

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

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HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE  
MINUTES

February 9, 2010

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

REGRETS: Councillor: Mary Wile

STAFF: Mr. Wayne Anstey, Acting Chief Administrative Officer  
Mr. Randolph Kinghorne, Municipal Solicitor  
Ms. Sherryll Murphy, Acting Municipal Clerk  
Ms. Melody Campbell, Legislative Assistant

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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 1:04 p.m.

**2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES - January 12, 19 & 26, 2010**

Councillor Rankin noted that on the January 26, 2010 Page 5 - minutes it should read "that there is no way that everyone will receive lower taxes"

Councillor Rankin noted that on the January 26, 2010 Page 9 - "upper levels of assessments would provide the assistance to those in the lower income range"

Councillor Watts noted that on the January 26, 2010 Page 6 - "She expressed concern that members of the public felt that their voices were not heard during the public consultation process"

**MOVED by Councillor McCluskey, seconded by Councillor Sloane, that the minutes of January 12, 2010 as presented, January 19, 2010 as presented, and January 26, 2010 as amended, be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

**3. METRO TRANSIT FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC OPERATIONS PLAN**

- An extract of the Committee of the Whole minutes dated November 10, 2009 was before Council.
- A supplementary report dated January 6, 2010 was before Council.
- A report dated October 9, 2009 was before Council.

Ms. Patricia Soanes, General Manager of Metro Transit, provided the supplementary report to Council.

**MOVED by Councillor Fisher, seconded by Councillor McCluskey, that Halifax Regional Council:**

- 1. Receive the supplementary report dated January 6, 2010 as an addition to the Metro Transit Five-Year Strategic Operations Plan and;**
- 2. Approve, in principle, the Metro Transit Five-Year Strategic Operations Plan and direct staff to annually bring details on proposed service changes and their corresponding cost implications to Halifax Regional Council for approval as part of the Operating and Capital Budget process.**

The following points of discussion ensued among Council:

In response to a question by Councillor Rankin, Ms. Soanes advised that the Metro Transit Five-Year Strategic Operations Plan is a framework and that it will be reviewed every year. Councillor Rankin suggested that HRM request increased levels of funding support from the Provincial and Federal Governments.

Councillor Uteck expressed her concern over the loss of Route #8. Ms. Soanes advised that any routes to be reinstated would be dependant upon the operational requirements for the next year as reflected in the 2010/11 operating budget.

Councillor Sloane expressed concern regarding the time line for the Woodside Ferry as it is noted in the report as 2013/14. She suggested that HRM staff initiate discussion with the staff of the Nova Scotia Community College on the opportunities of NSCC students using a U-Pass. She expressed the need for better connectivity of the ferry services to the downtown and Spring Garden Road area.

In response to a question by Councillor Mosher, Ms. Soanes advised that if this Metro Transit Five-Year Strategic Operations Plan is adopted in principle, it would not affect route changes. The Councillor noted that according to the Regional Plan, Spryfield was designated a district centre; with this being the case, the Metro Link should be made available to the Spryfield area as soon as possible. She advised that there will be a need to increase the use of neighbourhood buses as ferry ridership increases. Councillor Mosher requested that staff provide information to Council regarding the cost recovery for the ferry; how the Metro Transit Five-Year Strategic Operations Plan relates to the Regional Plan; and information regarding consideration of ferry service in combination with neighbourhood buses.

Councillor Watts questioned the availability of any potential funding options for the transit services. She advised that she does not support a transit rate increase. Mayor Kelly advised that he is working through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Atlantic Mayors Congress and the Big Cities Mayors on funding options. Councillor Watts requested that senior staff report on the action plan regarding the funding options and what avenues are being taken.

Councillor McCluskey suggested that staff investigate options to enable HRM to generate revenue from the four-pad arena lands in Bedford.

Councillor Dalrymple suggested that some of the rural areas may have to consider smaller buses with more routes, noting that this would be a cost saving measure for HRM. Ms. Soanes advised, in response to a question by the Councillor, that assessment and planning will be carried out to support community needs.

Councillor Blumenthal advised that he does not agree with the Metro Transit transfer

system, noting that some individuals are using their transfers all day. Ms. Soanes advised that Metro Transit has the ninety-minute transfer policy in place. She noted that the policy assists Metro Transit with increased ridership and capacity. Ms. Erin Flaim, Manager of Service Delivery, Metro Transit, advised that the ninety-minute transfer policy is an added safety precaution to the transit staff, as it decreases the possibility for confrontation with individuals who feel they have to pay twice for service.

**MOVED by Councillor Blumenthal, seconded by Councillor Streach, that Regional Council request that Metro Transit implement a one-time use of transit transfers for the transit system.**

Councillor Sloane suggested that Metro Transit implement a swipe card for transit users dependant upon zones.

Ms. Soanes advised Council that Metro Transit changes the colour of the transfer daily to decrease the possibility of fraud related to the transfer system.

**MOTION DEFEATED.**

Councillor Mosher suggested that the urban express have increased frequency with less stops. She added that it would be beneficial for buses to pick up transit users in their own communities instead of them having to travel to a park and ride.

Deputy Mayor Johns questioned what the next steps will be in the implementation of a rural transit system. Ms. Soanes advised that Metro Transit is looking at the implementation of planning for specific areas and the anticipated time frames for rural services. She advised that public engagement will be part of the process. The Deputy Mayor raised concern regarding the lack of services from Bedford, for example the four pad arena site and the seniors' complexes, noting that this is a large growth area that requires services. Ms. Soanes stated that Metro Transit is aware of the growth in the area and consideration can be given to this area in the yearly review of the plan.

Councillor Streach expressed concern regarding the plan to service areas in Enfield which is part of East Hants, before the Eastern Shore has transit services. Mr. Edward Robar, Manager of Planning & Product Development Metro Transit, advised that Metro Transit would only service the HRM side of the East Hants district with the opportunity to work with East Hants to enhance services. He noted that this service is part of the plan for Fall River and the airport area.

Councillor Blumenthal expressed concern that there is no plan for the visually impaired in the Metro Transit Five-Year Strategic Operation Plan.

Councillor Lund noted the increased growth in the Hammonds Plains Road area. He

suggested that staff consider a town hall meeting to discuss transit issues and potential increases in ridership along the Hammonds Plains Road. He suggested that as part of a future report, consideration be given to the Lucasville service being connected to service on the Hammonds Plains Road.

Councillor Hendsbee stated that HRM will have to consider infrastructure needs as transit traffic increases. Mr. Reashor, Director of Transportation & Public Works, advised that as Metro Transit implements routes, infrastructure improvements will be made, for example lane signals and extension of green light signals. In response to a question by the Councillor, Ms. Soanes advised that bus suppliers should be able to meet the bus requirements of HRM. She added that attracting suitable candidates to fill Metro Transit jobs has not been an issue.

In response to a question by Councillor Nicoll, Ms. Soanes advised that due to the high expense, smart cards are not part of this Metro Transit Five-Year Strategic Operations Plan.

Councillor Barkhouse advised that the Nova Scotia Community College is expecting an increase of one thousand students in its new phase. The Councillor requested that due to increases in enrollment, that Metro Transit consider a fast implementation of the U-Pass for students at the NSCC in Woodside.

Councillor Hum agreed that a comprehensive review for transit including the harbour link and commuter rail is required. In response to a question by the Councillor, Ms. Soanes advised that the Larry Uteck Interchange and Washmill Court are being considered as part of Metro Transit's opportunities for services.

Councillor Smith suggested that a plan be implemented for automatic announcement of bus stops along with an accessibility plan. In response to a question by Councillor Smith, Ms. Soanes advised that there will be consultation with Councillors and the public as plans move forward for the Burnside area.

Councillor Outhit expressed the need for HRM to look at ferries, metro links and commuter rail as population growth continues. He added a park and ride should be built near the four pad arena in Bedford.

In response to a query by Councillor Lund, Ms. Soanes advised that an automatic passenger counting system is related to fare box technology and is not currently considered in the Metro Transit Five-Year Strategic Operations Plan.

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

#### **4. Sea Level Rise**

A staff presentation, Sea Level Rise Adaptation Planning for Halifax Harbour, was distributed to Council.

Mr. Roger Wells, Supervisor, Regional & Community Planning & Mr. John Charles, Planner, Real Property Planning & Dr. Don Forbes, Geological Survey of Canada, provided the presentation to Council.

Following the presentation the followings points of clarification were provided to Council:

- the plan for sea level rise has to be a collaborative effort as many areas are not owned by HRM
- all levels of government, the private sector, and stakeholders need to work together on sea level rise issues
- consideration of what measures to implement at what time must be considered
- HRM staff will be meeting with Halifax Water to determine what infrastructure they have that may be effected by sea level rise
- HRM is on the forefront of planning; the provincial and federal governments are doing research on the best way to adapt to the changes
- when considering remedies, HRM is starting to consider adaptation over the next couple of months
- the model provided includes the North West Arm and Bedford Basin
- sea level rise is being considered by developers and some development agreements take this into consideration; staff continues to work with developers on the issue
- Halifax Harbour will be addressed first then the community areas with shoreline will be addressed

The following points were brought forward by members of Council:

- concern was raised regarding railway tracks; it was noted that CN must be brought on board as it is a key stakeholder
- staff should advise those applying for building permits of the anticipated sea level rise
- insurance companies and banks issuing loans are becoming aware of the issue of sea level rise
- public consultation on sea level rise should be considered
- it was noted that this issue is not unique to Halifax Harbour; there are many shorelines in HRM that need to be considered

**MOVED by Councillor Streach, seconded by Councillor Lund that Halifax Regional Council:**

- 1. Accept in principle Scenario 2c (upper bound of A1FI)**
- 2. Request staff to conduct public/stakeholder consultation**
- 3. Approve the workplan as set out in the presentation for Halifax Harbour**
- 4. Begin to address issues in the balance of HRM**

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

**MOVED by Councillor Streach, seconded by Councillor Blumenthal that Regional Council begin immediately following Committee of the Whole. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

**5. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

Cathy Mellett  
Acting Municipal Clerk