

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES APRIL 13, 2004

PRESENT: Mayor Peter Kelly (9:50 p.m.)
Deputy Mayor Steve Streach
Councillors: Krista Snow
David Hendsbee
Ron Cooper
Harry McInroy
Brian Warshick
Condo Sarto
Jim Smith
John Cunningham
Jerry Blumenthal
Dawn Sloane
Sue Uteck
Sheila Fougere (9:55 a.m.)
Russell Walker
Debbie Hum
Linda Mosher (10:00 a.m.)
Stephen Adams
Brad Johns
Robert Harvey
Len Goucher
Reg Rankin
Gary Meade

**ABSENT WITH
REGRETS:** Councillor Bruce Hetherington

STAFF: Mr. George McLellan, Chief Administrative Officer
Mr. Dan English, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
Mr. Wayne Anstey, Municipal Solicitor
Ms. Jan Gibson, Acting Municipal Clerk
Ms. Sherryll Murphy, Legislative Assistant
Ms. Sheilagh Edmonds, Legislative Assistant

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	CALL TO ORDER	4
2.	APPROVAL OF MINUTES	4
3.	APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS AND APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS	4
4.	BUDGET DELIBERATIONS	4
4.1	Overview	4
4.2	Halifax Regional Police /RCMP	5
4.3	Fire and Emergency Services	6
4.4	911 Dispatch Services	7
4.5	Real Property and Asset Management	7
4.6	Recreation, Culture and Tourism	11

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 9:40 a.m. with Deputy Mayor Streach in the Chair.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - None

3. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS AND APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS

The agenda, as distributed, was accepted.

4. BUDGET DELIBERATIONS

4.1 Overview

- A Committee of the Whole Schedule and a document entitled 2004/05 Business Planning and Budget Presentations were distributed to members of Council.

Mr. McLellan briefly reviewed the agenda for the week and noted that, as has been the practice in the past, a parking lot will be established and utilized throughout the sessions.

Mr. McLellan advised that the Imperial Oil file is not yet complete, however, the indication from the Province is that there will be additional capacity and staff believe this will be in the area of \$2 million. He went on to note that the capacity which would have resulted from the relief from HST has been removed from the budget as a result of the error relative to Imperial Oil. Mr. McLellan indicated that each department will identify what has been taken out of their individual budget as a result. Concluding his remarks, Mr. McLellan noted that given the Imperial Oil situation, staff has created a listing of projects equalling \$2,000,000, which were taken out of the budget subsequent to receiving the Imperial Oil information, included in the parking lot. A copy of the listing was distributed to members of Council.

Mr. McLellan then responded to questions from members of Council.

At this point in the meeting (9:40 a.m.) Mayor Kelly assumes the Chair and Deputy Mayor Streach takes his seat in Council.

Referring to the key assumptions outlined in the budget, Councillor Warshick asked the impact on the budget of a more robust dollar and increased cost per barrel of oil.

Ms. Dale MacLellan, Director, Financial Services, responded that the primary reason for these assumptions being in the budget is to make Council and the public aware of the assumptions used. She went on to advise that they are an estimate of the average for the year. Ms. MacLellan advised that during the Quarterly reporting, staff provides the impact of any variance from the key assumptions on the operating costs to date. She indicated

that if there are significant variances between the time that the budget document is prepared and the budget is approved, staff can bring back an analysis of this. She suggested that such reporting would be premature.

In response to a question from Councillor Warshick regarding the purchase of fuel, Ms. MacLellan indicated that staff would provide to Council the price contract approved by Council relative to fuel.

4.2 Halifax Regional Police /RCMP

Chief Frank Beazley, Halifax Regional Police and Inspector Peter LaVigne, RCMP presented the Halifax Regional Police and RCMP 2004/05 budgets. Chief Beazley outlined the following:

- This is the first time that the RCMP and Regional Police are presenting a joint plan
- Highlights for the coming year include the introduction of the Records Management System and Computer Aided Dispatch
- Implementation of the Policing Study will continue. 45 of the recommendations contained in the study were implemented over the past year.
- Police will be recruiting throughout the year to have a class beginning in 2005
- Increases in the budget: One (1) FTE as Summary Offence Ticket Clerk for HRP(\$36,000) and an increase for school crossing guards of 3% (\$22,800)

Chief Beazley and Inspector LaVigne then responded to a variety of questions from members of Council.

MOVED by Councillor McInroy, seconded by Councillor Snow that the matter of increasing the hours of Crossing Guards by ½ hour per day and also that an increase to \$8.00 per hour from what is presently proposed in the budget be placed in the parking lot and further that staff furnish a report in this regard.

Councillor McInroy noted that unlike other employees who travel to and from their place of work once per day, Crossing Guards are required to travel to and from their place of work four times per day. He went on to note the value of the service provided by Crossing Guards and suggested that the increase to \$8.00 recognizes that value.

Councillor Hendsbee addressed Committee of the Whole requesting the following information:

- More detail of RCMP expenditures (preferably by Detachments)
- Number of officers on secondment/overseas duty that are on HRM's payroll, but serving elsewhere
- Information regarding Program Delivery and Level of Services:

- < The level of presence of the Lake Patrol on local lakes in light of recent Canadian Coast Guard boating regulations (Porters Lake & Lake Charlotte primarily)
- < Status of Off Highway Patrol to respond to complaints of ATV traffic and other initiatives started to monitor trail activity
- < What level of support will there be for Citizen on Patrol and Community Policing Office support
- < What level of support will there be for School Program (i.e. Liaison officers in the schools, DARE in Elementary and Safe Grad programs)
- < Impact on level of service and response time of reassignment of officers and/or realignments of detachment boundaries (Cole Harbour & Musquodoboit Harbour (Route #207 and Porters Lake)
- What plans in place re continuance of Community Constables Program and other Community & Race Relation initiatives (more support efforts needed)

Councillor Adams expressed concern that the integration of police services had not resulted in more Halifax Regional Police presence in the Sambro Loop. He went on to note that the community meetings held in his area were not well attended and requested that in the future he be informed of meetings conducted by the Police with residents of his District.

Following further questioning of staff, the **MOTION WAS PUT AND PASSED.**

At 11:00 a.m. the meeting recessed for a five minute break.

The meeting reconvened at 11:05 a.m. with all the same members of Council being present.

4.3 Fire and Emergency Services

Fire Chief Michael Eddy addressed Council noting that the net increase in Fire and Emergency Services budget for 2004/05 was 1% or \$367,000. He went on to review the implications of the proposed business plan as set out on page 3 of the 2004/05 Business Planning and Budget Presentations document.

Chief Eddy and his staff responded to a variety of questions from members of Council.

Noting that Halifax is becoming a port of international importance, it was **MOVED by Councillor Uteck, seconded by Councillor Sloane that \$100,000 be included in the parking lot for the joint Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Team. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

In response to a question, staff advised that the replacement of the Fall River Fire Department has been on the books since 1999. However, the monies (approximately \$30,000) allocated for land may not be sufficient.

MOVED by Councillor Snow, seconded by Councillor Streach that \$200,000 be placed in the parking lot for the purchase of land for the Fall River fire station. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Councillor Cooper referred to the statistics provided relative to injuries and noted that in HRM injuries are 5.8 times more than the national average and asked why the rate of injury is so much higher in HRM.

Chief Eddy indicated that he did not have this information available and would get back to the Councillor in this regard.

Councillor Hendsbee, noting the increased number of fire calls being received from the Lawrencetown/Lake Echo area, asked for statistics on calls requiring a response compared to other Departments in the area.

At 12:10 p.m the meeting recessed for lunch.

The meeting reconvened at 1:15 p.m. with the following members present:

Mayor Peter Kelly; and Councillors Snow, Hendsbee, Cooper (2:45 p.m.), McInroy, Warshick, Sarto, Smith, Cunningham, Blumenthal, Sloane, Uteck, Fougere (3:05 p.m.), Walker, Hum, Mosher, Johns, Harvey, Goucher, Rankin, and Meade.

4.4 911 Dispatch Services

Inspector Mike Maher, Manager, 911 Emergency Dispatch Centre, presented the 2004/05 Operating and Capital Budgets for the 911 Emergency Dispatch Centre and responded to questions of the Committee.

Mayor Kelly thanked Inspector Maher for his presentation.

4.5 Real Property and Asset Management

Mr. Mike Labrecque, Director, Real Property and Asset Management presented the 2004/05 Operating and Capital Budgets for his Business Unit and responded to questions of the Committee.

Mr. Labrecque noted he was instructed to address elements in regard to items added on to the 'Parking Lot' and, therefore, he advised as follows:

- Buildings Maintenance - \$50,000 to Facilities Upgrade Account CB300556
\$115,000 to Major Facilities
\$50,000 to Various Recreation Centres

- Parks - \$60,000 for Playground Upgrades
\$40,000 for New Park Development (specifically, Western Commons)

\$25,000 for Sport Fields Upgrades
\$50,000 Sports Court Upgrades
\$50,000 Regional Trails
\$50,000 Walkways
\$70,000 New Playgrounds

During the Committee's discussion the following points were made:

- Pages A-7, 9, and 67 of the Capital Supplementary Budget Book should read as District 12.
- Seaview Park - staff is working on providing additional access to the Park through a land exchange with the Bridge Commission - this will depend on funding and Council approval on a change in land use - this item is not in this years' budget, however, it is listed as a priority item in the budget for following years.

MOVED by Councillor Cunningham, seconded by Councillor Warshick that \$350,000 be placed in the parking lot for the Dartmouth Multi-Use Trail.

Following a brief discussion with staff responding to questions, the **MOTION WAS PUT AND PASSED.**

Councillor Johns questioned whether the proposed GST rebate will be of benefit to the Community facilities that HRM has management agreements with.

In response, Mr. Labrecque indicated that he didn't know this information but would find out.

Councillor Smith made reference to H-33 - Walkways - and, noting \$42,500 was allocated for General, he questioned if any of these funds will be going to the Big Albro Lake Trail.

In response, Mr. Blair Blakeney advised that staff will be reviewing the overall program for walkway upgrades and will come back to Council with a recommendation as to where those funds will be allocated this year. He added that staff will consider putting Big Albro Lake on the list of required upgrades.

Councillor Rankin expressed concern that there were not more funds for 'Rails for Trails' program.

Councillor Uteck noted the increasing popularity of Lacrosse and asked staff to make a sport court facility, such as a Lacrosse box, a priority in future years.

In response, Mr. Peter Bigelow advised that staff and Councillors Adams and Mosher are currently working together in finding someone who would want to build a new Lacrosse box for the Metro area.

In response to a question, Mr. Blair Blakeney pointed out an error in the budget book. He referred to page H-15 and stated that \$60,000 would go towards the Compliance Program, noting that the figure of \$120,000 was incorrect. He suggested that staff could bring back a further breakdown of the figure once staff has carried out an assessment.

In response to a further question by Councillor Warshick regarding the budget item, 'New Playground', Mr. Blakeney advised that if the Parking Lot is approved, two additional projects removed at the last cut that would be put back, would be \$40,000 for Joshua Slocum in District 22, and \$30,000 for a program in District 5 - Bissett Lake Estates.

Councillor Harvey expressed concern about the amount of funds slated for general trails and it was therefore **MOVED by Councillor Harvey, seconded by Councillor Rankin that \$200,000 be put in the parking lot for general trails. THE MOTION WAS DEFEATED**

MOVED by Councillor Goucher, seconded by Councillor Warshick that \$70,000 for a skateboard facility for Bedford be placed in the parking lot.

Councillor Blumenthal questioned if the Merv Sullivan Tennis Court could be turned into a skateboard facility.

In response, Mr. Blakeney advised that this item was in the budget for upgrading and, noting that there were three tennis courts, he pointed out that staff could look at turning one of them into a skateboard facility.

THE MOTION WAS PUT AND PASSED.

Councillor Smith referred to page H-17 and noting that there were 20 fields listed for upgrading, questioned the status of the Harbour View Soccer Field.

Mr. Labrecque advised that it wasn't part of the rehabilitation program, but for approximately \$5,000 it can be done through operating side of the budget.

Councillor Smith advised that he was aware of a T-Ball group who wanted to use Victoria Park, in District 9, however the field has not been maintained, and he asked staff to give consideration to this item as well.

Councillor Sarto asked staff to take a look at the basketball courts on Mount Edward Road, noting that there were two courts—one for older children and one for younger children. Specifically, the Councillor advised he would like to spend some funds from his capital budget discretionary fund on this, and would like staff to advise him of the work that would be necessary.

Councillor Warshick referred to Beazley Field and noting that there were some funds set aside for the infield ridge, he questioned what was going to be done with the outfield and the leveling of the field.

In response, Mr. Blakeney advised that staff will be consulting with community user groups, adding that in one meeting staff already had with baseball user groups they were advised that if major dollars were going to be invested in improving a baseball diamond, it should not be Beazley. He noted that the groups suggested staff should be looking at a site that would be conducive to broader programs. Mr. Blakeney added that staff will be looking at a service strategy on baseball fields for the area.

Councillor Warshick asked staff to provide Council a copy of the Service Strategy sometime in the upcoming year.

Councillor Hendsbee questioned the status for a second ice surface in the Eastern Region.

Mr. Labrecque advised that he was not aware there was a need for a second ice surface, however, he would look into the matter.

Deputy Mayor Streach made reference to Councillor Hendsbee's comment on a second ice surface for the Eastern Region, and advised that he was aware there will be a request coming to staff for a feasibility study on expanding the use of that facility.

In response, Mr. Labrecque advised that staff prepared an arena capacity study a couple of years ago, and therefore, with that information staff could probably extrapolate a feasibility study.

Councillor Warshick expressed concern that necessary work for Beazley Field has been put off for too long, indicating that \$25,000 in this budget was all that was allocated and there is nothing slated for 05/06. He suggested that staff should have an overall Master Plan for Beazley rather than approaching it in a piece-meal fashion.

In response, Mr. Labrecque advised that staff could bring back an information report in terms of the detail, specifically the communication they have received from the users. The other option is for staff to undertake a master plan for the complex, although he cautioned that it would be difficult to do this without the proper resources. Should this be the case, Mr. Labrecque advised he would put the Master Plan on next years budget, and in the interim he could bring back to Council the information staff have derived from discussions with the user groups.

Councillor Warshick asked Mr. Labrecque to give consideration in next year's budget to outdoor rinks and bicycle parks.

Mayor Kelly thanked Mr. Labrecque and his staff for their presentation.

At 3:15 p.m. the Committee recessed.

At 3:25 the Committee reconvened with the same members present.

4.6 Recreation, Culture and Tourism

Mr. Lew Rogers, Director, Recreation, Culture and Tourism presented the 2004/05 budget for his department.

Mr. Rogers, and Ms. Karen McTavish, General Manager, Recreation Culture and Tourism, responded to questions from the Committee.

Councillor Uteck spoke on the importance of the Heritage Incentive program advising that the program should be ramping up but, in looking at the budget, it appears to be the opposite.

MOVED by Councillor Uteck, seconded by Councillor Sloane that \$150,000 be placed in the parking lot for the Heritage Incentive Program. THE MOTION WAS PUT AND PASSED.

During the course of discussion, with staff responding to questions, the following motions were moved:

MOVED by Councillor Uteck, seconded by Councillor Sloane that \$55,000 be placed in the parking lot for Community Festivals and Events. THE MOTION WAS PUT AND PASSED.

MOVED by Councillor Streach, seconded by Councillor Sloane that \$30,000 be placed in the parking lot for the Sheet Harbour Recreation Facility. THE MOTION WAS PUT AND PASSED.

MOVED by Councillor Warshick, seconded by Councillor Sarto that \$40,000 be placed in the parking lot for the First Bluenose Marathon. THE MOTION WAS PUT AND PASSED.

Councillor Hendsbee addressed the Committee and made several points as follows:

- clarified the point that North Preston Recreation Centre is part of a community facility within the urban core - the operational costs will be bore by the urban tax rate.
- District 3 is the home of the only HRM francophone community and the Councillor hoped that through tourism initiatives, it will help with the promotion of their events for the upcoming Acadian Congress.

- encouraged more initiative with regard to developing a cultural policy.
- hoped that staff will carry out a good review on the assistance that community facilities have in running their operations. A number of HRM community facilities outside the urban core are run by volunteer groups and these groups are feeling the pressure of volunteer burnout and dwindling funds.
- HRM Beaches programs - the Councillor received a request to re-establish the Conrod Settlement Beach swim program and he asked for staff's consideration on this.
- Tax and Grants concessions - any discussion on re-evaluating the threshold of incomes? i.e. \$26,000 - could consideration be given to increasing that somewhat.
- School properties and access to community facilities - the Councillor will be advocating that when HRM takes over a school facility HRM manage it with HRM keeping a share of the mandatory contribution education to maintain these properties.

Councillor Uteck noted there was a deficit in capital recreation equipment of \$52,000 and questioned the implications of this.

In response, Ms. MacTavish advised that the reduction in the monies staff originally proposed for all recreation programs is quite significant. She added that staff are trying to maintain high-quality leisure programs, and in some community centres the equipment is quite decrepit and, as such, there is high risk associated with that equipment not being in good repair. Therefore, staff have to disengage equipment when it is not in compliance with safety standards.

MOVED by Councillor Uteck, seconded by Councillor Sloane that \$52,000 be put in the parking lot for Capital Recreation Equipment. THE MOTION WAS PUT AND PASSED.

Councillor Cooper suggested that each year at budget deliberations, it is a balancing act with recreation programs in trying to make it all work, and in his view the support to get concrete programs and activities in this department should be increased.

Councillor Cooper questioned the item 'Program and Aquatic Equipment', noting it shows \$43,000 with 0 funding in the next couple of years.

In response, Ms. MacTavish advised that this was a typo, pointing out that equipment needs increase each year.

Councillor Cooper referred to the amount of recoveries advising that it shows a massive increase of 207% under revenue, and questioned how this was going to be achieved.

Mr. Rogers explained that this is a budget reallocation issue, i.e. the Hotel Tax has been assigned incoming to a new account. In responding to further questions from Councillor Cooper on this issue and as it relates to general recreational revenue, and program revenue, Mr. Rogers indicated he would get back to the Councillor with further clarification.

Mayor Kelly thanked Mr. Rogers for his presentation

The meeting adjourned at 4:25 p.m.

Jan Gibson
Acting Municipal Clerk