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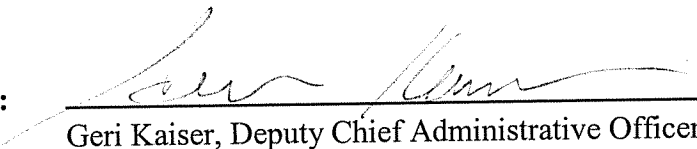


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**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**  
**April 25, 2006**

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

**SUBMITTED BY:**

  
Geri Kaiser, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** April 20, 2006

**SUBJECT:** Council Meeting Schedule - Options

### **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION REPORT**

#### **ORIGIN**

At the December 2005 Council meeting Councillor Younger requested a staff report on alternative council scheduling for 2007.

**BACKGROUND**

Regional Council’s meeting schedule is governed by Administrative Order No.1 and is approved by Council each year in late fall. Attachment 1 contains a copy of Regional Council’s 2006 meeting schedule and indicates Council meeting dates and approved vacation periods.

Current Meeting Schedule

Administrative Order No. 1 states that “Council shall meet every Tuesday by the hour of 6:00 p.m., with the exception of vacation periods as determined by Council by resolution”. Therefore, councillors are required to attend Regional Council meetings every Tuesday beginning at 6:00 pm to deal with such issues as public hearings, approval of tenders, etc. In addition to regular Regional Council meetings, councillors also are required to attend in camera meetings (which may occur each week) and Committee of the Whole meetings (which are scheduled for every second and fourth Tuesday of the month). Council’s existing schedule is graphically displayed below:

|               | <b>Monday</b> | <b>Tuesday</b>  | <b>Wednesday</b> | <b>Thursday</b> | <b>Friday</b> |
|---------------|---------------|---|------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| <b>Week 1</b> |               | In Camera<br>Regional Council                           |                  |                 |               |
| <b>Week 2</b> |               | Committee of the Whole<br>In Camera<br>Regional Council |                  |                 |               |
| <b>Week 3</b> |               | In Camera<br>Regional Council                           |                  |                 |               |
| <b>Week 4</b> |               | Committee of the Whole<br>In Camera<br>Regional Council |                  |                 |               |

In addition to the above meetings, Councillors are required to attend Community Council and various committees, boards and commissions throughout a standard month. As a result, some Councillors are concerned about the lack of time they spend in their respective communities. To address this issue, Council requested that staff investigate alternative scheduling options for Regional Council which would be used as a basis for discussion on this matter.

**DISCUSSION**

In developing alternative scheduling options, staff have assumed that Council wishes to:

- (i) ensure that issues of Council are addressed in a timely manner, particularly public hearings
- (ii) maintain the Committee of the Whole meeting structure;

- (iii) continue televising Committee of the Whole (COW) and Regional Council meetings ( which requires co-ordination of meeting schedules);
- (iv) maintain flexibility on start times for meetings; and
- (v) maintain the ability to hold Council over successive days.

Staff have identified three options for Council’s discussion based upon the above assumptions and they are:

**Option One**

- In Camera and regular Regional Council meetings would be held the first and third Tuesday of the month.
- Committee of the Whole meetings would be held on the second and fourth Tuesday of the month. Regional Council would reconvene immediately following the meeting to ratify only those recommendations presented at Committee of the Whole

|               | <b>Monday</b> | <b>Tuesday</b>   | <b>Wednesday</b> | <b>Thursday</b> | <b>Friday</b> |
|---------------|---------------|--|------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| <b>Week 1</b> |               | In camera<br>Regional Council  |                  |                 |               |
| <b>Week 2</b> |               | Committee of the Whole<br>(reconvene as Regional Council<br>to ratify COW recommendations) |                  |                 |               |
| <b>Week 3</b> |               | In camera<br>Regional Council  |                  |                 |               |
| <b>Week 4</b> |               | Committee of the Whole<br>(reconvene as Regional Council<br>to ratify COW recommendations) |                  |                 |               |

**Advantages:**

- eliminates a night meeting on every second and fourth week.
- issues raised at Committee of the Whole are ratified the same day

**Disadvantages:**

- limits Council’s ability to handle complex and numerous issues during times of increased workload as Regional Council issues will only have two opportunities per month for debate
- reduces the number of possible public hearing dates

**Option Two**

- In Camera and regular Regional Council meetings would be held the first and third Tuesday of the month.
- Committee of the Whole meeting would be held on the first and third Monday of the month to give Council more time to discuss issues. Regional Council would ratify the recommendations made at Committee of the Whole on the following day.
- No meetings would be held on the second and fourth weeks of the month, except for public hearing as demand warrants.

|               | <b>Monday</b>   | <b>Tuesday</b>                | <b>Wednesday</b> | <b>Thursday</b> | <b>Friday</b> |
|---------------|---|-------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| <b>Week 1</b> | Committee of the Whole  | In Camera<br>Regional Council |                  |                 |               |
| <b>Week 2</b> | No meetings<br>Public Hearings to be scheduled on off weeks based on demand |                               |                  |                 |               |
| <b>Week 3</b> | Committee of the Whole  | In Camera<br>Regional Council |                  |                 |               |
| <b>Week 4</b> | No meetings<br>Public Hearings to be scheduled on off weeks based on demand |                               |                  |                 |               |

\* Where applicable fifth calendar week not utilized.

**Advantages:**

- reduces the need for a night meeting on every second and fourth week.
- improves the manageability of Council's meeting schedule by clustering Public Hearings
- increases flexibility on the start time and duration of meetings

**Disadvantages:**

- increases the time required for Council meetings due to public hearing dates being clustered
- increases travel for Councillors if a public hearing is required on the second and fourth weeks
- limits Council's ability to handle complex and numerous issues during times of increased workload

**Option Three**

- Committee of the Whole, In Camera, and regular Regional Council meetings would be held the first and third Tuesday of the month.
- No meetings would be held on the second and fourth weeks of the month, except for public hearings as demand warrants.

|               | <b>Monday</b>   | <b>Tuesday</b>  | <b>Wednesday</b> | <b>Thursday</b> | <b>Friday</b> |
|---------------|---|---|------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| <b>Week 1</b> |   | Committee of the Whole<br>In Camera<br>Regional Council |                  |                 |               |
| <b>Week 2</b> | No scheduled meetings<br>Public Hearings to be scheduled on off weeks based on demand |   |                  |                 |               |
| <b>Week 3</b> |   | Committee of the Whole<br>In Camera<br>Regional Council |                  |                 |               |
| <b>Week 4</b> | No scheduled meetings<br>Public hearings to be scheduled on off weeks based on demand |   |                  |                 |               |

\* Where applicable fifth calendar week not utilized.

**Advantages:**

- reduces the need for a night meeting on every second and fourth week.
- reduces travel cost and time for councillors
- reduces administrative demands
- reduces televising costs

**Disadvantage:**

- increases the amount of time a councillor spends in meetings on the council meeting day
- limits Council's ability to address complex and numerous issues during times of increased workload as Regional Council only have two opportunities per month.

The options outlined above do not propose radical changes to the current structure as outlined in Administrative Order No. 1 or from the above stated assumptions. Regardless of the option chosen, some changes will be necessary to Administrative Order No. 1, but the basic flow of information to Council as decision makers remains the same.

**Direction:**

As stated previously, the above options are intended as a basis for Council to discuss alternative meeting schedules. Staff are seeking direction from Council on how this issue should be discussed (ie workshop session, Committee of the Whole) and the desired meeting schedule option.

**BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

There are no budget implications.

**FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN**

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

**ALTERNATIVES**

Staff is seeking Council's direction regarding scheduling options.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment "A": 2006 Regional Council Meeting Schedule

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.

Report Prepared by :                      Jan Gibson, Municipal Clerk      Ph: 490-4210

Financial Review :                      Barb Palmeter, Financial Consultant      Ph: 490-7221

## 2006 HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE

APPROVED DEC. 13/05

| MONTH    | DATE     | MEETING                    | TIME           | MONTH     | DATE    | MEETING                            | TIME           |
|----------|----------|----------------------------|----------------|-----------|---------|------------------------------------|----------------|
| January  | Jan 3    | No Meeting                 |                | July      | July 4  | Regular Session                    | 6:00 pm        |
|          | Jan 10   | COW<br>Regular Session     | TBA<br>6:00 pm |           | July 11 | No Regularly<br>Scheduled Meetings |                |
|          | Jan 17   | Regular Session            | 6:00 pm        |           | July 18 |                                    |                |
|          | Jan 24   | COW<br>Regular Session     | TBA<br>6:00 pm |           | July 25 |                                    |                |
|          | Jan 31   | Regular Session            | 6:00 pm        | August    | Aug 1   | Regular Session                    | 6:00 pm        |
| February | Feb 7    | Regular Session            | 6:00 pm        |           | Aug 8   | COW<br>Regular Session             | TBA<br>6:00 pm |
|          | Feb 14   | COW<br>Regular Session     | TBA<br>6:00 pm |           | Aug 15  | No Regularly<br>Scheduled Meetings |                |
|          | Feb 21   | Regular Session            | 6:00 pm        |           | Aug 22  |                                    |                |
|          | Feb 28   | COW<br>Regular Session     | TBA<br>6:00 pm |           | Aug 29  |                                    |                |
| March    | Mar 7    | Regular Session            | 6:00 pm        | September | Sept 5  | Regular Session                    | 6:00 pm        |
|          | Mar 14   | March Break                |                |           | Sept 12 | COW<br>Regular Session             | TBA<br>6:00 pm |
|          | Mar 21   | Regular Session            | 6:00 p.m.      |           | Sept 19 | Regular Session                    | 6:00 pm        |
|          | Mar 28   | COW<br>Regular Session     | TBA<br>6:00 pm |           | Sept 26 | COW<br>Regular Session             | TBA<br>6:00 pm |
| April    | April 4  | Regular Session            | 6:00 pm        | October   | Oct 3   | Regular Session                    | 6:00 pm        |
|          | April 11 | COW<br>Regular Session     | TBA<br>6:00 pm |           | Oct 10  | No Meeting                         |                |
|          | April 18 | Regular Session            | 6:00 pm        |           | Oct 17  | Regular Session                    | 6:00 p.m.      |
|          | April 25 | COW<br>Regular Session     | TBA<br>6:00 pm |           | Oct 24  | COW<br>Regular Session             | TBA<br>6:00 pm |
| May      | May 2    | Regular Session            | 6:00 pm        |           | Oct 31  | Regular Session                    | 6:00 pm        |
|          | May 9    | COW<br>Regular Session     | TBA<br>6:00 pm | November  | Nov 7   | Regular Session                    | 6:00 pm        |
|          | May 16   | Regular Session            | 6:00 pm        |           | Nov 14  | COW<br>Regular Session             | TBA<br>6:00 pm |
|          | May 23   | No Meeting                 |                |           | Nov 21  | Regular Session                    | 6:00 pm        |
|          | May 30   | Regular Session            | 6:00 pm        |           | Nov 28  | COW<br>Regular Session             | TBA<br>6:00 pm |
| June     | June 6   | No Meeting (FCM- Montreal) |                | December  | Dec 5   | Regular Session                    | 6:00 pm        |
|          | June 13  | COW<br>Regular Session     | TBA<br>6:00 pm |           | Dec 12  | COW<br>Regular Session             | TBA<br>6:00 pm |
|          | June 20  | Regular Session            | 6:00 pm        |           | Dec 19  | Holiday Season                     |                |
|          | June 27  | COW<br>Regular Session     | TBA<br>6:00 pm |           | Dec 26  |                                    |                |

Note: COW - Committee of the Whole Meetings every second &amp; fourth Tuesday of the Month as required.