

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

---

HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE  
MINUTES

August 11, 2009

PRESENT: Mayor Peter Kelly, Chair  
Deputy Mayor David Hendsbee  
Councillors: Barry Dalrymple  
Lorelei Nicoll  
Gloria McCluskey  
Bill Karsten  
Jackie Barkhouse  
Jim Smith  
Mary Wile  
Jerry Blumenthal  
Dawn M. Sloane  
Sue Uteck  
Jennifer Watts  
Russell Walker  
Debbie Hum  
Linda Mosher  
Stephen D. Adams  
Robert P. Harvey  
Tim Outhit  
Reg Rankin  
Peter Lund

REGRETS: Councillors: Steve Streach  
Brad Johns

STAFF: Mr. Wayne Anstey, Acting Chief Administrative Officer  
Ms. Mary Ellen Donovan, Municipal Solicitor  
Ms. Christen MacDonald, Acting Municipal Clerk  
Ms. Chris Newson, Legislative Assistant

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. CALL TO ORDER. . . . . 3  
2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES. . . . . 3  
3. SERVICE REVIEW. . . . . 3  
4. BLOOMFIELD MASTER PLAN. . . . . 6  
5. ADJOURNMENT. . . . . 6

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 4:07 p.m.

**2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES - August 4, 2009**

**MOVED BY Councillor Blumenthal, seconded by Councillor Rankin, that the minutes of August 4, 2009, as presented, be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

**Additions:**            5.     Tax Reform - Councillor Rankin - To be dealt with first.

The agenda, as amended, was approved.

Council agreed to deal with Item 5 at this time.

**5. TAX REFORM**

**MOVED BY Councillor Rankin, seconded by Councillor Lund that the Tax Reform item be moved to the September 15, 2009 session of the Committee of the Whole. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

**3. SERVICE REVIEW**

- A copy of the PowerPoint presentation was before Council.
- A report dated July 2, 2009 was before Council.

Mr. Ed Thornhill, Manager, Service Transformation, Corporate Planning, Business Planning and Information, presented the information. He advised that staff were seeking Council's endorsement on a list of services for review following the new service review process. The four services presented were being recommended as they were non-mandated and had no direct link to Council Focus Area outcomes with the exception of the marketing and publication service which did link to the Council Focus Area relating to Communication. Staff were proposing a review of the four noted services in an effort to achieve small successes with the new process prior to addressing larger service areas.

**MOVED BY Councillor Sloane, seconded by Councillor Lund that Halifax Regional Council authorize staff to commence review of the following services: Visitor Information Centres; Burial Services - Plot Provision and Internment; Water Quality Sampling; and Marketing Services - Publications.**

Mr. Thornhill responded to comments/concerns of Council advising that everything would be considered as part of the service review including relationships and partnerships with stakeholders such as Destination Halifax, Halifax Water and others.

Councillor Blumenthal noted that the last discussion on service review involved snow and ice removal. He expressed concern that the motion before Council was for a review of four different services and advised that he wanted to discuss the snow removal service as well as grass cutting service.

Without a vote being taken on the motion on the floor, it was **MOVED by Councillor Blumenthal that a service review be done on contracting out of municipal services versus in-house service utilizing the existing service standards for street and sidewalk snow removal and grass cutting service including a comparison of the costs and the complaints received from residents in regard to property damage.**

Councillor Walker noted that without a complete review of the snow removal service standards he would not be supporting the motion. He suggested a full afternoon discussion solely on snow removal service standards as the service standards need to change.

Mr. Thornhill and Mr. Brad Anguish, Director, Business Planning and Information Management, explained that staff would work with Council in regard to the service standards and that an analysis of contracting out services could be provided to Council as Phase 1 of that review. A full review of the snow removal and grass cutting services would be very large in magnitude and would require clarity from Council on the pressure point areas for staff's concentration.

Mr. Mike Labrecque, Director, Transportation and Public Works, advised that in regard to the fiscal framework, there was a current deficit of \$3 million and any increase to service standards would require funding in addition to that required to cover the deficit.

Councillor Harvey expressed support for staff's proposed plan of action as the larger topics would require more time.

In response to Councillor Smith, Mr. Anguish advised that the contracting of services portion of the snow removal service review could be brought to Council by September or early October of 2009.

Mr. Labrecque advised that winter works has always been a balance of contracting out and in-house service; it has been more cost efficient in some cases to contract out the service. He noted that staff were not in a position to make changes for the 2009 / 10 season, therefore; any proposed changes to service would be for the 2010 / 11 year. There would be some non-substantive improvements for the 2009/10 winter season as staff strive each year to improve services.

Councillor Hum explained that a full service review was required for snow and ice

removal, specifically, sidewalk snow removal for District 16. She noted that a meeting between staff and Councillors has to be held earlier than October as snow storms start in early November. She advised that she was in support of a detailed discussion at a future Committee of the Whole session solely on snow removal.

Councillor Outhit advised that he was in support of a full discussion of snow removal and suggestions on how to make it better. He noted that HRM did very well last winter in regard to snow removal with the exception of a few issues with sidewalks in the Bedford area.

Councillor Mosher noted that a previous discussion of Council held on February 10, 2009 suggested matching HRM standards with those expected of the public. She inquired when the item would have to be brought forward in order for the discussion to be held in time. She requested that Information Item 4 from July 7, 2009 be included on the next Committee of the Whole agenda for discussion. Councillor Mosher advised that she was still dealing with residents who have not had property damage repaired from damages made by snow removal Contractors. The Contractors should be made to repair the damage and pay for the associated costs.

Without a seconder the motion was lost.

Without a vote being taken on the main motion, it was **MOVED by Councillor Mosher, seconded by Councillor Blumenthal that all issues relating to snow and ice removal including the comparison of contracting out versus in-house service be deferred to a future Committee of the Whole session for full discussion. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

Councillor McCluskey noted that she has been asking for a full list of HRM services/programs but has not received that information. She advised that she was not in support of reviewing the four services proposed as she did not see what capacity could be drawn from them.

Without a vote being taken on the main motion, it was **MOVED BY Councillor McCluskey, seconded by Councillor Nicoll that the four proposed services for review be removed and replaced with a full review of recreation programs offered by HRM owned and operated facilities.**

Mr. Thornhill and Mr. Anguish advised that a review of that magnitude for recreation services would be a very large undertaking, therefore; the information would not be available prior to the business planning for the next cycle.

Mr. Wayne Anstey, Acting Chief Administrative Officer, suggested that the review of recreation services be in addition to the four proposed in order to start the process.

**MOTION PUT AND DEFEATED.**

Discussion ensued on the main motion as follows:

Councillor Outhit suggested that a review of Recreation services be added to the list as a long term project rather than deleting the proposed four services. He commented that perhaps Council should not take so much time off during the summer so that more issues could be addressed in time for the next season.

The main motion was amended to include a review of Recreation Services with a vote then taken on the amended motion as follows:

**MOVED BY Councillor Smith, seconded by Councillor McCluskey that Halifax Regional Council authorize staff to commence review of the following services: Visitor Information Centres; Burial Services - Plot Provision and Internment; Water Quality Sampling; Marketing Services - Publications; and Recreation.**

Councillor Walker requested that the service review contain information on how to improve the service rather than to get rid of them as the services, such as the Visitor Information Centres, could be a plus not a negative for the municipality.

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

**4. BLOOMFIELD MASTER PLAN**

Due to time constraints, this item was deferred to a future Committee of the Whole.

**5. TAX REFORM**

This item was dealt with earlier in the meeting. See page 3.

**6. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:08 p.m.

Christen MacDonald  
Acting Municipal Clerk