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Item No.
Community Planning & Economic Development Standing Committee
February 12, 2015

TO: Chair and Members of Community Planning & Economic Development Standing Committee

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed
Richard Butts, CAO

DATE: 15-01-30

SUBJECT: Possible Support for Engage Nova Scotia

ORIGIN

At the December 2, 2014 meeting Regional Council requested a staff report to:

- a) Evaluate Engage Nova Scotia's request for a funding contribution;
- b) Investigate opportunities to support the general direction of Engage Nova Scotia, including participation in upcoming forums, roundtables and conferences;
- c) Report to the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee and the Audit & Finance Standing Committee with recommendations no later than March 2015.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipal Charter

Power to expend money

79 (1) The Council may expend money required by the Municipality for

(av) a grant or contribution to

(v) any charitable, nursing, medical, athletic, educational, environmental, cultural, community, fraternal, recreational, religious, sporting or social organization within the Province.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that CPED recommend to Audit & Finance Standing Committee that

- (1) Halifax Regional Municipality, working closely with the Halifax Partnership (HP), provide an initial grant of \$50,000 to Engage Nova Scotia (ENS) this fiscal year with the possibility of an additional grant next year, subject to Council approval and if certain conditions are met.
- (2) Approve the withdrawal of funds in the amount of \$100,000 from the Operating Surplus Reserve, Q328 to cover the operating grant for fiscal 2014/15 and 2015/16 respectively.
- (3) Halifax Regional Municipality and ENS sign an Agreement along the lines of the one set out in Attachment A to govern the relationship between the two parties and to set out conditions for continuation.
- (4) Halifax Regional Municipality participate actively in the work of ENS where appropriate over the coming year.

BACKGROUND

On September 23, 2014 representatives of Engage Nova Scotia (ENS) presented to Mayor and Councillors at a Lunch & Learn session. In November, ENS wrote Mayor Savage requesting a \$50,000 contribution to its work with the possibility of renewing this commitment in subsequent years.

Engage Nova Scotia

ENS is a group of individuals and organizations from across the province. (Attachment B – List of ENS Board members) The website <http://www.engagenovascotia.ca/> provides more background on ENS.

ENS's launch predates the work of the Commission on Building our New Economy. ***Now or Never***, the Commission's report, cited ENS as an "exemplary initiative" and recognized the importance of its work to "change attitudes and adapt to new ideas as we address our economic and demographic challenges." ENS sees itself as mandated to change attitudes and introduce new ideas. ENS's current work includes:

- supporting 11 regional citizen engagement initiatives across NS at various stages of development
- hosting a significant June 2015 Symposium on "Economy, Attitude and Wellbeing"
- developing a "Nova Scotia Index of Well-Being"
- co-hosting Canada's first dialogue on setting a new narrative in Aboriginal relations with Canadians for a New Partnership and the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia
- planning a "Leaders Gathering" – a small cross section of senior leaders from all levels of government, the private and not-for-profit sectors from across the province - to explore greater collaboration
- working with UNSM and various municipalities on public engagement training
- doing in-depth research on the attitudes of Nova Scotians

The previous provincial government seconded a staff position to ENS and provided initial funding. The current provincial government has seconded two additional staff, made space available, and committed up to \$400,000 over 12 months, \$200,000 of which is to match private sector funding. ENS has received commitments for close to \$200,000 from private sector contributors as well as support from UNSM, the County of Inverness, and the Council of University Presidents. ENS is currently pursuing support from other municipalities, companies and individuals.

Halifax

The 2014 Regional Plan confirms that the December 2008 Council approved **Community Engagement Strategy** remains in place. The unit charged with implementing the strategy has been dispersed but Halifax has many staff who understand engagement processes and have experience working with citizens and community organizations. The principles of the strategy have been used in many Halifax community engagement exercises in the intervening years.

Halifax Partnership

ENS is working closely with HP. ENS has asked HP for funding, too. Understanding the need for changing attitudes and promoting a better understanding of the process of economic development are two areas where the interests of ENS and HP overlap, especially as HP moves forward with its work on implementing the current economic development strategy and putting in place a successor strategy.

DISCUSSION

ENS brings expertise in and commitment to community engagement to the table. ENS currently focuses on advancing the attitude change issue highlighted in the **Now or Never** report, linked closely to economic development and more general well-being issues. Halifax recognizes the need for new attitudes, too, especially around business confidence. There could be value in collaboration between ENS and Halifax. This report sets out a possible way forward for such collaboration.

ENS's request for support does not fit the criteria for any of Halifax's grant programs. Nor is ENS a consulting firm that Halifax could ask to line up for consideration when a need for outside engagement expertise arises. An ENS/Halifax partnership will require a unique arrangement.

HP is beginning work on an updated economic strategy. It will seek to achieve, for Halifax specifically, some of the same goals and "game changers" that **Now or Never** proposes for the province as a whole. A well designed partnership between Halifax (including HP) and ENS could advance the development of the economic strategy and the achievement of the **Now or Never** goals. HP and ENS are discussing opportunities for collaboration.

Principles

What Halifax has learned from work to date on economic development and what **Now or Never** spells out about the circumstances facing Nova Scotia today suggest some principles to govern any relationship between Halifax and ENS. They include:

- Private Sector leadership: **Now or Never** emphasizes the importance of private sector leadership and involvement in achieving its strategic goals. HP, through its work with private sector investors, has understood this since its inception. Any grant from Halifax to ENS should be contingent on genuine private sector support for ENS's work. ENS, as already noted, has secured private support.
- Deliverables: The ENS website spells out excellent ideas and how will they be operationalized. The seven elements of ENS's current work, noted above, begin to describe possible deliverables. The regional initiatives, the symposium and leaders gathering, and the work on wellbeing will all have useful outputs. A grant from Halifax to ENS will move these activities forward.
- Meeting Halifax needs: **Now or Never** describes the provincial situation. It highlights the mutual dependence of Halifax and the rest of Nova Scotia and the vital role for Halifax leadership. It also points to the need for development in Halifax to link to work done in the rest of the province. To play a leadership role, Halifax has needs which the work of ENS could help meet. The symposium and the surveys proposed should meet the specific needs of Halifax in the general context of the province.
- Role for Halifax: Halifax has had informal discussions with the province around **Now or Never**, its strategic goals and its game changers. HP has presented to the **oneNS Coalition**. Neither Halifax nor HP has a formal role in work going on now. Should Halifax provide funding for activities proposed by ENS – like the June Symposium – there should be a clear role for Halifax in the preparation and implementation of the event and appropriate recognition given to Halifax.
- Evaluation: What ENS proposes is exciting and potentially valuable. Much of it remains at a formative stage. The activities that have begun will yield learnings that might lead to new directions going forward. Should Halifax provide funding to ENS, there would need to be on-going evaluation of how the activities are progressing and appropriate changes made as things move forward.

Attachment A - Proposed Agreement between Halifax and Engage Nova Scotia - incorporates these principles.

Recommendation:

As noted above, staff recommend that:

- (1) Halifax Regional Municipality, working closely with the Halifax Partnership (HP), provide an initial grant of \$50,000 to Engage Nova Scotia (ENS) this fiscal year with the possibility of an additional grant next year, subject to Council approval and if certain conditions are met.
- (2) Approve the withdrawal of funds in the amount of \$100,000 from the Operating Surplus Reserve, Q328 to cover the operating grant for fiscal 2014/15 and 2015/16 respectively.
- (3) Halifax Regional Municipality and ENS sign an Agreement along the lines of the one set out in Attachment A to govern the relationship between the two parties and to set out conditions for continuation.
- (4) Halifax Regional Municipality participate actively in the work of ENS where appropriate over the coming year.

There are many interesting elements to ENS's currently proposed body of work. Because the focus of that work is in complex areas like changing attitudes, economic development broadly defined and well-being, as the work unfolds, the problems will change. It is only possible to outline initial targets for Halifax financial support.

Staff propose that the \$50,000 target the following three areas:

Economy: ENS distinguishes between simple economic growth (as measured by numbers like the Gross Domestic Product) and a more broadly defined economic "development." Like HP, ENS wants to encourage the kind of thinking about development that gets at the roots of Nova Scotia's problem, not just the symptoms. The work ENS is supporting in different regions of the province tries to do that. The proposed Symposium on the Economy, Attitude and Wellbeing, currently planned for June 2015, will continue this work. Some of Halifax's funds would go toward this meeting. Halifax should have a presence on the organizing committee and recognition as a symposium sponsor.

Attitudes: *Now or Never* highlights the need to change Nova Scotian attitudes. This is as true for Halifax as it is for the rest of the province. To design work to change attitudes requires knowing what current attitudes actually are, who holds them and how strongly. ENS is keenly interested in this work. HP also needs this information. ENS plans to carry out an in depth attitude survey for the province. HP has done previous work in this area, particularly on attitudes towards growth in Halifax, and brings experience to the project. ENS and Halifax/HP (and possibly others like the Cape Breton Partnership or the new RENS) would develop the questions and engage a firm to conduct the survey. Halifax funds would ensure a Halifax sample size sufficient to give the information Halifax and HP need to move their own work ahead.

Wellbeing: ENS proposes to conduct a Community Well-being Survey in conjunction with the Canadian Index of Wellbeing (<https://uwaterloo.ca/canadian-index-wellbeing/>). CIW has already done such surveys in places like Victoria, Kingston and Guelph. ENS has opened discussions with CIW. The cost of a survey will be about \$170,000. The survey would provide information about the wellbeing status of people in Halifax as well as the province more generally and how the two compare with the rest of Canada.

The baseline information will point to ways to move forward. Once the survey is done, ENS expects to begin work on the development of a Nova Scotia Wellbeing Index. The survey results plus previous work on Genuine Progress Indicators, the province's *Community Counts*, the *Vital Signs* work of the NS Community Foundation, and, HP's *Halifax Index* material should supply the solid baseline data for the proposed Index.

This work aligns with both ENS's and Halifax/HP's priorities. Support from Halifax for this initial work and appropriate follow up activities will demonstrate not only Halifax's willingness to collaborate with others but also Halifax's capacity to play a leadership role.

Halifax Needs

In November, Council adopted a set of Priority Outcomes for 2015/16. The symposium, the attitude survey and the wellbeing survey will provide useful background information for the Healthy Communities outcome around Inclusive & Accessible Community, the Economic Development outcomes around Rural Economic Development, Welcoming Community and Economic Environment and the Governance & Communications outcomes related to Communities of Interest, Communications and Policy Engagement.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are sufficient funds in the Operating Surplus Reserve, Q328 to cover the proposed grant over the two year period. Year two (2015/16) funding is conditional on ENS meeting the conditions laid out in Attachment A. These costs will be charged to Operating account E400 which will then be reimbursed through a transfer of funds from Q328, so there will be no impact to the Operating budget.

Budget Summary: **Operating Surplus Reserve, Q328**

Projected Net Available Balance at March 31/15 as at Dec 31/15	\$5,184,908
Less amount per Recommendation # (2)	(\$100,000)
Projected Net Balance March 31/15	\$5,084,908

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Extensive discussions have taken place among Halifax staff, ENS and HP.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct environmental implications of ENS's request for support.

ALTERNATIVES

Staff recommends support from Halifax to ENS with conditions. Other options could include:

- Reject any funding to ENS
- Modify the conditions covering the funding to ENS
- Make an unconditional grant to ENS

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Proposed Agreement between Halifax and Engage Nova Scotia

Attachment B – Board of Engage Nova Scotia

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/commcoun/index.php> then choose the appropriate Community Council and meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210, or Fax 902.490.4208.

Report Prepared by: Chris Bryant - Senior Advisor – GREA – 902.490.3729

Report Approved by: Maggie MacDonald – Acting Managing Director – GREA – 902.490.1742

Financial Approval by: Greg Keefe, Director of Finance & ICT/CFO, 902.490.6308

Attachment A

Draft Agreement

between

Engage Nova Scotia and Halifax Regional Municipality

1. In response to a request from the Chair of the Board of Engage Nova Scotia (ENS) made to Halifax Regional Municipality ("Halifax") in a November 21, 2014 letter to Mayor Mike Savage and as directed by Regional Council, Halifax agrees to provide up to \$50,000 to ENS to be spent on contributing to:
 - 1.1 a symposium on Economy, Attitude and Wellbeing to be held in 2015,
 - 1.2 survey work on the attitudes of Nova Scotians towards change and economic development, to be conducted in 2015,
 - 1.3 a survey on community wellbeing to be done in conjunction with the Canadian Index of Wellbeing.
2. Halifax will make the grant when
 - 2.1 ENS shows that it has received at least \$50,000 from Nova Scotian private sector sources.
3. In the activities for which ENS uses the funds received from Halifax, ENS will:
 - 3.1 provide detailed reports to Halifax on how the funds were used and what results were achieved,
 - 3.2 include Halifax representatives in the planning, execution, evaluation and reporting on the activities for which Halifax funding was used,
 - 3.3 provide specific information for the situation in Halifax from any surveys done,
 - 3.4 credit Halifax as a contributor to the activities for which the Halifax funding was used.
4. In January of 2016,
 - 4.1 Halifax and ENS will review the outcomes of the work done in conjunction with 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3, especially the items related to 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4, and consider whether a second grant of up to \$50,000 is warranted and,
 - 4.2 staff will prepare a submission to Regional Council for its consideration.

Attachment B

Board Members – Engage Nova Scotia

The Board of Engage Nova Scotia was confirmed at the June 3, 2014 AGM. Members include:

- **Jaime Battiste** - Citizenship Coordinator Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn Negotiation Office, Eskasoni
- **Patricia Bishop**, Owner Taproot Farms, Port Williams
- **Michael Chender**, Founder Authentic Leadership in Action Institute, Halifax
- **Mark Coffin**, President Springtide Collective, Halifax
- **Danny Graham** (Founding Chair), Corporate Social Responsibility McInnes Cooper, Halifax
- **Lynn Hennigar**, President Lighthouse Media Group, Mahone Bay
- **Doug Keefe**, Principal Doug Keefe Consulting, Wallace
- **Ramona Lumpkin** (Chair), President Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax
- **Rankin MacSween**, President New Dawn Enterprises, Boisdale
- **Jim Mustard**, Deputy Warden Municipality of the County of Inverness, Pipers Glen
- **Robert Orr**, CEO Cuna de Mar LP, Bedford
- **Pam Scott-Crace**, Editor-at-Large Progress Magazine, Halifax
- **Dr. Gaynor Watson-Creed**, Medical Officer of Health Capital District Health Authority, Dartmouth
- **Gerald Weseen**, Senior Director, Government Relations Emera Inc., Bedford