



Item No. 11.1.5
Halifax Regional Council
August 6, 2013

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: Original signed by 

Richard Butts, Chief Administrative Officer
Original Signed by 

Mike Labrecque, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: July 5, 2013

SUBJECT: UNSM Conference Resolutions 2013

ORIGIN

Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities request for resolutions to be considered at the 2013 Annual Conference.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

HRM Charter s. 79 (1) (v) authority to spend subscription funds on UNSM membership, as well as broader ability to participate in UNSM activities.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council forward the following four resolutions described in this report to the UNSM Annual Conference in November 2013:

- Dedicated Wastewater Infrastructure Funding
- Municipal Consultation on Infrastructure Program Development
- Erosion and Sedimentation Control Guidelines
- Increasing African Nova Scotian Engagement

BACKGROUND

Each year at its annual conference, UNSM debates a number of resolutions submitted by its 54 member municipalities. Those that are passed are forwarded to the Provincial government as requests for changes in policy, legislation, financing, etc. These resolutions have the benefit of UNSM's collective voice, and may be considered to have the support of all municipalities in Nova Scotia. A formal resolution passed by UNSM in support of the initiative(s) may assist the municipality in securing support for those items, and garners additional public profile for the issue.

HRM is represented in the Regional Caucus of UNSM. The role of the Caucus is to elect members to serve on the Board and to make recommendations to the Board on matters of interest and concern to the caucus. In advance of each annual conference, Municipalities, Caucuses, the Board and the Resolutions Committee can submit resolutions for debate at the Fall Conference. To be properly received, the resolution must be approved by Council

The 2013 UNSM Annual Conference is being held from November 5th to 8th in Halifax. UNSM Bylaws state that resolutions must be received by the UNSM office 80 days prior to the Annual Conference, putting this year's deadline at August 17th. All resolutions received by that date will be introduced and debated at the Annual Conference.

DISCUSSION

Wastewater Infrastructure Funding

Upgrades to wastewater systems are some of the most pressing and expensive needs facing Nova Scotian municipalities in the short- and medium-term. With a significant infrastructure deficit and new federal regulations, substantial upgrades must be made to wastewater systems across the province. With some of the oldest infrastructure in Canada, many Nova Scotian municipalities are facing costs of hundreds of millions of dollars to upgrade their wastewater systems, if no cost-shared strategy is identified. For example, Halifax Water has estimated the cost to renew wastewater infrastructure and comply with federal regulations at \$1.34 billion (net present value) over thirty years. In June 2013 Council approved water and wastewater as a top priority for funding under the new federal long term infrastructure plan.

Municipalities support the aims of the 2009 Wastewater Strategy. However the lack of any dedicated federal funding is a significant issue for municipalities. In 2012 UNSM passed a resolution asking the Province to advocate for a dedicated funding stream within the long term infrastructure plan that will address the costs of wastewater system upgrades. The Province supported this and raised the issue with the federal government. The new federal infrastructure plan does include a funding stream that can be used for wastewater systems (the \$10 billion Provincial-Territorial Infrastructure Fund); but wastewater is only one of a number of eligible projects in the fund, which is for both municipal and provincial projects.

In April 2013 the Atlantic Mayors' Congress passed a resolution calling on the federal and provincial governments to establish a dedicated fund, outside of the long term infrastructure

plan, to assist municipalities in meeting the new wastewater regulations (Appendix I: Atlantic Mayors Congress Cooperative Governance and Wastewater Funding). The AMC introduced the same resolution at the FCM Annual Conference in June, where it also passed with overwhelming support. Given the importance of this issue to Nova Scotian municipalities, it is recommended that HRM forward the AMC resolution to the UNSM annual conference for endorsement, and request the Provincial government support its intent.

Proposed Resolution:

WHEREAS wastewater system upgrades are necessary to comply with new federal regulations; and

WHEREAS these upgrades pose a significant financial risk to Nova Scotian municipalities; and

WHEREAS no dedicated funding program exists to assist municipalities in meeting the cost of the upgrades;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities support the Atlantic Mayors Congress resolution asking the Federal and Provincial governments to provide a dedicated fund to assist municipalities in meeting the new federal wastewater regulations; and

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities ask the Province for its commitment to establish this fund, and work with UNSM members to gain Federal commitment.

Municipal Consultation on Infrastructure Program Development

In March 2013, the federal government announced the new long term infrastructure plan (LTIP) to renew its infrastructure funding program under one umbrella. This program, a new Building Canada Fund, was developed after a year of consultation with provinces, municipalities and a wide range of stakeholders. The new Building Canada fund focuses on funding public infrastructure that will promote the federal priorities of productivity and economic growth, such as roads, bridges, highways, and transit. Overall the Building Canada Fund will deliver \$53.3 billion over 10 years. Assuming that funds are allocated using a similar method as the original Build Canada program, it is estimated that the Province of Nova Scotia would be allocated \$370 million over the life of the program.

Over the coming months the federal-provincial funding agreements, which will govern how funding flows and identify priority projects, will be negotiated. In order to maximize access to potential infrastructure funds, it is important that municipalities position themselves for success. The Federal plan was developed in close consultation with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, recognizing the important role municipalities will play in delivering the plan. As owners of 60% of Canada's infrastructure, municipal priorities must be front and centre as the funding agreements are developed. The same is true at a Provincial level. It is recommended that HRM support UNSM's close involvement in the federal-provincial infrastructure funding discussions to ensure municipal representation.

Proposed Resolution:

WHEREAS municipalities are the owners of the majority of Canada's public infrastructure; and

WHEREAS municipalities have been closely involved in federal consultations to inform the new long term infrastructure plan; and

WHEREAS the federal-provincial funding agreements will be developed over the next 6 to 12 months; and

WHEREAS municipalities will have a central role in delivering the infrastructure plan;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT UNSM strongly advocate for municipal consultation and a role in the development of the federal-provincial funding agreement.

Erosion and Sedimentation Control Guidelines

Water quality has been a growing area of concern for residents. A manageable contributor to decreasing water quality is the management of sediment from construction and development projects. Collaborative enhanced compliance to, and awareness of, the Province of Nova Scotia Erosion and Sedimentation Control Handbook will improve water quality and residential enjoyment of these natural assets.

This position is consistent with current Council direction on stormwater management work, and is an issue being discussed at the UNSM Sustainable Practices committee table. It supports the "Healthy Communities" Council Focus Area which states "HRM is a safe, liveable and sustainable community that encourages public engagement and participation in civic life and values our natural and cultural assets."

Proposed Resolution:

WHEREAS The Province of Nova Scotia has legislative authority with respect to water quality;

WHEREAS the 1988 Erosion and Sedimentation Control Handbook for Construction Sites is a Provincial educational material that sets standard expectations for environmental protection;

WHEREAS municipalities manage and influence municipal construction and development activities and have the opportunity to expand the use of the Handbook;

WHEREAS stormwater management and protection of community natural resources are shared intergovernmental responsibilities expected of residents;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities urge the Province of Nova Scotia to update the 1988 Erosion and Sedimentation Control Handbook;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities ask the Province to undertake a collaborative project within government, municipalities, utilities, and the construction and development industries to increase awareness and improved behaviours with respect to Erosion and Sedimentation Control.

Increasing African Nova Scotian Engagement

HRM is in the process of establishing its African Nova Scotian Affairs Integration Office. The goal of the Office is to strengthen the overall delivery of municipal services to residents and communities of African descent within HRM. The Office wants to increase participation and engagement of the African Nova Scotian community to ensure municipal government is connected with and reflective of the population it serves. The Office is reaching out to community members and stakeholders to determine how best to achieve this, including provincial and municipal reps, UNSM and the African Canadian Women in the Public Service Network.

The goal of the African Nova Scotian Integration Office is similar to that of UNSM's Women in Local Government project, which aims to increase women's participation in municipal government so that municipal governments reflect the populations they serve. The Women in Local Government work is supported by a steering committee comprised of elected and administrative officials from both municipal and provincial levels of government. It undertakes a number of initiatives to educate and support women interested in participating in local government.

The HRM African Nova Scotian Integration Office is interested in working more closely with the Women in Local Government project on measures that would increase the number of racially visible women in government. This initiative would support the "Governance and Communication" Council Focus Area, which states "HRM's governance structures and communications approach provide maximum opportunity for public engagement in and enables appropriate stewardship of municipal affairs."

Proposed Resolution:

WHEREAS the HRM African Nova Scotian Affairs Integration Office aims to increase the engagement and participation of HRM's African Nova Scotian community in municipal issues; and

WHEREAS the Women in Local Government project aims to increase women's participation in municipal government; and

WHEREAS HRM's African Nova Scotian Affairs Integration Office wants to leverage existing partnerships and mechanisms to support its work;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the UNSM Women in Local Government Project and the HRM African Nova Scotian Integration Office explore measures to recruit and retain racially visible women in municipal government.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

None

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

None

ALTERNATIVES

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix I: Atlantic Mayors Congress Cooperative Governance and Wastewater Funding

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.

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Report Approved by: _____
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Atlantic Mayors Congress

Halifax, April 25th, 2013

Cooperative Governance and Wastewater Funding

Whereas the Government of Canada, various provincial governments and municipal governments initiate deliberations and decisions based upon their mandates; and

Whereas decisions taken at one order of government may have significant impact on the governance of other levels of government; and

Whereas orderly, efficient and economic governance requires long range financial planning; and

Whereas the recent wastewater regulations mandated by the federal government will result in at least \$20 billion dollars of expenses for municipalities across the country;

Therefore be it resolved that the Atlantic Mayors Congress request the Government of Canada and the governments of the four Atlantic Provinces to ensure that deliberations of all governments effected by the decision-making of others participate fully in the process; and

Be it further resolved that the Atlantic Mayors Congress in cooperation with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities initiate dialogue to ensure that this model of cooperative governance is adopted by all; and

Be it further resolved that the Government of Canada recognize the exceptional financial burden that implementation of the wastewater regulations places upon municipalities and that the Provinces and Government of Canada provide a dedicated fund to assist municipalities in meeting the new federal wastewater regulations.