

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES

December 16, 2008

PRESENT: Mayor Peter Kelly
Deputy Mayor David Hendsbee
Councillors: Steve Streach
Barry Dalrymple
Lorelei Nicoll
Gloria McCluskey
Andrew Younger
Bill Karsten
Jackie Barkhouse
Jim Smith
Jerry Blumenthal
Dawn M. Sloane
Sue Uteck
Jennifer Watts
Russell Walker
Debbie Hum
Linda Mosher
Stephen D. Adams
Brad Johns
Robert P. Harvey
Tim Outhit
Reg Rankin
Peter Lund

REGRETS: Councillor Mary Wile

STAFF: Ms. Geri Kaiser, Acting Chief Administrative Officer
Ms. Mary Ellen Donovan, Municipal Solicitor
Ms. Julia Horncastle, Acting Municipal Clerk
Ms. Barbara Coleman, Legislative Assistant

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1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Kelly called the meeting to order at 1:11 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

MOVED by Councillor McCluskey, seconded by Councillor Blumenthal that the minutes of December 9, 2008 be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

3. PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AND MUNICIPAL PROPERTY TAXATION

The following motion was put on the floor at the December 9, 2008 session of the Committee of the Whole and was now before Council for consideration.

MOVED by Councillor Younger, seconded by Deputy Mayor Hendsbee that Regional Council:

Accept that most of HRM “Benefits” from transit service and that therefore

- 1. Metro Link, Rural Express Transit and Ferries should be paid for largely by an area rate on dwelling units in the Urban Settlement and the Rural Commuter Shed designations, and,**
- 2. Local Transit routes should be funded by a single area rate on dwelling units paid by all properties within walking distance of transit service**

And that the Draft 2009-2010 Budget should be developed upon this basis;

And that staff return to Council with the proposed tax rates and services changes.

Councillor Brad Johns entered the meeting at 1:16 p.m.

Council expressed concern that if people could not enjoy the service then would they pay for the service. Many councillors felt that this would be a hard sell to their residents. Mr. Fisher explained that transit service did not only benefit the people that actually use the bus but it would save the need for costly improvements to the road infrastructure, congestion of downtown traffic and other areas. Transit Service would make the city a more vibrant, environmentally friendly city.

Councillor Steve Streach entered the meeting at 1:33 p.m.

Councillor Nicoll suggested staff should look at redesigning their routes to better accommodate their riders.

Council was reminded that this strategy in front of them today is not to fix all problems but to give HRM a different way of collecting revenue.

Mayor Kelly left the meeting at 2:34 p.m.

Councillor Streach advised Council that if the word “accept” was not in the recommendation and the words, ‘approve in principle’ were put in its place he could accept the recommendation. Council accepted the friendly amendment to the motion.

The motion now reads:

MOVED by Councillor Younger, seconded by Deputy Mayor Hendsbee that Regional Council approve in principle that most of HRM “Benefits” from transit service and that therefore:

- 1. Metro Link, Rural Express Transit and Ferries should be paid for largely by an area rate on dwelling units in the Urban Settlement and the Rural Commuter Shed designations, and,**
- 2. Local Transit routes should be funded by a single area rate on dwelling units paid by all properties within walking distance of transit service**

And that the Draft 2009-2010 Budget should be developed upon this basis;

And that staff return to Council with the proposed tax rates and services changes.

Following further discussion, and without a vote being taken on the motion on the floor, the following motion was placed.

MOVED By Councillor McCluskey, seconded by Councillor Lund that Regional Council amend the motion to read, “approve in principle’ and remove the line, “Accept that HRM benefits from transit service and that therefore”. MOTION PUT AND PASSED

The Motion now reads;

MOVED by Councillor Younger, seconded by Deputy Mayor Hendsbee that Regional Council accept in principle:

- 1. Metro Link, Rural Express Transit and Ferries should be paid for largely by an area rate on dwelling units in the Urban Settlement and the Rural Commuter Shed designations, and,**
- 2. Local Transit routes should be funded by a single area rate on dwelling units paid by all properties within walking distance of transit service**

And that the Draft 2009-2010 Budget should be developed upon this basis;

And that staff return to Council with the proposed tax rates and services changes.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED

4. BUSINESS PLANNING OVERVIEW (Staff Presentation)

A Power Point Presentation regarding this matter was circulated.

Mr. Brad Anguish, Director, Business Planning and Information Management, provided a presentation on the 2009/10 Proposed Business Planning Process noting the following:

- Council had passed a motion for a process change two years ago in the way HRM does business planning
- Changes in Priority Setting process, budget book format, and budget debate process were the directives of Council

Mr. Anguish continued to review both the presentation for the benefit of Council opening the floor to questions and discussion by Council. Throughout the discussions it was reiterate that Council had the discretion and the power to change this process should they choose to.

MOVED By Councillor Karsten, seconded by Councillor Sloane that Council adopt the proposed planning cycle dates. MOTION PUT AND PASSED

5. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:01 p.m.

Julia Horncastle
Acting Municipal Clerk