

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
MINUTES
MARCH 2, 2000

PRESENT: Deputy Mayor John Cunningham
Councillors Steve Streach (afternoon)
Gordon R. Snow (morning)
Keith Colwell
Ron Cooper
Harry McInroy (afternoon)
Jack Greenough
Condo Sarto
Bruce Hetherington
Clint Schofield
Jerry Blumenthal
Graham L. Downey
Sue Uteck
Sheila Fougere
Russell Walker
Bill Stone
Graham Read
David E. Merrigan
Robert Harvey (afternoon)
Peter Kelly
Reg Rankin
Jack Mitchell

ABSENT Mayor Walter R. Fitzgerald
WITH REGRETS: Councillor Stephen Adams

STAFF: Mr. George McLellan, Acting Chief Administrative Officer
Mr. Wayne Anstey, Municipal Solicitor
Ms. Vi Carmichael, Municipal Clerk
Ms. Julia Horncastle, Assistant Municipal Clerk

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The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. by Deputy Mayor Cunningham.

1. PRESENTATION - 2000/2001 OPERATING BUDGET

COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Mr. McLellan, Acting Chief Administrative Officer, advised there are no specific modifications recommended to the existing base budget.

REAL ESTATE SERVICES & FACILITIES

Mr. McLellan, Acting Chief Administrative Officer, advised the substantive change in the modifications are as a result of the Rose Facility Management contract costs.

Mr. Tom Rath, General Manager, Real Estate Services, advised this budget encompasses business parks, real estate services, the building transition program and building services. He advised the \$340,000.00 modification is as a result of bringing the Rose Facility Management under contract for a three year period.

In response to Councillor Kelly, Mr. Rath advised the amount of \$160,227.00 for consulting fees is for administration and overhead expenses as well as including part of the contract with Rose Facilities Management. He advised \$100,000.00 is dedicated to space planning services. On further question, Mr. Rath advised the amount under Other Professions Fees covers a number of items such as appraisal services, geotechnical services and external legal services that are associated primarily with the sale of property. He advised Contract Fees deal with management of surplus properties that are leased.

Councillor Kelly requested further detail and breakdown of these items.

Councillor Stone stated there is a need for a staff person to be assigned to deal exclusively with the business parks. Mr. Rath responded that a number of key real estate officer positions are in the process of being implemented and those individuals will have the skills and training necessary to be able to respond to sales enquiries both with respect to surplus property as well as property in the business parks.

In response to Councillor Mitchell, Mr. Rath advised there is no specific plan for disposition of parkland as there is presently no overall listing of surplus lands. He advised his department will be working in conjunction with parks and recreation to identify surplus property and, as time and resources permit, these will be brought to Council.

In response to Councillor Cooper, Mr. Rath advised the amount under the heading "other goods and services" is rent paid by the Municipality for facilities in Duke Tower, Alderney

Gate and a number of other leased properties.

In response to Councillor Schofield, Mr. Rath clarified that the monies allocated for new roads in Burnside are included in the Capital Budget. He stated the monies used to expand roads and services in Burnside would be from the sale of those lands as well as contribution from a proposed reserve account.

In response to Councillor Blumenthal, Council was advised savings achieved by Rose Facilities Management should be realized toward the end of the second year.

911 COMMUNICATIONS CENTRE

Mr. McLellan, Acting Chief Administrative Officer, advised the budget increase under this business unit represents a followed item from the MAPP collective agreement representing an increase of four full time staff positions which will be etched out of the present part time compliment. Mr. McLellan further advised a salary differential for the new seconded manager is also included.

In response to Councillor Kelly, Council was advised Knightsridge is the backup centre and it is fully functional. Council was advised it was designed to run parallel with the primary centre as well as a backup centre.

In response to Councillor Uteck, Council was advised the amount under membership dues, conference and travel is for all those items plus an amount for training.

In response to Councillor Kelly, Council was advised the monies in the proposed modifications for this coming year are not a duplication but rather in response to HRM strategic planning relative to where HRM intends to go relative to all its communication infrastructure. Council was advised that if HRM is to do a complete integrated system with the Province there would be a capital projection of approximately \$7 million.

EMERGENCY MEASURES

Mr. McLellan, Acting Chief Administrative Officer, advised the amount of \$20,000 is to provide infrastructure assistance to ham radio users and for a vehicle cost incurred during the year which was not recognized in the 1999/2000 budget.

FINANCIAL SERVICES

Mr. McLellan, Acting Chief Administrative Officer, advised the amount of \$12,000 is for training. He noted there are a number of proposed improvements regarding service

capacity which will not have a cost impact.

In response to Councillor Blumenthal, Council was advised that the intent is to have an independent review of the Greater Halifax Partnership and the RDA.

In response to Councillor Kelly on the disbursal of the consultants fees of \$480,000, Ms Dale MacLennan, Director of Finance, advised this amount is the funding for commissionaires. She advised the amount under professional fees include the annual external audit and funding transfer relative to the parking metres transferred from public works. Ms. MacLennan further advised there has been restructuring within various sections of financial services and other business units.

FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

Mr. McLellan, Acting Chief Administrative Officer, advised there are a series of modifications noting, the amount of \$118,000 under prevention services is for positions to help with requests being received in the fire prevention area. He advised this will enable an increase in the number of inspections as well as support the operations division of that area. Mr. McLellan advised the attendance management item is for an outside service provider to assist in meeting a projected reduction in absenteeism. He advised the costs for additional clothing is mandatory under the occupational health and safety regulations. He advised there is a proposed reduction in the number of platoon chief positions and a driver training officer position being proposed.

In response to Councillor Walker, Deputy Chief Mosher advised there are no planned increases in the number of operational firefighters. Councillor Walker requested the absenteeism numbers be provided as well as response times from West Street to where the new station will be.

Councillor Kelly referenced the increase in the retirement allowance and queried whether this amount was for an early buy out or just normal attrition. In response, the Deputy Chief advised this was normal attrition for those people who offered to take the ERP.

In response to Councillor Sarto, Council was advised the Dartmouth Woodside and King Street stations would be closed and a new station built in the Penhorn area. He advised the consolidation of the Walker Street station with station 18 would be looked at in year three.

In response to a query from Councillor Hetherington regarding the amount for vehicle repair and maintenance, Council was advised there are still trained maintenance staff actively working fire services. The Councillor questioned why vehicle maintenance would not come under shared services and requested an answer be provided prior to completion

of the budget process.

In response to Councillor Kelly, Council was advised the amount under other profession fees is for labor arbitrations. On further question, Council was advised Honorariums is included with membership dues, conferences and travel.

In response to Councillor Cooper, Council was advised there are monies for fleet maintenance in the shared services budget as they are currently doing some of the work called for as part of alignment 2000. Mr. MacLennan advised the full absorption of fleet services for police and fire has not been represented in the shared services budget. In response to Councillor Kelly, Council was advised the amount budgeted for fuel costs will have to be looked at further to see whether some other budget cut can be made to absorb the increase in costs.

In response to Councillor Kelly, Council was advised the amount under conference and travel also includes an amount of \$104,000 for training in the core area, \$12,700 for books and periodicals as well as travel. Deputy Chief Mosher advised this amount also includes an allocation for training, membership fees etc. for departments that are outside the core area.

Councillor Kelly asked that clarification to be provided on the increase in the amount for books and periodicals.

FISCAL SERVICES

Mr. McLellan advised \$9 million being transferred from the operation budget to fund the capital program. He advised capital grant funding in the amount of \$534,000 is for specific requests and the amount of \$450,000 under Organization Development Fund is block funded noting, staff will come back with business cases before any of those funds are released. It was noted the variable operation stabilization reserve is another fund that has been block funded so as to prevent additions to the budget without submission of the appropriate business case justifications.

Ms. MacLennan, Director of Finance, reviewed the two funds and the eligible projects for them. She advised under the organizational development fund there were a number of departments including finance, planning and development and transit that had proposed modifications. She advised the intent is that departments will come back and submit proposals and business cases once their reviews are underway.

Councillor Walker suggested the following four items be added under Capital and Operating Grants: (1) residential tax exemption program to add to the budget an amount of \$160,738; (2) add \$23,000 to the Councillor's discretionary fund; (3) add an amount

of \$100,00 to the operating expenses to Community Grants; and, (4) \$117,000 to non profit tax exemptions.

Councillor Kelly requested clarification be provided on the amount under other goods and services and contract fees.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Mr. McLellan, Acting Chief Administrative Officer, advised this encompasses a number of departments. The Smart Communities is the commitment of \$400,000 should HRM be the winning community in the province. If HRM is chosen, then this would be the first of a three year funding commitment.

(Council recessed until 1:30 p.m.)

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Mr. McLellan, Acting Chief Administrative Officer, advised there is an allocation for a GIS technician, a cost reallocation, which in previous years was covered under the Capital Budget. He noted there is an amount dedicated to the Regional Growth Management Plan, three additional by-law enforcement officers and additional funds in recognition of staff reallocations.

Councillor Hetherington queried why there was no allocation of funds for support staff for the by-law enforcement officers as they are required to do their own reports taking them away from the time they can dedicate to enforcement. In response, Mr. Paul Dunphy, Director of Planning and Development, advised a number of the business processes are being examined and there may be opportunity to free up staff and reallocate them to areas where services need to be improved such as by-law enforcement and the building permit process.

Councillor Hetherington suggested a plan of action to address the time being spent by the by-law enforcement officers on paper work, etc., come back to Council within thirty days.

Councillor Kelly referenced pages 146 and 147 of the budget document regarding funding to construct oversized streets and sewers, and queried the status of the proposal for lot levies. In response, Mr. Dunphy stated it is one of the priorities and is expected to come forward to Council in the near future noting, it had not come forward previously as there was a requirement to obtain the legislative authority to implement this.

In response to Councillor Kelly regarding plan reviews, Mr. Dunphy advised a priority being proposed in this budget is to reintroduce four planners to deal with planning

applications which will return the service and FTE level to last years levels. He advised there is no proposal to have additional staff work on community MPS amendments and plan reviews but there is a plan to have planners work on community wide regional planning.

In response to Councillor Kelly, Mr. Dunphy advised staff increases are being examined in the areas of planning applications and building inspection permits.

In response to Councillor Blumenthal regarding a Regional Growth Development Plan, Ms. Donna Davis-Lohnes advised what is being recommended this year is the commencement of a regional planning program particularly looking at where and how the Municipality grows spatially. She advised the cost implications, particularly with regards to the operating and capital costs, are being looked at.

In response to a query from Councillor Stone, Mr. Dunphy advised currently taxi revenues cover the entire cost of the taxi enforcement function including the new taxi inspector position.

In response to Councillor Kelly regarding fees, Council was advised the consulting fees proposed under the Regional Planning Program are for economic consultants who would do the economic analysis on the various growth scenarios to develop a communication and public participation strategy.

Mr. Paul Dunphy, Director of Planning and Development, advised under contracting and consulting fees there is approximately \$300,000 for animal control and \$40,000 for two commissionaires who work on taxi enforcement.

In response to Councillor Harvey, Ms. Donna Davis-Lohnes advised this budget is status quo with respect to Heritage. Mr. McLellan, Acting Chief Administrative Officer, advised there is currently a staff report being drafted to address funding relative to Heritage.

GRANTS

Councillor Blumenthal expressed concern that Neptune would be receiving a grant noting, the recommendation for the Waegwoltic was not as expected. Ms. Barb Nehiley, advised these concerns would be addressed at the next meeting of the Gant Committee.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

In response to Councillor Greenough, Mr. Wayne Anstey, Municipal Solicitor, advised the increase in the amount for wages represents funding for the Municipal election. He further advised the increase in the total budget can be attributed to the \$600,700 election budget

and other increases are components of this amount.

HALIFAX REGIONAL LIBRARY

Deferred to the next budget meeting.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Mr. George McLellan, Acting Chief Administrative Officer, advised there is an allocation for a full time general manager under organizational development services. The increase in the staff relations costs is for one additional contract to be negotiated this year.

Mr. Pat Hartling, Director of Human Resources, advised the consulting and professional fees address issues relative to negotiations and expenses related to the negotiation team. He advised there is also an anticipation of some research and legal advisory services relative to the work of the bargaining team. He noted there is provision for arbitration of policy grievances that arise out of collective agreement negotiations.

INFORMATION SERVICES

Mr. George McLellan, Acting Chief Administrative Officer, advised there have been positions changed from seconded staff to permanent staff for additional functional support for the SAP system. He advised there is an amount for leasing costs for the SAP server and to reinstate the communication coordinators position which will be filled from existing staff. He noted SAP technical training has been decreased and the external consultants are no longer required. Mr. McLellan advised computer maintenance costs are included as well as an additional technical support person for SAP. He noted there is also an amount for new and upgraded circuits for the IWAN and a cost for the TMR project to allow the police to upgrade their units to participate in the IWAN connection after April 1st.

INTEGRATED COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Council was advised \$700,000 is directed towards the Integrated Wide Area Network with regards to interfacing with the Provincial IWAN system.

METRO TRANSIT

Mr. George McLellan, Acting Chief Administrative Officer, advised the proposed modifications were for expansion of the Park and Ride noting, this would be the first year of a three year initiative. He stated the modification also represented an increase in charter growth and reinstatement of the Metro Transit Awards Banquet.

In response to Councillor Walker, Council was advised there have not been any increases budgeted to increase service. It was further noted there is no anticipated decrease in service nor a fare increase.

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by Councillors Greenough and Walker that the meeting be adjourned to Wednesday, March 8, 2000 at 9:30 a.m. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Vi Carmichael
Municipal Clerk

