



**HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES
March 8, 2016**

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

STAFF: Mr. John Traves, Acting Chief Administrative Officer
Ms. Karen Brown, Acting Municipal Solicitor
Ms. Sherryl Murphy, Deputy Municipal Clerk
Ms. Phoebe Rai, Legislative Assistant
Ms. Sheilagh Edmonds, 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_2016-03-08_live.mp4.html

The agenda, supporting documents, and information items circulated to Council are available online: <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/160308cow-agenda.php>

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m., and recessed at 12:10 p.m. Committee of the Whole reconvened in at 2:21 p.m. and adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Councillor Mosher, Chair called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – January 27, February 2, February 3 and February 16, 2016

MOVED by Councillor McCluskey, seconded by Councillor Nicoll

THAT the minutes of January 27, February 2, February 3 and February 16, 2016 be approved as circulated.

A question was raised regarding the Seniors Snow Removal Program motion from page 7 of the January 27, 2016 minutes. Council heard that the matter will be addressed as part of a larger report.

Ms. Sherryll Murphy, Deputy Municipal Clerk, indicated that the minutes would be revised to provide clarity and brought back to Regional Council for approval.

The question was called on the motion as follows:

THAT the minutes of February 2, February 3 and February 16, 2016 be approved as circulated.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

3. Full Review of Final Budget – Proposed 2016/2017 Budget and Business Plan

The following was before Committee of the Whole:

- A staff recommendation report dated February 24, 2016, with revised proposed reserve budget 2016/17 summary and revised Attachment A
- Proposed 2016-17 Operating and Capital Budget Books
- A recommendation report dated February 23, 2016 submitted by the Chair of the Board of Police Commissioners
- A staff presentation dated March 8, 2016
- A handout from the Chief Financial Officer entitled “2016-17 Municipal Budget Highlights”
- A handout entitled Revised Proposed Reserve Budget 2016/17 Summary and Proposed Capital Reserve Funds Budget
- Correspondence dated March 7, 2016 from Philip Pacey

i) Presentation

Councillor Mosher, Chair invited staff to provide a presentation respecting the Proposed 2016/2017 Budget and Business Plan.

Mr. John Traves, Acting Chief Administrative Officer, provided introductory remarks. He indicated that the budget before Council is linked to the priorities of Council and represents a balanced budget without tax increases.

Ms. Amanda Whitewood, Chief Financial Officer and Director of Finance & ICT, presented the proposed 2016/2017 Budget and Business Plan. She reviewed each of Council's approved priorities and detailed how the financial plan responds to those priorities. With respect to financial responsibility, Ms. Whitewood spoke to the positive economic forecast, decline of municipal expenditures, flattening of property tax bills,

decline in municipal debt, and the strategic infrastructure reserve for debt management creating capacity for growth.

Mr. Bruce Fisher, Manager of Financial Policy and Planning spoke to the financial pressure of \$18.7 million and provided an overview of how the budget was balanced. Mr. Fisher also presented the breakdown of operational revenues for 2016/17, noting that both residential and commercial property tax bills are flat.

ii) Public Submissions

Councillor Mosher invited members of the public to address Committee of the Whole on the budget presentation.

Mr. Rob McLaughlin, Tantallon commented that the tendering process for sidewalk snow removal could be improved by including a component in the contract to enable the extension of the contract if the contractor meets a certain level of service. He advised that this would enable the municipality to access better rates for machines and fuel.

Mr. Kevin Lacey of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation expressed his view that the budget did a good job of protecting the interests of taxpayers, though he noted his concern with rising transit costs and pensions.

Mr. Nick Langley of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business lauded the decrease in the tax rate, but expressed concerns regarding pension liabilities.

Councillor Mosher called three times for additional speakers. There being no further speakers, Councillor Mosher opened the debate.

iii) Debate

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Whitman, seconded by Councillor Karsten

THAT Halifax Regional Council approve the 2016/2017 Capital and Operating Budget, as per revised Attachment A of the staff report dated February 24, 2016 – “Resolution for Approval of Operating and Capital Budget, and Tax Rates for Fiscal 2016/2017,” including:

- a. Total Budget Approval for Multi-year Projects, as detailed in Schedule 1; and**
- b. The Withdrawal from Reserves detailed in Schedule 2.**

Mayor Savage joined the meeting at 11:12 a.m.

In the ensuing discussion, Councillors requested additional information to be provided by staff on the following matters:

- when did Council provide direction regarding the marketing budget for the Halifax Convention Centre;
- regarding the “pan Canadian check-in,” what is the level of assessment in those cities in comparison to Halifax;
- the district schedule for implementing the street lighting replacement program and the status regarding street lights on private roads; and
- the list of replacement bus shelter locations.

Staff indicated they would follow up with the Councillors directly to provide this information.

In response to a question regarding revenue from payments in lieu of taxes (PILT), Mr. Traves indicated that it would be reasonable to expect a decision from the Minister during the 2016-2017 fiscal year; however, the value has not yet been determined.

Responding to a question respecting lake testing, Mr. Brad Anguish, Director, Parks and Recreation confirmed that there has been no change to lake testing protocols. He advised that staff monitor all supervised beaches and lakes as well as ice thickness.

The Committee of the Whole recessed at 12:10 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 2:20 p.m. with the following motion on the floor:

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Whitman, seconded by Councillor Karsten

That Halifax Regional Council approve the 2016/2017 Capital and Operating Budget, as per Revised Attachment A – “Resolution for Approval of Operating and Capital Budget, and Tax Rates for Fiscal 2016/2017 including:
a. Total Budget Approval for Multi-year Projects, as detailed in Schedule 1; and
b. The Withdrawal from Reserves detailed in Schedule 2.

In responding to a question in regard to the Household Hazardous Waste Depot, Mr. Matt Keliher, Manager, Solid Waste Resources advised that last year there were 17 mobile Household Hazardous Waste Depots but not all were used. The Acting CAO advised that staff would look into whether there is unused capacity and redeploying it in the upcoming year.

In response to a question by Councillor Hendsbee in regard to rural internet service, Ms. Donna Davis, Chief Information Officer, noted that the Municipality has no jurisdiction over the provision of internet service to the public but that she would follow up with Provincial staff and get back to the Councillor.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

MOVED by Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor Adams

That Halifax Regional Council approve the Halifax Regional Police 2016-2017 Operating Budget and Business Plan of \$76,964,700.00

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

Kevin Arjoon
Municipal Clerk