

# HALIFAX

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**Item No. 8.1 (i)**  
**Halifax Regional Council**  
**August 4, 2015**

**TO:** Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

**SUBMITTED BY:**

Original signed by



Richard Butts, Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** July 2, 2015

**SUBJECT:** **New Administrative Order 2015-001-GOV and Repeal of Administrative Orders #13 and #31**

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## **SUPPLEMENTARY** **INFORMATION REPORT**

### **ORIGIN**

Request for Supplementary Information Report in regard to outlining the process for considering the acquisition of archival records from private sources, and the role and responsibilities in implementing policy regarding the management of the Municipal Archives (as per page 8 of the proposed AO).

### **LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

Pursuant to the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*, s. 38(1), Council may adopt a policy for the management and destruction of records and may, by policy, specify further classes of records that are not to be destroyed or that are to be kept for specified time periods.

### **BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION**

The Municipal Archives was established in 2005-2006 specifically to address the transfer of large volumes of municipal records from the Provincial Archives as the archives streamlined and focused their collections. The collection came to the municipality on large shrink wrapped pallets and has required an extensive process of sorting, cataloging and accessioning of those records to provide for use and public access. While progress has been made over the past 10 years the task is not yet complete and the collection continues to be processed.

During that time over 80 sets of community records have been acquired by the Municipal Archives, a record of which can be found at <http://www.halifax.ca/archives/NewAcquisitions.php>.

The Municipal Archives is part of the Corporate Records Centre located at 81 Ilsley Ave, Dartmouth. The Corporate Records Centre contains roughly 19,000 boxes of Corporate Records from all Business Units (including Police Services) in addition to the Archival Records, all of which must be retained, managed and controlled on behalf of the municipality. The Corporate Records Centre is staffed by a manager, who

is an information management professional, and five (5) full time staff including one (1) archivist and one (1) staff person whose time is divided between records and archives. In addition the Corporate Records Centre has been successful in bringing in students and interns through a variety of grants programs.

The Municipal Archive is not a museum. The intent of the archives is not to hold artifacts but rather to hold archival "records" which are defined as:

*"record" means a record of information in any form including:*

- (i) Books, documents, maps, plans, machine readable records, drawings, photographs, letters, vouchers and papers, sound recordings, videotapes, microfilm, electronic files, electronic mail transmissions, databases and spreadsheets, and*
- (ii) Any other information that is written, photographed, recorded or stored in any manner and that is produced or received by the Municipality, such as official records, non-governmental records, copies, duplicates or transitory records*

*"archival record" means a record that is no longer required by the Municipality for current operations, legal, auditor or financial requirements but which has been appraised as having enduring legislative, historical, informational, evidential, research or other value.*

The Municipal Archives provides access to archival records to staff and elected officials, and to the public and researchers through the reference room and on the web. The reference room is open to the public by drop in Tuesday 10am-1pm; Wednesday 1-4pm; Thursday 1-4pm and by appointment otherwise.

### **Role of Archives in New AO**

The role of the Municipal Archives is provided for in clauses 16-21 of the proposed Administrative Order 2015-001-GOV.

The proposed AO strengthens the role of the Corporate Records Centre and Archives in working with the business units to develop new file plans by ensuring that, based on the professional advice, archival records are identified at the beginning of the life-cycle and moved to the archives in a planned and timely way.

Clause 21 of the new AO ensures that, during restructuring, orphaned records come under the control and custody of the Municipal Archives to ensure records are not unintentionally lost or destroyed.

Clause 19 of the new AO clearly continues to provide for the acquisition of community records "when such acquisitions will supplement the archival record of the Municipality".

Clause 18 of the new AO clearly continues to "provide for access to the archival records in the custody and control of the Municipal Archives". The municipality continues to invest in the public face of the archives with recent renovations to the reference room and ongoing digitization of records to provide access through the web. The AO does recognize that this work takes place within the "applicable legal restrictions and physical limitations" of the records.

### **Records as a Corporate Asset**

The purpose of the AO is to clearly outline the corporate governance and accountability framework for the information assets (records) of the municipality through their entire lifecycle.

Records, including archival records, are an asset of the municipality. Assets require the ongoing financial commitment of the staff and resources of the municipality. In the case of archival assets the responsibility of the municipality may extend perpetually (forever) unless the records are deaccessioned at some point in the future.

The AO designates the responsible officers at the most senior level of the organization. Delegation of appropriate duties to professional staff, while expected, does not relieve the responsible officer of the

accountabilities under the AO. What the AO is intended to provide is clarity that these functions are carried out under the same rigor, risk management and accountability as with any other corporate asset.

The accountability to Regional Council for acquisition for new assets, such as external archival records, falls under section 6 (2) (a) of the AO which provides that the CAO may establish procedures for the management of records.

The procedures previously in place for acquisition of community records/assets and were not in keeping with the authorities provided for in the acquisition of other corporate assets and, as such presented risk to the organization.

It is the intent of the business unit, with the adoption of the new Administrative Order 2015-001-GOV, to outline the policies and procedures related to the acquisition of external archival records for approval by the CAO. Once approved those procedures would be made available through the Records Centre/Archives web site.

As an archival professional the Municipal Archivist continues to have a significant role in regard to consideration of the acquisition of community/external records including the analysis, development of the business case, advice and recommendations in regard to the acquisition in keeping with clause 19 of the AO, which provides that external/community records may be acquired "when such acquisitions will supplement the archival record of the Municipality". Consideration of acquisition of archival records requires that a valuation be conducted and a preservation plan developed to ensure the ongoing preservation and access to the records. These roles fall to the Municipal Archives/Archivist as an archival professional.

The procedures for review/approval of the business case/recommendation of the Municipal Archives/Archivist will follow the roles outlined in the AO in regard to review/approval of the file plans and what Council would expect in regard to an approval process for acquisition of a corporate asset including:

- Administrative review in regard to compliance with the intent of the AO.
- Financial review in regard to valuation, tax implications and ongoing costs associated with the acquisition
- Access and Privacy review in regard to privacy matters
- Legal review in regard to legislative compliance and risk and, following those reviews:
- Approval of the Chief Administrative Officer in regard to the acquisition of an asset on behalf of the municipality.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

As provided in the report dated May 11, 2015 to Regional Council.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Administrative Order 2015-001-GOV, as proposed, does not change the public access to the archives or reference materials held by the municipality. The AO, as proposed, continues to provide for the acquisition of community/external archival records when such acquisitions will supplement the archival records of the municipality. In that regard, it is difficult to determine what additional aspects of the proposed AO regarding the effective management of municipal records would have significant community impact.

**ATTACHMENTS**

None

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

Report Prepared/Approved by: Cathy J. Mellett, Municipal Clerk, 902. 490.6456

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