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BRIEFING FORM

SUBMITTED BY: District Boundary Review, Staff Working Team

SUBMITTED TO: District Boundary Review Committee of Council

DATE: November 5, 2009

SUBJECT: Councillor Survey, HRM District Boundary Review

ORIGIN

At the meeting of the August 4, 2009 Committee of the Whole regard the District Boundary Review process Council requested that a survey of Councillors be included in the process.

At the October 1, 2009 meeting the District Boundary Review Committee directed staff to draft a survey for review and decision by the committee at the following meeting.

DECISION REQUIRED

- 1) Does the proposed survey (attached) meet the goals and objectives of the District Boundary Review Committee in regard to conducting a survey with members of Council? Any changes, additions, deletions?
- 2) Would the District Boundary Review Committee like the survey conducted
 - a) as a survey circulated to Council and returned to staff (legal)?
 - b) as individual Councillor interviews? the survey questions provided in advance
 - Conducted by staff?
 - Conducted by members of the District Boundary Review Committee?

BACKGROUND

In March, 2002 the District Boundaries Advisory Committee for the 2004 district boundary review conducted a survey of Councillors to better understand the role of a councillor, as well as their workload: 16 responses were received. The results, with identifiers removed, were presented to the UARB as part of the Municipality's application. This information was used to assist the District

Boundaries Advisory Committee in evaluating various governance models, and to assist the UARB in understanding the role of a municipal councillor in HRM.

ALTERNATIVES & ASSOCIATED RISKS

1) To substantively change the survey and bring it back to the December meeting of the District Boundary review Committee

2) Not to conduct a survey of Councillors. This is not the recommended approach as Council asked that they a survey of Councillors be conducted and a similar survey was included in previous boundary reviews.

IMPACT: *(Other Bu's, Financial, Capacity/resource, etc.)*

Circulating the survey for return to Legal uses the least resources but may also result in the least number of responses.

Staff from the Clerk's office (Linda & Cathy) could schedule and conduct interviews between now and early December with an introductory email from the District Boundary Review Committee.

If interviews were conducted by Committee members with their colleagues on each Community Council it may have the most favourable response.

ATTACHMENTS:

Version 2.0 - District Boundary Review Councillor Survey

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HRM Boundary Review Committee
Councillor's Survey

Councillor's Name _____ District _____

How would you describe your district (circle as many as you feel apply):

Rural Suburban Urban

Based on direction given by Council as part of the review process we are requesting that all Councillors complete the following short survey. The information collected will assist in evaluating the role and functions of Councillors and their workload as part of the District Boundary Review process.

Responses will be combined in reporting and no individual Councillor's response will be identified in the reported data.

1. (a) The HRM Charter offers little guidance on the role of a councillor. If you had to write a job description for an HRM Councillor, what duties and responsibilities would you include?
- (b) Are there any of those duties and responsibilities you would change?
2. (a) What, in your opinion, is the role a Regional Councillor in formulating and creating policy and direction for HRM?
- (b) What is the role of a Regional Councillor in the implementation of policy for HRM?
- (c) At what level of detail do you think a Regional Councillor should be involved in governance?
- (d) What is or should be the role of the Regional Councillor as advocate for individual constituents re: service problems or other related issues?
3. (a) How many of the following, on average, do you receive/send on an average day as a result of your role as a Councillor?

i	Telephone Calls	_____
ii	Letters	_____
iii	Electronic Mail	_____
iv	Facsimiles	_____
	Total	_____
- (b) How much time do you spend in an average week responding to calls and correspondence? Hrs. _____

(c) Do you manage to respond to all matters and deal with the issues raised?
Yes _____ No _____

(d) Comments: _____

4. How much time do you spend in a typical week on any of the following activities as a result of your role as Councillor?

	Meetings	Time	Hrs.
(a) Council Related	_____	_____	Hrs.
(b) Committee Related	_____	_____	Hrs.
(c) Community Council	_____	_____	Hrs.
(d) Community Related	_____	_____	Hrs.
(e) Ceremonial	_____	_____	Hrs.
(f) Travel	_____	_____	Hrs.
(g) Others	_____	_____	Hrs.
TOTAL	_____	_____	Hrs.

5. (a) On how many Committees of Council do you currently sit?

6. (a) How much of the time spend on the items noted in Questions 3 and 4 is effective use of your time?

(b) Are there some of the items noted in Questions 3 and 4 that could/should be dealt with more effectively, if handled by municipal staff?

7. (a) To what extent do you utilize the Councillor Support Staff available to you?

(b) Do you have a non-HRM support network to assist you? (i.e. spouse, partner, friend, community association) Yes _____ No _____

(c) Is the HRM staff support you have available to you adequate?
Yes _____ No _____

(d) Would you utilize additional HRM Staff Support if it was available?
Yes _____ No _____

8. Based on your experience as a Regional Councillor, do you feel that the position of Councillor is a full or a part-time position? Full Time: _____ Part Time: _____

What factors would cause you to answer the question differently?

Comments: _____

9. Do you feel that a Councillor with the workload you have is able to provide his/her constituents the representation they expect? Yes _____ No _____

Comments: _____

10. The *Municipal Government Act* outlines the following factors that are to be taken into consideration in defining the number and boundaries of polling districts in a municipality:

- iv number of voters
- v relative parity of voting power
- vi population density
- vii community of interests
- viii geographic size

(a) Considering these and the present service delivery levels of HRM, do you think that the number of Regional Councillors that are necessary to carry out the business of HRM should be:

Increased _____

Decreased _____

Unchanged _____

(Check one)

(b) If HRM's administrative and support structure was changed so that Council could devote more of its time to policy issues, would this alter your response?

Yes _____ No _____

Comments: _____

(c) Given your responses to (a) and (b), are you willing to offer a suggestion as to the appropriate number of Regional Councillors?

Number _____

(d) Further Comments: