

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

April 2, 2007

MINUTES

PRESENT: Mayor Peter Kelly, Chair
Deputy Mayor Uteck
Councillors: Steve Streach
Krista Snow
David Hendsbee
Harry McInroy
Gloria McCluskey
Andrew Younger
Bill Karsten
Jim Smith
Mary Wile
Patrick Murphy
Dawn M. Sloane
Sheila Fougere
Russell Walker
Debbie Hum
Linda Mosher
Stephen D. Adams
Brad Johns
Robert P. Harvey
Gary Martin
Reg Rankin
Gary G. Meade

REGRETS: Councillor Becky Kent

STAFF: Mr. Dan English, Chief Administrative Officer
Ms. Mary Ellen Donovan, Municipal Solicitor
Ms. Jan Gibson, Municipal Clerk
Ms. Chris Newson, Legislative Assistant
Ms. Jennifer Weagle, Legislative Assistant

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 9:36 a.m.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES - None

3. BUDGET DELIBERATIONS

CAO OVERVIEW:

Mr. Dan English, Chief Administrative Officer, provided opening remarks. He referred to page C1 of the budget book explaining that staff were directed by Council, on January 23, 2007, to present a budget that would maintain the existing level of services. Budget envelopes were presented to each Business Unit based on Council's direction. Some efficiencies and non-recurring costs were identified resulting in \$1 million being set aside for the Council Focus Areas. Additional resources requested from various business units, totalling approximately \$5 million, were reviewed by the Executive Management Team (EMT). Page K10 of the budget book provides an outline of the EMT's allocation of the additional \$1 million including consideration of the additional resources requested per business unit.

Councillors Smith and Karsten entered the meeting at approximately 9:42 a.m.

Council was requested, by motion of Council, to place any additional budget requests in the parking lot for consideration. Staff would then provide a report to Council considering the parking lot items prior to the budget being approved. He added that the budget does not include the re-adjustment of approximately \$19 million, as explained by staff at the Tuesday, March 27, 2007 Regional Council session.

Councillor Sloane advised of an error on page C19 of the budget book as follows: Bloomfield Centre should be listed in District 11 not District 12 and the George Dixon Centre should be listed in District 12 not District 11.

Mr. English advised that notification was received just this morning that there will be a further adjustment to the RCMP costs of approximately \$300,000. Ms. Cathie O'Toole, Acting Director, Finance Services, explained that HRM is billed annually by the Department of Justice for the cost of RCMP services. Prior to that Department's budget being tabled, the estimated increase in cost of RCMP services for 2007/08 was set at 3.5%. Upon the budget being tabled, the increase in cost for services was determined to be only 2.9%; resulting in a net benefit to HRM of approximately \$365,000. Ms. O'Toole added that this adjustment may be used to address some of the parking lot items identified during budget deliberations.

Ms. O'Toole provided clarification to Deputy Mayor Uteck on the intended \$50 million from HRM's capital/operating budget for the Commonwealth Games indicating that the funding would not have been in this year's capital budget. The \$8 - \$10 million per year would have been shifted from future capital budgets to different projects in support of the

Commonwealth Games such as paving Windmill Road instead of a road currently on the list for paving.

Councillor McCluskey explained that the Police Act indicates that Municipal Council shall only exercise global budget approval and shall only accept the police service budget submitted by the Board of Police Commissioners. She requested that the additional \$365,000 be left in the police budget, as originally submitted by the Board of Police Commissioners, and that it not be placed in the parking lot.

Councillor Mosher entered the meeting at 9:50 a.m.

Councillors Sloane and Snow commented that the surplus in the police budget should be re-allocated within that business unit's budget. Councillor Smith also expressed concern with a police budget being presented that had not been approved by the Board of Police Commissioners and agreed that the surplus amount should be left within the police budget and not placed in the parking lot.

Mr. Dan English, CAO, and Ms. Cathie O'Toole, Acting Director, Finance Services clarified that the surplus in the police budget is not additional dollars being received, it is an overstated amount in the tabled budget. The only option, now that the budget has been tabled and due to the double entry system, is to reduce that amount as an expenditure for the RCMP and then add it to the parking lot. The Additional Resources Requested (ARR) list from police will also be added to the parking lot for consideration. Restricting the RCMP savings to the police envelope restricts the ability to find corporate savings from other areas such as; the request to develop and deploy a digital recording and storage system for photography, voice and video records. This is a \$104,000 item that may be funded through the Corporate Records Management system. Ms. O'Toole further advised that how the budget is funded; what comes from debt, general tax rate or area rates, is decided by Council as a whole after staff review the pros and cons and present their recommendations to Council.

3.1 HALIFAX REGIONAL POLICE

Chief Frank Beazley, Halifax Regional Police, and Superintendent Gordon Barnett, RCMP, presented.

Chief Beazley indicated that the Halifax Regional Police (HRP) Operating budget for 2007/08 has increased by 6.3% mainly due to compensation, technology upgrades and increased park patrols. There will be an additional 32 police officers (provincially funded); 22 to be placed with HRP and 10 to the RCMP. Once the provincial budget is approved, an agreement will be entered into regarding building space on Gottingen Street.

Chief Beazley responded to questions/concerns of Council as follows:

- this year's police budget is not comparable to previous police budgets due to the re-organization which added the Integrated Emergency System, By-Law Enforcement and the SPCA contract to the HRP business unit. Mr. English responded to Councillor Fougere that, in future, a reconciliation schedule could be provided to indicate the funds removed from one business unit and placed with another due to

- re-organizations.
- a 3% increase for crossing guards has been included in the budget, however; there has been no provision made in the event that the crossing guards are successful in their efforts to unionize.

MOVED BY Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor Snow that the \$494,525, as outlined on the 2007/08 Additional Resources Request (ARR) list, approved by the Board of Police Commissioners be moved to the parking lot and referred to staff for a report.

Chief Beazley clarified that \$109,000 of the \$494,525 is already in the envelope, therefore; the amount to the parking lot would be \$385,525. He reviewed the AAR list line by line and explained that the \$109,000 already in the envelope would include \$40,000 of the \$85,000 for Item 1 as well as Items 2 and 7. Funding for Item 9 would come from the provincial budget.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Councillor Rankin entered the meeting at 10:00 am.

MOVED by Councillor Snow, seconded by Councillor Sloane that any unfunded balance of police requests be added to the parking lot. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Chief Beazley responded to further questions/concerns of Council as follows:

- although there is only a 1.1% increase for Community Standards Officers, a significant amount of cross-training of Commissionaires to issue tickets and assist with park patrol is considered an increase to service.
- \$25,000, above and beyond what was placed in the budget envelope, has been allocated for the CITY WATCH program.
- an integrated mobile Mental Health Unit (with the Capital Health District), comprised of police officers and psychiatric professionals, will be a 24 hour service with the ability to assess the threat to community and/or self on the scene. This should reduce the time/overtime officers spend accompanying individuals to the hospital.

Councillor Streach entered the meeting at 10:31 am.

Deputy Chief Tony Burbridge, HRP, clarified that licensing will be moved from the Finance business unit to By-Law Enforcement, under HRP, and the shortfalls in licensing will be addressed.

- the photo radar/photo interceptor initiative would require a legislative change to the Motor Vehicle Act. Chief Beazley advised that he approached the provincial Department of Justice two years ago in regard to this matter. Discussions are ongoing at the provincial Traffic Subcommittee. He will continue to push for the legislative change. Superintendent Gordon Barnett, RCMP, advised that the photo radar/interceptor initiative also has his full support.

MOVED BY Councillor Martin, seconded by Councillor Sloane that Halifax Regional

Police continue to urge the provincial government to move on responsible legislation in regard to photo radar initiatives. Further, that this matter be referred to the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities for their support and review. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

- the HRP Traffic Division has been very successful. The only issue is with court space/scheduling. If the Traffic Division continues to be as successful, there will be a need for a Municipal Court.
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will be signed by HRM and the province in regard to the twenty-two (22) provincially funded officers. A report is sent to the provincial Department of Justice for those officers which includes their names, activity, crime statistics and the benefit brought to HRM.

Councillor Fougere suggested a more aggressive strategy, such as a door to door campaign, to have pets licensed indicating that only 5% of pets in HRM are licensed.

Superintendent Gordon Barnett, RCMP, responded to questions/concerns of Council as follows:

- the ability to offer the DEAR (drug awareness) program to elementary schools is not a resource issue; it is a human resources issue. The attrition rate has created a challenge in training RCMP officers to implement the program. The program, developed in the United States, must be delivered by a sworn police officer. Contact with RCMP members outside the Halifax area has been initiated to engage them in the DEAR training. 90% of Grade 6 classes were visited and educated in the DEAR program.
- there will be more of a strategy in 2007/08 for consistent park patrols with each Divisional Commander putting together a strategy for their area. The Quick Response team will be employed for criminal activity/noise in the parks. The park patrol service will be turned over to the Commissioners.

Councillors Hum and Harvey indicated that the following problem areas require more consistent park patrol: Hemlock Ravine/Tremont, First Lake area and Metropolitan Field as well as the walkways to and from those areas.

- the request for a radar set for the North Preston unit should come to the RCMP, not HRP.
- The RCMP will continue last year's Lake Patrols Program utilizing Community Liaison and School Liaison officers.
- the ATV strategy will continue as there has been a lot of positive work done.
- The RCMP has a full time Diversity program. New members were hired from the North Preston area. More African-Canadian recruits are encouraged.
- Trail patrols do not lack resources, the issue is more the nature of some of the trails; a railbed that winds through the province. ATV's are relied on to patrol these areas.
- the Sackville and Cole Harbour RCMP detachments are becoming crowded. Expansion and realignment is being considered over the next three years. One unit will be moved out of the Cole Harbour detachment to the Blue Cross building and some have been moved to the Community Centre in Preston.

Councillor Hendsbee entered the meeting at 11:00 am.

Councillor Sloane suggested that revenue generated from dog licenses be used for enforcement, off leash dog parks and to provide garbage cans in the parks. Deputy CAO Kaiser advised that revenue generated is recorded as general revenue and Council would decide how that revenue is dispersed.

Chief Beazley further responded to questions/concerns of Council as follows:

- Flashing red lights for crosswalks would be under the jurisdiction of the Traffic Authority.
- HRM and the Halifax Port Authority had an agreement with the Halifax Regional Police from the beginning. The Port of Halifax has a police detachment and waterside patrol; a boat was purchased last year. The Federal government is looking at a national security plan for ports.

In response to Councillor Hendsbee, Chief Beazley advised that there is no financial support in the HRP budget for community groups, such as Citizens on Patrol. There is also a legal issue to be considered as providing funding to people to do volunteer work may open HRP/HRM to risks.

- The strategy for off highway vehicle (ATV issues) patrols is to get to the known problem areas as early as possible.
- HRP works closely with the military police but there is no integrated unit specifically for the port.

Deputy Mayor Uteck assumed the Chair at 11:14 am.

Councillor Rankin suggested, in support of Councillor Hendsbee's comments, that \$1000 (per year) be placed in the parking lot for Citizens on Patrol (COP) to supply them with basic office supplies such as a desk, chair and paper. He explained that COP are an asset to HRM and in the absence of a budget allocation, funding assistance is through the Councillors discretionary grants.

Councillor Murphy requested that, in future, planning for the budget debates include coverage by Eastlink television.

Mayor Kelly resumed the chair at 11:30 am.

Councillor McCluskey requested the information from the Federal government, indicating the reduction in RCMP service costs, be circulated to the Board of Police Commissioners.

Councillor Younger advised that a recent Supreme Court ruling indicates that funds must go back to the service that fee is charged for, therefore; revenue from dog licenses could not go to general revenue. He suggested that booths be set up at the parks and/or a door to door campaign be implemented to get people to register their pets. It may be possible to fund the requests for increased services (off-leash parks) through increased licensing.

Councillor Younger requested that the park patrols include patrolling the parks after hours

and that after hour patrols not be limited to the parking lots. He inquired if it would be possible to ticket people who are in the parks after hours and whether the canine unit could be used to find them. Councillor McCluskey requested that Birch Cove Park also be included.

Councillor Hendsbee suggested that conversations be held with the Federal government in regard to using the Armouries building as a joint police/fire museum if the facility, at some future point, is deemed surplus.

Council thanked Chief Beazley and Supt. Gordon for their presentations and the great work achieved by their respective units.

Council agreed to hear presentations by Halifax Regional Fire and Community Development commencing at 1:30 pm.

The meeting recessed at 11:50 am.

The meeting reconvened at 1:35 p.m. with Mayor Kelly resuming the Chair, and the same members present, with the exception of Councillors McInroy, Younger, and Walker.

Councillor Adams joined the meeting at this time.

3.2 HALIFAX REGIONAL FIRE

Acting Chief Director William H. Mosher, Halifax Regional Fire & Emergency Service, presented an overview of the 2007/08 Fire & Emergency Services budget.

Acting Chief Mosher responded to questions of Council, providing the following information:

- C The facilities review master plan of the sixty stations is taking longer than anticipated, and staff hope to have it completed by the end of the year;
- C Dry hydrants will be installed during development of subdivisions, as per subdivision regulations;
- C Since October 2006, twenty-six fire stations have had life safety issues addressed, and plans are in place to complete the remaining stations;
- C Exhaust extraction systems have not commenced yet, due to changed emissions standards, and the developers of the product are re-manufacturing their product accordingly;
- C The new Dutch Settlement fire station will be completed within twelve months, and the new station for Three Harbours will be completed within the next three years;
- C Fire Services and Transportation and Public Works are working with Finance to move forward on the new fire station for Fall River;
- C HRM is required to contribute \$150,000 toward the Urban Search and Rescue program, which covers all areas east of Toronto, in order to maintain Federal funding in the amount of \$450,000;

Councillor Streach left the meeting at 1:49 p.m.

Mayor Kelly left the meeting at this time, and Deputy Mayor Uteck assumed the Chair.

MOVED by Councillor Wile, seconded by Councillor Sloane that \$150,000 be moved to the parking lot for the Urban Search and Rescue program. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Councillor McCluskey distributed copies of the budget book from Regina earlier in the meeting, and indicated that the Regina budget provides much more information than the HRM budget, and requested that staff take this into consideration for the following year's budget preparations.

Councillor Smith left the meeting at 2:00 p.m.

Acting Chief Mosher with the assistance of Deputy Chief Director, Core Operations, Stephen Thurber, and Deputy Chief Director, Safety & Strategic Initiatives, Roy Hollett, continued responding to questions of Council, noting the following:

- C Previous discussions about locating a fire station in the Penhorn area concluded in the decision that it was not the right location, and this matter has been closed out with some of the funding going toward the new Fall River station;
- C Staff contract out to St. John Ambulance to train fire staff in the use of defibrillators;
- C A Fire Services manager has been seconded to work on the development of a Fire Training School with the Province;
- C An operational division employee has been seconded to work on the development of Emergency Measures Organization comfort centres;
- C Staff are making great strides with the status of the fleet, and there are only a few older trucks remaining;
- C The drafting of an open air burning By-law is underway; and
- C Fire crews have been making an attempt to maintain visibility in some HRM parks, including Burnside, to deter arson and other illegal activities.

Councillor Johns requested that it be stated for the record that Acting Chief Mosher confirmed that no changes will be made to the Upper Sackville station. He also requested that it be reflected in the record that there would be many benefits to considering the consolidation of the Millwood and Upper Sackville stations, and relocating to Sunset Ridge.

Councillor Martin commended fire services staff and volunteers that responded to the Pier's Landing fire last week, noting the professionalism of all involved.

At the request of Councillor Karsten, Ms. O'Toole clarified that Council authorized closing out the account for the proposed Penhorn fire station and reallocating the funds for this project. The Clerk's office will make these reports available to Councillor Karsten.

Councillors Fougere and Hum left the meeting at 2:23 p.m.

3.3 HALIFAX PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Ms. Judith Hare, CEO, Halifax Regional Library Board, presented an overview of the

2007/08 Halifax Public Libraries budget.

Councillor Fougere returned at 2:37 p.m.

MOVED by Councillor McCluskey, seconded by Councillor Karsten, that \$143,800 be moved to the parking lot to be allocated for the Dartmouth North library to increase operational hours to fifty hours per week and include a librarian. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Council recessed at 2:47 p.m., reconvening at 2:54 p.m. with Mayor Kelly resuming the Chair.

Ms. Hare responded to questions of Council, providing the following information:

- C The capital campaign for the new Spring Garden Road library will commence within the next year, and capital donors are currently being identified;
- C Outreach services include books by mail and home delivery service for those unable to visit the Library due to disability, illness, or distance;
- C Upgrades and renovations in this budget include \$350,000 for renovations to the Captain William Spry library, and the balance for replacing boilers, repairs to windows and the stairway at the Spring Garden branch; and
- C The remaining funds would be insufficient for required repairs to Acadia School library, and therefore repairs to the Acadia School location will be undertaken in next year's budget.

Councillor Hendsbee made the following inquiries, which were directed to staff to return to Council in the form of a supplementary report:

- C Details and status of individual maintenance and repair items to public libraries included in the budgets;
- C The status of Bookmobile operations, including hours of operation in rural areas;
- C A copy of the current fees and fines schedule in use by the libraries; and
- C Discussion on sharing library facilities between schools and public libraries.

The Municipal Clerk reviewed the parking lot items with Council at this time, to which Council agreed.

Mayor Kelly indicated that it would be beneficial to all departments' and Council's collective schedules to move forward with the next department, which is Legal Services and Risk Management. Council agreed to move forward with the Legal Services and Risk Management budget review.

3.4 LEGAL SERVICES AND RISK MANAGEMENT

Ms. Mary Ellen Donovan, Director, Legal Services, presented an overview of the 2007/08 Legal Services and Risk Management budget.

Ms. Donovan responded to questions of Council, providing the following information:

- C Of the 24 full time employees in Legal Services and Risk Management (increased from 22 the previous year), 12 are lawyers;
- C A full cost analysis has not yet been completed on the Legal Services staff cost for the 2014 Commonwealth Games bid; however, staff will be recovering approx. \$50,000 from that budget;
- C Legal and consulting fees include court filing fees, witness fees, discovery transcriptions, etc.
- C Legal research resources remain stretched and is identified as an area of expected services not being delivered. Legal research resources significantly improve the degree of success, and this situation will be monitored in the upcoming year, and will be given consideration in next year's budget.

It was requested that the CAO circulate an updated HRM Organizational Chart to Council.

Councillor Hendsbee requested clarification outlining the case-load of HRM matters delegated to in-house counsel vs. external counsel. This information will be brought forward in the form of a supplementary report.

Mr. Anstey advised of a News Release from the Province announcing \$5.44 million in Federal and Provincial funding through the Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund for new community centres on Prospect Road and in the community of Fall River.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

Jan Gibson
Municipal Clerk