

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE COUNCIL October 3, 2006

PRESENT:

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

REGRETS:

Andrew Younger
Harry McInroy

STAFF:

Mr. Dan English, Chief Administrative Officer
Ms. Geri Kaiser, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
Ms. Mary Ellen Donovan, Municipal Solicitor
Ms. Jan Gibson, Municipal Clerk
Ms. Chris Newson, Legislative Assistant

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 1:10 pm.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

MOVED by Councillor Sloane, seconded by Councillor Johns that the minutes of the August 8, 2006 meeting of Committee of the Whole Council, as distributed, be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. COUNCIL FOCUS AREAS 2007 / 2008

- A copy of the PowerPoint presentation was before Council.
- A staff report dated September 19, 2006 was before Council.

Ms. Betty MacDonald, Director, Business Planning and Information Management, presented the report. Ms. MacDonald identified the three main focus area categories as Public Safety, Community and Infrastructure (to include the recapitalization of buildings). She explained that a fourth category, Taxation, was to be discussed at this evening's Regional Council session. She offered to provide Council with a discussion paper for each of the three categories, to be presented at three separate Committee of the Whole fall sessions. Ms. MacDonald advised that the intent is to have Council discussions completed by December 31, 2006 with a directive to staff at that time in regard to the 2007/08 budget planning.

Mr. Dan English, CAO, clarified that staff are seeking direction from Council in regard to a process that would enable Councillors to put forward their priorities and that specific priorities would be addressed at a later date. Numerous Councillors commented that a process to identify priorities is not required as priorities will identify themselves via Council sessions, phone calls, e-mails and correspondence from residents to their area Councillor or directly to staff.

Ms. Cathie O'Toole, Acting Director, Finance Services, explained that the Council Focus Area process is a high level tool for resource allocation. She explained that if Council chooses not to do Council Focus Areas staff will require assistance with the funding allocation process. She advised that performance measurement needs to start at the program and service level. A list of the 537 programs and services currently offered by HRM has been forwarded to the Audit Committee.

In response to Councillor McCluskey, Ms. O'Toole advised that the information regarding allocation of the \$3 million set aside for Council Focus Areas last year is embodied in the

report circulated to Council. Due to the size of the report, staff will provide Council with specific information on the allocation of those funds.

MOVED BY Deputy Mayor Walker, seconded by Councillor Karsten that the Committee of the Whole recommend Regional Council continue the list identified at the 2006/07 Council Focus Areas for the 2007/08 budget.

The following comments/concerns were raised by Council during the ensuing discussion:

- It would be preferable to continue with the list of priorities identified last year, until they are completed, rather than add additional items to the list.
- A measurable outcome is required for each of the priorities in order to determine whether the priority has been addressed, what has been accomplished and what remains to be done.
- Quarterly reports were requested to be provided to Council for each priority area.
- The Council priorities of Community Development and Recreation be merged together since the Community, Culture and Recreation business unit has been merged with the Planning and Development business unit.
- The Council Focus Areas should be for two years.
- Taxation reform has to be a priority.

Councillors Hendsbee and Fougere entered the meeting at 1:24 pm.

- Concern was expressed with the ability of staff to deliver on the priorities due to the shortage of staff, specifically in the planning department.
- Concern was also expressed that the recent merger of two business units (Community, Culture and Recreation with Planning and Development) has resulted in six of the twelve priority areas being under one Director.
- An up to date organizational chart was requested in order to determine who is in what position. The CAO advised that an organizational chart can be distributed this week. He further assured Council that he is confident there is sufficient staff to respond. No priorities will come off the list.
- Council requested that youth/recreation be a portfolio under the newly merged business unit of Community Development as Recreation is a grass roots service provided by HRM that residents can clearly see.
- Last year's Council Focus Area sessions were a success and should be repeated this year to give staff a better idea of where to allocate the money.
- Council Focus Area discussions should be completed by the end of December.
- Twelve priority areas is too broad for staff. Mr. English, CAO, clarified that there are now thirteen priority areas as Recapitalization of Buildings (fire services) was identified as a priority during budget deliberations in June.
- Deferred maintenance cannot be deferred any longer and has to become a priority.
- Parkland acquisition and strategic transportation (depot and terminal sites) should also be a priority.

- \$3 million dollars should be set aside for parkland acquisition.
- Cost sharing with the province for street paving projects should be continued.
- Technological upgrades should also be a priority to ensure the public are able to hear Council debates.
- A contribution plan for HRM facilities should be considered as HRM cannot continue to give direct assistance.

Councillor Kent entered the meeting at 2:12 pm.

- Each staff report should include a paragraph on whether or not the subject meets the municipal mandate.

Deputy Mayor Walker assumed the Chair at 2:17 pm.

- Signs should be posted indicating that the work (road/sewer repairs etc.) is being done by HRM to show citizens value for their tax dollars.
- One priority area should not be detrimental to other services such as an adult program being eliminated from recreation to offer a youth program.
- Scorecards could be used to measure operations as well as performance.
- The former Program and Services Review Committee was a good forum for prioritizing.
- A session could be held with the Senior Management Team to determine what has been accomplished over the last year in regard to the Council Focus Areas.

The motion on the floor was now put to a vote. **MOVED BY Deputy Mayor Walker, seconded by Councillor Karsten that the Committee of the Whole recommend Regional Council continue the list identified at the 2006/07 Council Focus Areas for the 2007/08 budget. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

4. MUNICIPAL OPERATIONS

- A copy of the PowerPoint Presentation was before Council.

Mayor Kelly resumed the Chair at 2:23 pm.

Mr. Mike Labreque, Director, Transportation and Public Works, assisted by Mr. Denis Huck, Manager, Municipal Operations Services, Transportation and Public Works, made a presentation to Council advising that Municipal Operations Services (MOS) will be more proactive rather than reactive in their work. The following points were outlined during their oral presentation:

- Setting up and refinement of a work order process is underway.

- Management will attend, on a quarterly basis, staff meetings at the depots.
- Service standards are to be set. Staff will be informed of those standards and will understand what is expected of them. The public will also be notified of the service standards.
- There will be more accountability of management through the annual performance management system. The business plan begins with corporate priorities and objectives with specific tasks assigned to specific managers. If performance is not what is expected, changes will be made.
- Three Preventative Maintenance Supervisors have been hired to identify work to be done (proactive approach) which will then be entered into the work order backlog system. Staff will then prioritize the work and assign the appropriate employees to complete the work order which will include a service standard timeline. Once the work is completed, the service request will be closed and those affected (the customer) will be notified.
- A new initiative to engage and inform front line workers has been implemented. Kiosks have been set up in each depot to provide employees with access to HRM information (employment opportunities, newsletters etc.). Employees will also be given an opportunity to comment on what initiatives are working/areas where improvements are required.
- There are 101 CUPE 108 employees and ten Supervisors; most employees are located at the MacIntosh Street depot with some at the Oakmount and Turner Drive depots.

During the ensuing discussion on the matter, Council raised the following comments/concerns:

- The work order process, pro-active prioritization of work, service standard timelines and customer follow-up will be appreciated.
- Providing specific direction on Hansen is difficult and when requested to do so, staff should contact the Councillor (customer) directly.
- The MOS service standards should be outlined in the Councillors' district newsletters and HRM's Newsletter.
- Staff should do more than just the job requested on the work order. For example, when emptying a garbage can, staff should also pick up the litter around the can.

Ms. Geri Kaiser, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, in response to Councillors Wile and Kent, advised that staff will forward an e-mail to Council regarding the jurisdictional boundaries for street lighting and will outline HRM service standards, such as response time, as they relate to street lighting. Staff will also provide information in regard to HRM's understanding of the service standards/responsibility for Nova Scotia Power Corporation and the province. Responsibility for street lights on private roads will also be addressed.

Councillor Hendsbee reminded staff that he had previously requested a report on street lighting which was to include an inventory of all HRM assets, consideration given to use LED

lights instead of mercury bulbs and that GPS coordinates be given when reporting (street light) outages.

Councillor Hendsbee suggested that staff refer to www.streetscape.com for methods used by other municipalities in regard to streets and roads. For example, using concrete/brick for sidewalks has proven problematic requiring frequent maintenance. He further suggested that staff provide Councillors with business cards containing contact information for appropriate staff who service that district which could be circulated to the residents as required. Also, that staff provide customers with the HRM work order number to facilitate access to updates. He commented that Councillors should have direct access to HANSEN.

Mr. Huck responded to Councillors Kent and Hendsbee that Councillors will be contacted prior to the snow season in regard to the staff contact person for their districts.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:34 p.m.

Jan Gibson
Municipal Clerk