


HALIFAX

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Item No. 11.1.4
Halifax Regional Council
October 20, 2015

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: September 23, 2015

SUBJECT: Halifax Town Crier Update

ORIGIN

July 30, 2013, motion of Regional Council:

"MOVED by Councillor Hendsbee, seconded by Councillor Nicoll that Halifax Regional Council accept the recommendation of the Nova Scotia Guild of Town Criers and appoint Mr. David Nimmo, a resident of Dartmouth, as the Interim Town Crier for central HRM, with a stipend of \$300 per month, to include expenses of \$100, effective August 1, 2013. This appointment is to run until a competition is held to identify and appoint a permanent Town Crier for HRM." MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, Section 79(1)(k), provides that Council may expend money required by the Municipality for recreational programs.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council direct staff to cease work on the recruitment of a permanent HRM Town Crier and continue to work with the Nova Scotia Guild of Town Criers to meet ongoing commitments for the use of town criers.

BACKGROUND

On July 30, 2013, Regional Council passed a motion to appoint an interim Town Crier until a competition could be held to identify and appoint a permanent Town Crier for Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM). While an interim Town Crier was appointed, the individual resigned within two weeks of the appointment citing personal reasons.

In January 2015, staff met with the Nova Scotia Guild of Town Criers (NSGTC) to discuss the role and the process to hold a competition. It was agreed the position would be best served by an individual who could fulfil the duties on a regular basis to HRM citizens. As well, it was decided that applicants for the position should be evaluated through an application process prior to the live competition, similar to the Halifax Poet Laureate application process.

On April 14, 2015, an Information Report was circulated to Regional Council that provided an update on the July 30, 2013 motion. The report stated the application process would include a public call for submissions, followed by an interview process with support from NSGTC and concluding with a live competition of the short listed candidates. The goal was to complete the process by the spring of 2015 to accommodate appearance requests during the summer event season.

Staff opened the call for applications on May 27, 2015. The call for applications was promoted on HRM's website, through social media on numerous HRM Facebook pages and Twitter accounts. As well, the call was advertised in the Municipal Services section of the Chronicle Herald. The call for applications closed on June 5, 2015, however, no applications were submitted.

DISCUSSION

With no applicants, staff was unable to proceed with holding a competition and therefore is unable to appoint a permanent HRM Town Crier as per the Regional Council motion. In early June, staff requested that NSGTC review their initial position and possible next steps. The NSGTC agreed that if the approach continues which permits various existing Town Criers to assist in fulfilling the requests of appearances, the appointment of an official Town Crier for HRM would not be necessary.

Additionally, the discussion also highlighted that an official Halifax Town Crier may infringe on the duties of the three current districts criers; Mr. Greg Fenwick in Sackville, Mr. Bob Raoul in Spryfield and Mr. Jamie Rouse in Eastern Passage. The NSGTC proposed that in the future a town crier appointment could be considered solely for downtown Halifax to serve the cruise ships and City Hall functions, rather than providing that opportunity to the current NSGTC members.

Given that staff has encountered considerable challenge in addressing Council's direction to appoint a permanent Town Crier for HRM, and given that staff has had success working with NSGTC over the past two years, it is recommended that Council direct staff to cease work on the recruitment of a permanent HRM Town Crier and continue to work with the Nova Scotia Guild of Town Criers to meet ongoing commitments for the use of town criers.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Executive of the Nova Scotia Guild of Town Criers includes members of the public.

ALTERNATIVES

Regional Council could direct staff to work with the NSGTC to attempt to recruit a separate Town Crier for downtown Halifax to serve only the cruise ships and City Hall functions.

ATTACHMENTS

None

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.

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