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Item No. 10.1.3

Halifax Regional Council
December 9, 2008

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: *Julia Horncastle*

Julia Horncastle, Acting Municipal Clerk

DATE: December 5, 2008

SUBJECT: 2009 Regional Council Meeting Schedule

ORIGIN

It has been the practice for Regional Council to adopt a schedule outlining meetings of Regional Council for the forthcoming year. The proposed meeting schedule for 2009 is now before Council for consideration.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council:

- 1) Approve the 2009 Regional Council Meeting Schedule as attached.
- 2) Adopt as a policy pursuant to the Municipal Government Act, an amendment to Administrative Order One, Section 8(2), to state "Council shall meet every Tuesday at the hour of 6:00 p.m., with the exception of vacation periods as determined by Council by resolution, or when deemed appropriate by the Mayor and Chief Administrative Officer jointly, or two-thirds of the Council to convene earlier in the day.
- 3) Direct staff to investigate and report back on the tools, technology and resources required to provide consistent public access to the proceedings of Council.

BACKGROUND

In accordance with Administrative Order Number One, Section 8 (2), regular Council sessions are held every Tuesday commencing at 6:00 pm. Previous Council schedules have taken into account statutory and standing holidays as well as providing Council with a summer break, while ensuring that the business of Council is conducted in a timely manner. Additional Council and Committee of the Whole meetings are also scheduled to accommodate the Budget and Business Planning schedule

From time to time it has been the practice for Regional Council meetings to commence immediately following Committee of the Whole meetings, as deemed appropriate by Council. Also, from time to time Council has sought additional flexibility in scheduling and conducting Council meetings. These practices and flexibility are not provided for in Administrative Order One, Respecting the Procedures of Council.

Currently, EastLink Television provides broadcast coverage of evening Council Sessions and a limited number of other sessions of Council, such as Budget and Business Planning Committee of the Whole meetings, at no cost to HRM, as part of their commitment to community service.

DISCUSSION

Council Meeting Schedule

The attached schedule proposes that Council sessions for 2009 begin on January 13th. The schedule reflects March 17th as March break. Council's summer recess will consist of July 14th, 21st, 28th, August 18th, 25th, September 1st and 8th. There will be a break on May 19th to coincide with the Victoria Day holiday weekend and October 13th for Thanksgiving. December 22rd and 29th have been proposed as the break for the Holiday Season.

Committee of the Whole Meeting Schedule

Committee of the Whole meetings have been scheduled for the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month as required, with the exception of January and February which reflect one additional meeting for each of the two months. It is anticipated that these additional meetings will be required early in the year to allow Council adequate time to debate and provide instruction to staff with regard to Council priorities and expectations. As has been the long standing practice, additional Committee of Whole sessions will be scheduled to accommodate the Budget Deliberation Process. Additional meetings may also be scheduled throughout the year should the need arise.

Revisions to the Council Schedule

As Council is aware staff, under the direction of the Regional Council Membership Selection Committee, have undertaken a review of HRM's governance structure. As part of this review discussions pertaining to the scheduling of Council meetings have taken place with Members of Council. Upon completion of this review, if deemed appropriate, Council may choose to revise the approved 2009 meeting schedule for the balance of the calendar year.

Currently, Administrative Order One, Section 8(2) states that "Council shall meet every Tuesday at the hour of 6:00 p.m., with the exception of vacation periods, as determined by Council by resolution". An amendment to this Administrative Order is proposed in order to provide Council with flexibility in the setting of Council meeting time frames.

Enhanced Public Access to Meetings of Council

Eastlink has openly entered into discussions with HRM regarding Council broadcasts and those discussions are ongoing. At present, due to commitments of staff and equipment, EastLink can only respond to requests for additional coverage that occur based on a pre arranged schedule.

Due to the recent equipment and technological upgrades to the Council Chamber, staff are now positioned to explore options for enhancing public access to the proceedings of Council. Video streaming of Council sessions via the internet may be one such option.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

There are no budget implications associated with the recommended course of action.

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

In keeping with past practice with respect to Council breaks and based on input provided by Members of Council, there are no alternatives being presented at this time.

ATTACHMENTS

Halifax Regional Council Meeting Schedule January to December 2009.

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.

Report Prepared by: Christen MacDonald, Coordinator, Office of the Municipal Clerk, 490-6525

2009 HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL SCHEDULE

DRAFT

MONTH	DATE	MEETING	TIME	MONTH	DATE	MEETING	TIME
January	Jan 6	No Meeting		July	July 7	Regular Session	6:00 p.m.
	Jan 13	COW Regular Session	TBA 6:00 p.m.		July 14	No Regularly Scheduled Meetings	
	Jan 20	COW Regular Session	TBA 6:00 p.m.		July 21		
	Jan 27	COW Regular Session	TBA 6:00 p.m.		July 28		
February	Feb 3	COW Regular Session	6:00 p.m.	August	Aug 4	Regular Session	6:00 p.m.
	Feb 10	COW Regular Session	TBA 6:00 p.m.		Aug 11	COW Regular Session	TBA 6:00 p.m.
	Feb 17	Regular Session	6:00 p.m.		Aug 18	No Regularly Scheduled Meetings	
	Feb 24	COW Regular Session	TBA 6:00 p.m.		Aug 25		
March	March 3	Regular Session	6:00 p.m.	September	Sept 1		
	March 10	COW Regular Session	TBA 6:00 p.m.		Sept 8		
	March 17	No Meeting (March Break)			Sept 15	Regular Session	6:00 p.m.
	March 24	COW Regular Session	TBA 6:00 p.m.		Sept 22	COW Regular Session	TBA 6:00 p.m.
	March 31	Regular Session	6:00 p.m.		Sept 29	Regular Session	6:00 p.m.
April	April 7	Regular Session	6:00 p.m.	October	Oct 6	Regular Session	6:00 p.m.
	April 14	COW Regular Session	TBA 6:00 p.m.		Oct 13	No Meeting (Thanksgiving)	
	April 21	Regular Session	6:00 p.m.		Oct 20	Regular Session	6:00 p.m.
	April 28	COW Regular Session	TBA 6:00 p.m.		Oct 27	COW Regular Session	TBA 6:00 p.m.
May	May 5	Regular Session	6:00 p.m.	November	Nov 3	No Meeting (UNSM - Halifax)	
	May 12	COW Regular Session	TBA 6:00 p.m.		Nov 10	COW Regular Session	TBA 6:00 p.m.
	May 19	No Meeting (Victoria Day)			Nov 17	Regular Session	6:00 p.m.
	May 26	COW Regular Session	TBA 6:00 p.m.		Nov 24	COW Regular Session	TBA 6:00 p.m.
June	June 2	Regular Session	6:00 p.m.	December	Dec 1	Regular Session	6:00 p.m.
	June 9	No Meeting (FCM - Whistler, BC)			Dec 8	COW Regular Session	TBA 6:00 p.m.
	June 16	Regular Session	6:00 p.m.		Dec 15	Regular Session	6:00 p.m.
	June 23	COW Regular Session	TBA 6:00 p.m.		Dec 22	Holiday Season	
	June 30	Regular Session	6:00 p.m.		Dec 29		

Note: Committee of the Whole Meetings every second & fourth Tuesday of the month or on as as required basis.

Where appropriate, Regional Council may be scheduled immediately following Committee of the Whole meetings.