

**HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
MINUTES**

October 11, 2005

PRESENT:

Mayor Peter Kelly
Deputy Mayor Len Goucher
Councillors: Steve Streach
Krista Snow
David Hendsbee
Gloria McCluskey
Andrew Younger
Bill Karsten
Becky Kent
Jim Smith
Mary Wile
Patrick Murphy
Dawn Sloane
Sue Uteck
Sheila Fougere
Russell Walker
Debbie Hum
Linda Mosher
Stephen Adams
Brad Johns
Robert P. Harvey
Reg Rankin
Gary Meade

REGRETS:

Councillor McInroy

STAFF:

Mr. Wayne Anstey, Acting Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
Ms. Mary Ellen Donovan, Municipal Solicitor
Ms. Jan Gibson, Municipal Clerk
Ms. Chris Newson, Legislative Assistant

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	CALL TO ORDER	3
2.	APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES	3
3.	ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE SESSIONS(S) - REGIONAL PLANNING	3
4.	COUNCIL ACTION PLAN	3
5.	INFRASTRUCTURE CRITERIA	6
6.	ADJOURNMENT	8

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

2. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

MOVED by Councillor McCluskey, seconded by Councillor Rankin that the minutes of September 27, 2005 be approved as circulated. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

3. **ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE SESSIONS(S) - REGIONAL PLANNING**

- A report dated October 5, 2005 was before Council.

MOVED BY Councillor Rankin, seconded by Councillor Streach that Council agree to hold a Committee of the Whole on October 18, 2005 to discuss the Regional Plan. November 1, 2005 will also be set aside for a Committee of the Whole, should it be necessary.

Mayor Kelly clarified that the October 18th COW session would commence at 1:30 pm.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. **COUNCIL ACTION PLAN**

- A Supplemental Report dated October 5, 2005 was before Council.
- A copy of the *PowerPoint* presentation: Focusing Our Resources: Council Action Plan was before Council.

Ms. Betty MacDonald, Director, Governance & Strategic Initiatives, assisted by Ms. Jennifer Church, Coordinator, Intergovernmental Affairs, presented the report.

During the ensuing discussion, the following comments were made:

Several Councillors suggested a consolidation approach be considered as many of the key focus areas interlink with another. For example, By-Law Enforcement links with Public Safety/Youth/Community Relations.

Councillor Streach suggested that item eleven on the list be split into two separate headings as Community Development is different from Economic Development.

Ms. MacDonald responded to Mayor Kelly that staff could return with a grouping/consolidation approach quite quickly.

MOVED BY Councillor Streach, seconded by Councillor Fougere that Council:

- 1. Endorse the key twelve (12) strategic focus areas as identified in Council's Action Plan.**
- 2. Authorize staff to return with a status update and a suggested approach for further action on each item identified.**

The twelve items for focus are:

Regional Planning	Youth
Infrastructure	By-Law Enforcement
Public Safety	Taxation
Traffic Congestion	Transit
Community Relations	Community Recreation
Community Development	Economic Development

Councillor Smith commented that his residents ask questions on all twelve topics listed. He suggested that Councillors assign a point value to each topic (twelve being highest priority) and forward that information to Ms. MacDonald.

Ms. MacDonald responded to Councillor Streach that Council could review the mandates of Council Committees as some of those Committees could be collapsed / reformatted / realigned to deal with the priorities outlined. She added the first step is to identify what needs to be achieved.

Councillor Murphy arrived at 2:48 pm.

Councillor Johns advised that he has requested that the review of Council Committees be added to the next Membership Selection Committee agenda.

Ms. MacDonald confirmed for Councillor McCluskey that there is an Executive Summary being prepared for Council that will include the priorities from the charts created at the Priority Setting Workshops.

Councillor Mosher arrived at 2:55 pm.

Ms. MacDonald responded to Mayor Kelly that she is unable to give an exact date for when the report, including the Executive Summary Report, may be complete.

Ms. MacDonald responded to Councillor Smith that Council's priorities are similar with staff's priorities as both are concerned with public priority issues. She added that staff also had issues concerning the operational (Administration) part. Councillor Smith suggested that Administration be added to the list of key focus areas.

Councillor Hendsbee commented that he would have liked to have seen all ninety-three (93) concerns/priorities in order to have a better appreciation as the information presented is too generic and too broad in description. He would also like to see staff's priorities to determine how alike or different they are from Council's priorities as issues such as a backlog of tenders, overworked By-Law Enforcement, Council Chamber refurbishing (electronics), parks and other projects also have to be brought to the table.

Councillor Harvey suggested that HRM address three priorities and then look at the next three.

Councillor Hum suggested that the word "congestion" be left off traffic issues and that traffic be placed under Infrastructure. She added traffic also has to be looked at under the Regional Plan and Transit.

Councillor Snow arrived at 3:11 pm.

Councillor Fougere referred to page two of a memo, included in the council package, from Mr. Dan English, Acting Chief Administrative Officer, which contains a list of the focus areas from the workshops categorized as:

1. Infrastructure - streets/roads/sidewalks/transit.
2. Community Services (Development) - Police/By-law /Youth
3. Economic Development
4. Governance

She commented that there were ninety-three topics that were condensed into four groups and now Council is expanding back to eleven or twelve. She suggested the topics be crunched and then Council could look at how funds would be allocated to achieve those priorities.

Councillor Mosher added that HRM also contributes to education and the building of gyms which involves all three levels of government. At the UNSM discussions last week, all fifty-five municipal units agreed that the taxation system has to be reviewed. She advised that 14.9 % of the municipal budget goes toward education but education is not a municipal mandate. Council will have to look at downloading from other levels of government.

Councillor Sloane added that there are four areas in which Council has already begun work; Regional Planning, Economic Development, Transit and Traffic. She suggested that Council has to say to the Federal and Provincial Government that this is what we, as a municipality, will do and this is what you have to do. HRM has taken on too many responsibilities and it is time to ensure that schools/education/housing/health are taken care of by the Provincial/Federal governments.

Councillor Hendsbee commented that core services are the economic realities of the day. He added that the municipality must work with the provincial and federal governments for emergency services. Mayor Kelly added that there will be an EMO Committee meeting in Halifax at the end of October with all Mayors being invited to attend. A draft document has been compiled.

Councillor Hendsbee requested broader definitions/description on the focus areas such as

community development/community relations before scoring and forwarding to staff.

Mayor Kelly confirmed that Council will receive the information from the two day workshop.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

5. INFRASTRUCTURE CRITERIA

- A report dated September 26, 2005 was before Council.
- A copy of the *PowerPoint* presentation: Infrastructure was before Council.

Ms. Betty MacDonald, Director, Governance & Strategic Initiatives, assisted by Ms. Jennifer Church, Coordinator, Intergovernmental Affairs, presented the report.

Mayor Kelly left the chair at 3:52 pm. Deputy Mayor Goucher assumed the Chair at 3:52 pm.

Ms. MacDonald clarified for Councillors Uteck and Rankin that the list supplied in the Council report was for background information only. Staff are requesting Council's guidance to first determine what are the most important areas, the criteria. The funding of those projects will be discussed after the criteria is determined. She added that if Council directs that the gas tax rebate is to go to green projects, staff would review all the green projects. The gas tax will add to HRM's capacity to do infrastructure. Ms. MacDonald added that staff will provide options to Council regarding the allocation of funding. She commented that this is the first step to setting Council's capital budget for the next few years. The second step relates to how HRM will pay for the projects (gas tax/transit/MRIF).

MOVED BY Councillor Rankin, seconded by Councillor Kent that Council approve the general infrastructure criteria as outlined in Appendix "C" of the staff report dated September 26, 2005.

Mr. Wayne Anstey, Acting Chief Administrative Officer, clarified that the infrastructure criteria are general in nature and apply to determining what is more important (strategically/risk) on the list within a category. The criteria would apply to any category of infrastructure whether it is transit/sewer/streets/roads and are not category specific. When it comes to funding the projects, Council will have to apply the funding sources as per criteria from senior levels of government.

Deputy Mayor Goucher confirmed with Council that Council did wish to deal with the two recommendations, as outlined in the report dated September 26, 2005, separately. He further confirmed that Council did wish to hear the complete presentation from staff at this time. Ms. MacDonald continued with her presentation on the three programs of funding from the Federal Government: Gas Tax, MRIF and Transit Funds.

Councillor Streach commented that considering the transit fund/gas tax will mostly be for the

core area and vastly destined to urban projects, he suggested that 100% of the MRIF funding be allocated to rural areas rather than the suggested 80%.

MOVED BY Councillor Streach, seconded by Councillor Snow that Council allocate 100% of the Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund (MRIF) to communities that are rural in nature.

Councillor Younger commented that if the change is made from 80% rural to 100% rural for MRIF, the criteria could change slightly and the second motion should have been dealt with before a decision was made on the first motion. Ms. MacDonald advised the general criteria could be applied to compile a list of the first fifty projects. If Council then decides an emphasis should be on rural matters, the rural projects could be chosen from that list of fifty.

Councillor Adams suggested that Council have a definition before them of what is meant by rural before approving the motion. Ms. MacDonald offered two definitions for rural:

1. Rural - those areas that are paying the rural tax rate.
2. Rural commuter shed (Regional Plan) - which would incorporate areas such as Tantallon/Fall River/Musquodoboit.

Councillor Adams added that he cannot share the exuberance for this motion as the HRM rural communities, which represents approximately 150,000 residents, will only receive approximately \$4.5m per year at best. He commented that it is just not enough. Councillor Adams suggested Council write a letter to the MP's who represent HRM asking if that is the best they could do for HRM. He added there was a lost opportunity for residents in rural areas of HRM and the small communities have been compromised for being part of a larger group.

Councillor Walker added there are conditions applied to the federal funds (such as environmental/sustainable). He requested a chart of MRIF (Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund) projects as 1/3 funding for those projects will come from HRM tax dollars.

Ms. MacDonald responded to Deputy Mayor Goucher that staff do not have all the information in regards to the environmental sustainability requirements for the Federal funds. She added that staff have been informed that the restriction for funds being linked to a budget surplus has been lifted.

Councillor Sloane commented that the definition of sustainable should be the same as the Provincial and Federal definition and expressed concern that the definitions may be different. She added that she is in favour of reviewing a list that would include urban/suburban/rural as Council is looking at projects for all of HRM.

Deputy Mayor Goucher confirmed with Council that they wished to remain in discussion on this matter until 4:45 pm. The In Camera session of Council would commence immediately following adjournment of the Committee of the Whole.

Mayor Kelly returned to the chair at 4:30 pm.

Councillor Hendsbee added there are some restrictions regarding allocation of the funds and Council should be able to allocate as they see fit. He commented that projects have been added to the list and then disappeared. He inquired if those projects would be included on the list or would they be considered new projects and how would this affect the list. Ms. MacDonald clarified that the definition of urban projects has had a previous requirement that it be a project that has not already been started. The only restriction for the gas tax is that the overall capital budget has to increase by the amount of the gas tax. She added that details of the requirements are not as yet available.

At this time a vote was taken on the first motion and it was **MOVED BY Councillor Rankin, seconded by Councillor Kent that Council approve the general infrastructure criteria as outlined in Appendix "C" of the staff report dated September 26, 2005. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.** This matter is to go forward to Regional Council for the October 11, 2005 evening session.

At this time Council returned to discussion on the second motion to approve 100% allocation of funding to rural areas. The motion on the floor reads as follows: **MOVED BY Councillor Streach, seconded by Councillor Snow that Council allocate 100% of the Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund (MRIF) to communities that are rural in nature.**

Councillor Rankin commented that in respect to the rural areas the definition has to be transparent and recommended that the definition be as per the tax structure (rural tax rate).

Mayor Kelly advised that it was now 4:45 pm. Council agreed to extend the Committee of the Whole session until 5:00 pm in order to complete discussion on this issue.

Councillor Younger commented that he cannot support the motion as it stands as the MRIF program is the only infrastructure program for all municipalities for the next three years. If 100% of the MRIF funds are allocated to rural areas there will be no infrastructure dollars for Dartmouth/Halifax/Bedford and parts of Sackville. Priorities would be addressed for one area of the municipality but not all. The gas tax and transit funds are to be used in all areas (urban/suburban/rural). He added that he is more in support of the 80% funding.

Councillor Adams advised that Ministers McQuire, Barnett and Godfrey have suggested that Herring Cove is a strong candidate for the new funding. If Council puts forward the criteria that a rural community must be in the rural commuter shed or rural tax rate to be eligible, Herring Cove would no longer be eligible. He added that he cannot support the motion as it stands.

Ms. MacDonald suggested that staff could provide various definitions of rural communities (rural by nature) to be reviewed by Council.

MOVED BY Councillor Streach, seconded by Councillor Johns that Council defer decision on this matter pending a clear definition from staff on the term "rural in nature". MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

6. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Jan Gibson
Municipal Clerk