a continuous service lifespan of 8-10 years in a salt water environment. Our current harbour fire-rescue boat is 9 years old and has been in continuous service in our harbour and surrounds especially since Fire's acquisition in 2001. While it has suited some of our needs, it does not perform to the expectations of a purpose built fire-rescue boat.

- It does not allow us to work in shallows;
- Rescue in the harbour is difficult because of the height of the gunwales;
- The boat was retrofitted to accept a pump for firefighting;
- It is rubber and therefore more susceptible to fire damage;
- The boat cannot be positioned against an object or other boat;
- The RIB does not have capacity to pump foam, for marine petroleum based fires;
- Pump capacity at maximum is 800 gallons per minute which is extremely low for a master fire stream;
- Searching at night is minimally effective because of the limited lighting the RIB will support;
- There is no storage on board for any equipment.

The intent would be to call a tender to procure a purpose built fire- rescue boat to improve and eradicate the deficiencies noted. The fire-rescue boat would include following minimum performance specifications:

- a 28 ft boat with twin outboards and a multifunction Combo jet-drive that supplies approximately 2000 gallons per minute to the monitor guns for fire suppression (fore and

- aft);
- a jet drive that would allow work in shallow water, which is imperative for rescue and shore line wharf based fires;
  - gunwales that fold out to water level as rescue platforms allowing for quick and efficient rescue from the water;
  - is purpose built for water rescue and firefighting;
  - construction would be fibreglass / kevlar blend that resists fire damage;
  - an unsinkable hull with bow crown bumpers which can be used to push small water craft, objects;
  - the ability to tow up to 10,000 lbs;
  - on board capacity for storing foam and a foam induction system;
  - pump capacity of 2000 gallons per minute, higher than our land based fire apparatus;
  - remote controlled spotlights for nighttime operations;
  - ample sealed storage on board for equipment;
  - fully equipped on arrival;
  - 10 year hull warranty;

It is the intention of HRFE to purchase a replacement for our aging Harbour Fire - Rescue boat. The boat preferred would be specifically designed for Harbour Fire-Rescue.

The estimated cost of this procurement is \$ 230,000 and if approved the Procurement policy for tendering will be followed.

The current harbour-fire rescue boat still has some value to HRFE as a back up. Operating costs associated with the new boat will be minimal as warranty covers the inboard jet drive for two (2) years, outboard engines for three (3) years and the hull for ten (10) years.

A trailer is included with the boat, and no additional fit up is required.

### **BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

Based on an increase to the 2007/08 Capital Budget of \$230,000 for a Harbour Fire-Rescue Boat

One (1) Harbour Fire- Rescue Boat complete with trailer - \$230,000

Funding is available from the Fire Vehicle & Equipment Reserve Q206 in the amount of \$230,000. This has been confirmed by Financial Services.

**FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN**

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating budget, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation. If approved, this will increase the 2007-08 Capital budget and withdrawals from reserves.

**ALTERNATIVES**

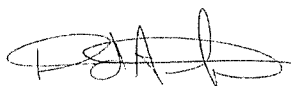
- 1) To continue using the existing RIB Fireboat to respond to emergencies, realizing that it is nearing its expected life span, while continuing to cover the costs for repairs and upgrades and knowing it does not meet our requirements for shoreline firefighting / rescues.
- 2) To not replace the current water craft and HRM accept the risk of not having any firefighting water craft for a shoreline / marina response.

**ATTACHMENTS**

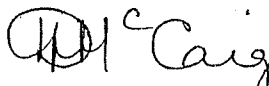
None

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.htm> 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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For Cathie O'Toole, Acting Director, Finance 490-6308



Report Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_  
William H. Mosher, Chief Director 490-4239