



**HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES  
May 13, 2014**

PRESENT: Mayor Mike Savage  
Deputy Mayor Darren Fisher  
Councillors: Barry Dalrymple  
David Hendsbee  
Bill Karsten  
Lorelei Nicoll  
Gloria McCluskey  
Waye Mason  
Jennifer Watts  
Linda Mosher  
Russell Walker  
Stephen Adams  
Reg Rankin  
Matt Whitman  
Brad Johns  
Steve Craig  
Tim Outhit

STAFF: Mr. Richard Butts, Chief Administrative Officer  
Mr. John Traves, Municipal Solicitor  
Ms. Sherryll Murphy, Deputy Municipal Clerk  
Mr. Liam MacSween, Legislative Assistant

*The following does not represent a verbatim record of the proceedings of this meeting.*

*A video recording of this meeting is available:  
[http://archive.isiglobal.ca/vod/halifax/archive\\_2014-05-13\\_live.mp4.html](http://archive.isiglobal.ca/vod/halifax/archive_2014-05-13_live.mp4.html)*

*The agenda, supporting documents, and information items circulated to Council are available  
online: <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/140513cow-agenda.php>*

*The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. and adjourned at 12:25 p.m.*

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Deputy Mayor Fisher called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

**2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – NONE**

**3. Mayor and Council Review of Task Force on Violence and Public Safety**

The following documentation was before the Committee:

- A recommendation Report dated May 6, 2014
- A recommendation Report dated April 16, 2014
- A presentation dated, May 13, 2014
- A memorandum from the Municipal Clerk dated May 13, 2014

Professor Don Clairmont introduced himself and the team of collaborators for the project. He acknowledged and introduced Professor Kit Waters, Professor Chris Murphy, Dr. Verona Singer, Mr. Don Spicer and Professor Steve Kimber all of whom played an integral role in delivering the report to the Mayor and Council. Professor Clairmont further acknowledged Mr. John Peach and Professor Steve Schnieder who were not in attendance but contributed to the report.

Mayor Savage entered the meeting at 10:02 a.m. and assumed the position of Chair. He provided background information with respect to the Mayor and Council Review of the Task Force on Violence and Public Safety and noted that the Regional Council meeting will commence immediately after the Committee of the Whole meeting. The Mayor invited Professor Don Clairmont to begin his presentation.

Professor Clairmont gave a presentation with regard to the Mayor and Council Review of the Task Force on Violence.

The Mayor thanked Dr. Clairmont and his team for the report and presentation.

**MOVED by Deputy Mayor Fisher, seconded by Councillor Mason that Halifax Regional Council, as part of the Healthy Communities Core Priorities Area:**

- 1. Direct the CAO to implement the relocation of the Public Safety Office function from the Halifax Regional Police to HRM administration, as described in the Mayor and Council Review of Task Force Violence and Public Safety;**
- 2. Direct the CAO to review and respond as appropriate to the recommendations of the Mayor and Council Review of the Task Force on Violence and Public Safety, and report back to Council at a future date.**

Deputy Mayor Fisher commented that there was a major problem in 2006-2008 with respect to public safety and violence in HRM. He stated that it is encouraging to see reductions and improvements in this area but noted new challenges with respect to crime and public safety originating from social media. He referenced existing programs, such as the Souls Strong Program, Cease Fire, and the COMSTAT (Comparative Statistics or Computer Statistics) police reporting model which greatly assisted in reducing crime rates. He further commented that these programs speak to increased collaboration among levels of government and community partners as well as a shift toward community advocacy as opposed to simply funding programs.

Councillor Mason thanked Professor Clairmont and his team for the work that was undertaken with respect to the report. He commented that the Mayor and Members of Council are driven to take a holistic approach to building a safe community as per Council's mandate. He commented that the report illustrates that HRM does many things very well with respect to public safety as there have been a great deal of improvements since 2006. He commented that Halifax Regional Police (HRP) and the RCMP do a great job but there is always a way to do better. He concluded by stating that the report creates a road map for excellence with respect to public safety.

Councillor Mason commented that he strongly supports the staff recommendation but proposed the following amendment to the second recommendation in the main motion:

**MOVED by Councillor Mason, seconded by Councillor Karsten that the motion be amended to direct the CAO to review and respond as appropriate to the recommendations of the Mayor and Council Review of the Task Force on Violence and Public Safety, and report back to Council no less than twice yearly.**

**MOTION TO AMEND PUT AND PASSED.**

Councillor Watts thanked Professor Clairmont and his team for the comprehensive review. She noted that the gender based violence that is prevalent in this Municipality is incredibly painful and worrisome and stated that she believes these crimes limit the community. She requested commentary from Professor Clairmont with respect to accountability for both men and women in dealing with sexual violence prevention and the impact that alcohol abuse plays in that regard.

Professor Clairmont noted that men need to be more accountable with respect to sexually based violence against women. He commented on the recent "Don't be that Kind of Guy" campaign that was well received by women's groups across HRM. He noted that when the St. Mary's situation developed, half of the people that were chanting in the video were females and that there is some responsibility on the part of women to advocate for themselves to show that they are not tolerant of that type of behavior. He commented that both men and women need to be engaged to get the message across that sexualized violence is not acceptable.

Councillor Mosher stated that she appreciates all of the hard work that was put in to the review. She noted a positive change with respect to violence and public safety in HRM over the past several years and remarked that there is more work to do in that regard. She stated that she is a member of the Board of Police Commissioners and expressed concern that the Board was not formally consulted with respect to moving the HRM Public Safety Office from HRP to HRM

administration. She advised that the Board of Police Commissioners is the body which currently oversees the Public Safety Office and that further consultation with the Board should take place before the Public Safety Office is moved.

Councillor Mosher proposed the following amendment to the main motion:

**MOVED by Councillor Mosher, seconded by Councillor Dalrymple that the motion be amended to direct the CAO to consult with the Board of Police Commissioners to obtain feedback on the Clairmont report with respect to the Public Safety Office and ensure it aligns appropriately with the requirements of the Police Act.**

Mayor Savage inquired if members of the Board of Police Commissioners were interviewed as part of the review. Professor Clairmont replied in the affirmative and noted that with the exception of one Commissioner, all members of the Board of Police Commissioners were interviewed as part of the review.

Councillor Karsten requested further information from the Solicitor with respect to the amendment. He stated that Regional Council gave the direction to create a Public Safety Office and that the authority to move the Public Safety Office is that of Regional Council. He commented that he does not believe that there is a requirement under the Police Act for the Board of Police Commissioners to approve the move of the Public Safety Office and that he would not be able to support the motion.

Mr. John Traves, Solicitor commented that the proposed amendment put forth by Councillor Mosher is to consult with the Board of Police Commissioner regarding the implementation of the recommendation in regard to addressing only alignment with the Police Act.

Councillor Dalrymple commented that there was a discussion at the last meeting of the Board of Police Commissioners during which it was made clear that the Board would like input regarding the move of the Public Safety Office. He commented that HRM Administration may be the best place for the Public Safety Office, however it would be appropriate for the Police Commission to provide input prior to the move given that the Board of Police Commissioners is the current overseeing body of the Public Safety Office.

Councillor Hendsbee commented that he views the move of the Public Safety Office from HRP to HRM Administration as a positive improvement. He stated that HRP is doing a very good job of managing the Public Safety Office but noted that it will likely be more accessible to the public and have more of an impact in the community if it is moved under HRM Administration.

Councillor Nicoll echoed Councillor Hendsbee's comments regarding the alignment of the Public Safety Office to HRM Administration. She noted that public safety, community planning and economic development policy falls under the jurisdiction of Regional Council and that the Public Safety Office should be no different. She commented that she will not support the proposed amendment.

Councillor Mason expressed his support for the amendment to consult with the Board of Police Commissioner regarding the alignment of the Public Safety Office with HRM Administration. He noted that the Board of Police Commissioners provides oversight on policing and public safety matters and that their input in this regard would be valuable. He commented that he supports moving the Public Safety Office from HRP to HRM Administration to expand the role of the office beyond policing, but the Board of Police Commissioners should be consulted in this process.

Councillor Craig thanked Professor Clairmont and his team for the report and presentation. With respect to the proposed amendment, he commented that the alignment of the Public Safety Office is going to happen and that consultation with the Board of Police Commissioners on crime prevention and enforcement will be beneficial. He commented that the review undertaken by the Task Force goes way beyond policing and many of the recommendation have to do with community planning and programming, advocacy, and economic development. He expressed his support for the amendment to consult with the Board of Police Commissioners to help achieve the goals as set forth in the report to make the recommendations actionable.

Councillor Outhit concurred with Councillor Mason and Craig and commented that he supports the amendment. He noted that the Board of Police Commissioners would like to have some input with respect to the move of the Public Safety Office and that it should be extended as a courtesy given that the Board of Police Commissioners is the current reporting body for the Public Safety Office.

Councillor Rankin stated that some members of Council are concerned that there was a lack adequate consultation with the Board of Police Commissioners regarding the alignment of the Public Safety Office with HRM Administration. He commented that he believes the intended function of the Public Safety Office goes beyond policing and relates to socio-economic conditions and community planning. He commented however, that policing plays a very important role in public safety and that it is the role of Regional Council and HRM Administration to determine the various remedies to address the societal issues which cause public safety issues. He concluded by stating that Regional Council is going to adopt what was intended to be adopted and that in his opinion, the original recommendations have endured.

Professor Clairmont noted that the HRP will maintain its own programming with respect to Public Safety and violence as will the RCMP. He commented that the recommendation to move the Public Safety Office from HRP to HRM Administration was formulated as there is a need to broaden the scope and functionality of the office. He commented that changes to the laws on prostitution, the allocation of resources to certain communities and the evolving downtown are general issues that are beyond the mandate of Police Services. Dr. Professor Clairmont advised that many senior Police Officers within HRM agree with this assessment. If HRM is to be effective in dealing with these issues, a Public Safety Office outside of the Police Services is necessary.

Councillor Mosher stated that the intent of the proposed amendment is to afford the Board of Police Commissioners the opportunity to provide feedback with respect to the move of the Public Safety Office given that the Board is the current reporting body for that particular office. She

noted that the advice of the Board of Police Commissioners in this regard would be beneficial. She further noted that the amendment does not suggest that the Public Safety Office should not be moved from Police Services but rather that the Board of Police Commissioners should be consulted respecting the implementation of the move.

**MOTION TO AMEND PUT AND PASSED.**

With respect to the main motion, Councillor Hendsbee inquired as to how broadly the report will be shared with external community groups and agencies. He further commented that the staff should focus on cleaning up garbage and graffiti in some communities in HRM to help improve public safety.

Mayor Savage noted that the report is a public document and can be shared with any community group that expresses interest to do so. He further noted that Professor Clairmont and Professor Waters indicated that they would speak to community partners about the report if requested to do so.

Councillor McCluskey thanked Professor Clairmont and his team for the report. With respect to the public Safety Office, she agreed with previous comments that the realignment of the Public Safety Office was a matter to be decided by Council. She further commented that more work needs to be done with respect to public housing, group homes, and providing affordable recreation programs for children and youth, as well as curbing underage drinking.

Councillor Dalrymple commented that it is unfortunate that the Board of Police Commissioners could not discuss the report but noted that that in no way detracts from its importance. He remarked that the report outlines the dramatic drops in crime rates since 2008 and delves deeper into the root causes of crime in HRM. He concluded that there is more work to be done with respect to addressing issues such as gun violence and gender based crime in HRM.

Councillor Nicoll thanked Professor Clairmont and his team for the report and commented that the culture in HRM with respect to violence and public safety must change and the recommendations listed in the report identify opportunities to achieve that goal. She noted that forecasting measures such as the COMSTAT model help Police identify where resources are needed and greatly impacts the crime rate in the community. She inquired about domestic violence reporting.

Professor Clairmont noted that multiple offenders in HRM account for a significant number of charges that are laid by Police Services. He further noted that the overall crime picture is developing quite well but there are a number of hard cases with respect to multiple offenders that require more resources. With respect to domestic violence, Professor Clairmont explained that a Domestic Violence Court, modeled after the court which exists in Cape Breton, would be beneficial for HRM as it not only deals with domestic violence cases but also emphasizes treatment options for offenders.

Councillor Walker thanked Professor Clairmont and his team for the report. He inquired if the person who will lead the Public Safety Office will be a Police Officer.

Mr. Richard Butts, Chief Administrative Officer commented that the person who will lead the public safety office does not have to be a Police Officer. In response to a follow up question from Councillor Walker, he commented that the relationship of Police Services to the office would not change if the Public Safety Office is moved from HRP to HRM Administration. He further noted that he believes the intent of the recommendation regarding the move of the Public Safety Office is so that its mandate can be broadened beyond the scope of Police Services.

Deputy Mayor Fisher assumed the position of Chair as Mayor Savage wished to speak on the report.

Mayor Savage thanked Professor Clairmont and his team for the detailed report and presentation. He acknowledged and thanked former Mayor Peter Kelly who commissioned the original taskforce and brought Professor Clairmont and the team on board. He remarked that significant progress has been achieved with respect to public safety and violence in HRM and commented that there is significant work that still must be undertaken, particularly in relation to gender violence and guns and gangs.

Mayor Savage commented that HRM is very lucky to have a very good Public Safety Officers. He further commented that HRM has two excellent police forces under the leadership of Chief Jean Michel Blais, HRP and Chief Superintendent Roland Wells, RCMP. He explained that there is much more to public safety than policing alone, and that the report as provided by Task Force is not a commentary on policing in HRM. He noted that aligning the Public Safety Office with other departments in HRM will help ensure that more resources and other areas of expertise are devoted to enhancing public safety.

Mayor Savage returned to Chair with the Deputy Mayor taking his seat in Council.

Further discussion ensued with Professor Clairmont answering questions from Councillors relating to fostering community partnerships and youth group home facilities.

With respect to the main motion, Councillor Dalrymple requested that Committee of the Whole vote separately on each part of the motion, as follows:

**MOVED by Deputy Mayor Fisher, seconded by Councillor Mason that Halifax Regional Council, as a part of the Healthy Communities Core Priorities Area direct the CAO to implement the relocation of the Public Safety Office function from the Halifax Regional Police to the HRM administration, as described in the Mayor and Council Review of Task Force on Violence and Public Safety.**

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

**MOVED by Deputy Mayor Fisher, seconded by Councillor Mason that Halifax Regional Council, as a part of the Healthy Communities Core Priorities Area direct the CAO to review and respond as appropriate to the recommendations of the Mayor and Council**

**Review of Task Force on Violence and Public Safety, and to report back to Council no less than twice yearly.**

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

**MOVED by Deputy Mayor Fisher, seconded by Councillor Mason that Halifax Regional Council, as a part of the Healthy Communities Core Priorities Area direct the CAO to consult with the Board of Police Commissioners to obtain feedback on the Clairmont report with respect to the Public Safety Office and ensure it aligns appropriately with the requirements of the Police Act.**

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

**5. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:25 p.m.

Cathy J. Mellett  
Municipal Clerk