

**Item No. 9.4.2**  
**Audit & Finance Standing Committee**  
**December 20, 2013**

**TO:** Chair and Members, Audit & Finance Standing Committee

**SUBMITTED BY:** Original Signed  
Councillor Walker, Chair, and Members of HRM Grants Committee

**DATE:** December 10, 2013

**SUBJECT:** **Business Improvement District Contributions Fund – Proposed Policy Amendments**

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**ORIGIN**

Staff report dated October 24, 2013 “Proposed Default Prevention and Management Practice” presented at the November 4, 2013 HRM Grants Committee meeting.

Supplementary report dated November 25, 2013 presented at the December 2, 2013 HRM Grants Committee meeting.

**LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

The HRM Grants Committee Terms of Reference set out that the duties of the Committee (s.4) are to:

- 4.1 Advise Regional Council on all matters related to the allocation of grants, as defined by Regional Council;
- 4.2 Develop eligibility criteria, priorities, policy and procedures for assistance under the respective programs and services managed under the auspices of the HRM Grants Program portfolio;
- 4.3 Evaluate programs and services managed under the auspices of the HRM Grants Program portfolio in cooperation with HRM staff , stakeholders, and the general public with a view to making recommendations to Regional Council respecting scope of programming, service standards, and funding capacity.

*HRM Charter (2008) s.70 (1) respecting discretionary funding to business improvement districts.*

**RECOMMENDATION**

**The Grants Committee recommends that the Audit & Finance Standing Committee recommend Regional Council’s adoption of amendments to Section 16 of the BID Contributions Fund Policy respecting application and report deadlines as detailed in the Discussion section of the November 25, 2013 staff report with implementation to commence in the 2014-15 fiscal year.**

## **BACKGROUND**

Refer to the Background section of the November 25, 2013 staff report.

At the November 4, 2013 Grants Committee meeting, a staff report dated October 24, 2013 “Proposed Default Prevention and Management Practice” was before the Committee. The Grants Committee made recommendation to the Audit & Finance Standing Committee for the approval of updates to the default prevention and management practice for programs administered under the Grants Committee Terms of Reference. The Audit & Finance Standing Committee approved the recommendation at their November 20, 2013 meeting.

In addition to the recommendation that was forwarded to the Audit & Finance Standing Committee, the Grants Committee at their November 4, 2013 meeting requested a staff report regarding the addition of an application deadline to accommodate the timing of the annual BID levy approval and a reporting deadline. A Supplementary Report dated November 25, 2013 in response to this request was received at the December 2, 2013 Grants Committee meeting, and forms Attachment 1 of this report.

## **DISCUSSION**

The Grants Committee reviewed and discussed the November 25, 2013 “BID Contributions Fund – Proposed Policy Amendments” supplementary report at the December 2, 2013 Grants Committee meeting.

Staff indicated that they had clarified with the Business Improvement Districts that the BID Contribution Fund program is a merit based program, and that if unused funds were offered to other BIDs, there would be no funds remaining in the event that an appeal was approved.

The Grants Committee briefly discussed the supplementary report and approved the staff recommendation.

Any recommendation from the Audit & Finance Standing Committee on this item will be forwarded to Regional Council in January, along with the recommendations from the November 20, 2013 Audit & Finance Standing Committee meeting with regard to Item 9.4.1 “Proposed Default Prevention and Management Practice”.

Refer to the Discussion section of the November 25, 2013 supplementary report for further information.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

As outlined in the November 25, 2013 supplementary report.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Membership composition of the HRM Grants Committee consists of five (5) members of Regional Council as well as five (5) members of the general public. Grant Committee meetings are open to the public. Agendas, reports and minutes are available on the HRM website.

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

None.

**ALTERNATIVES**

The Audit & Finance Standing Committee could amend or overturn the proposed recommendation.

**ATTACHMENTS**

1. November 25, 2013 supplementary report “BID Contributions Fund – Proposed Policy Amendments”

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A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.html> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

Report Prepared by: Jennifer Weagle, Legislative Assistant, 490 6517

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HRM Grants Committee  
December 2, 2013

**TO:** Chair and Members of the HRM Grants Committee

**SUBMITTED BY:** Original signed  
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Greg Keefe, Director of Finance & ICT/CFO

**DATE:** November 25, 2013

**SUBJECT:** BID Contributions Fund - Proposed Policy Amendments

### SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT

#### ORIGIN

November 4, 2013 – Grants Committee motion requesting a staff report regarding the addition of an application deadline to accommodate the timing of the annual BID levy approval and a reporting deadline.

#### LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

HRM Charter (2008) Section - 70 (1) respecting discretionary funding to business improvement districts.

#### RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Grants Committee recommend the Audit & Finance Standing Committee recommend Regional Council's adoption of amendments to Section 16 of the BID Contributions Fund Policy respecting application and reporting deadlines as detailed in the Discussion section of this report with implementation to commence in the 2014-15 fiscal year.

## **BACKGROUND**

In 2011, Regional Council approved policy for the distribution of municipal discretionary grants to Business Improvements Districts (BIDs). These grants support beautification, marketing, and related initiatives undertaken by a BID formally recognized pursuant to By-law B-700 Respecting the Regulation of Business Improvement Districts. These grants are to be matched with non-municipal funds by the recipient BID. Subject to Council's approval, the value of grant is calculated using each BID's proportional share of all levies, excluding federal and provincial tax grants. Because the timing of Council's approval of area rates fluctuates, current policy does not include a fixed application deadline. For the past two (2) years a deadline has been set in consultation with the BIDs. For clarity and consistency, an application and reporting deadline are recommended.

## **DISCUSSION**

**Application Deadline:** To accommodate the uncertainty in the timing and/or approval of a proposed BID levy it is recommended that a fixed date not be included in policy. Instead, the proposed application deadline would be 30 business days (excluding weekends and statutory public holidays) after the date of the BID area rate's approval.

- If approved, the BID Contributions Fund Policy, Section 16 would be amended by the addition of: *"The application deadline to the BID Contributions Fund will be 30 business days (excluding weekends and statutory public holidays) after the date of the BID area rate's approval by Regional Council"*.

**Reporting Deadline:** The proposed deadline for submitting a final report is April 30th of the following fiscal year. HRM's fiscal year is April 1 to March 31<sup>st</sup>. For clarity, the policy needs to be amended.

- If approved, the BID Contributions Fund Policy Section 16 would be amended to replace "A project final report shall be submitted on or before April 30<sup>th</sup>, of the fiscal year in which the contribution was made..." to read: *"A project final report will be due on or before April 30<sup>th</sup> of the following fiscal year"*.

Example: The final report for a grant issued in June, 2013, would be due to HRM on or before April 30, 2014.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The proposed amendments to policy have no financial implications.

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The BID Contributions Fund is only available to the eight (8) BID associations currently recognized by Regional Council pursuant to By-law B-700.

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

Not applicable.

**ALTERNATIVES**

Grants Committee could amend or overturn the recommended changes to the BID Contributions Fund Policy.

**ATTACHMENTS**

None.

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A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/commcoun/cc.html> then choose the appropriate Community Council and meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

Report Prepared by: Peta-Jane Temple, Team Lead, Grants & Contributions, Finance & ICT, 490-5469. Peter Greechan, Community Developer, Grants & Contributions, Finance & ICT, 490-7310

Original signed

Report Approved by: Bruce Fisher, Manager, Financial Policy & Planning, 490-4493

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