



**HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES  
January 28, 2015**

PRESENT: Mayor Mike Savage  
Deputy Mayor Lorelei Nicoll  
Councillors: Barry Dalrymple  
Bill Karsten  
Gloria McCluskey  
Darren Fisher  
Waye Mason  
Jennifer Watts  
Linda Mosher  
Russell Walker  
Stephen Adams  
Reg Rankin  
Matt Whitman  
Brad Johns  
Tim Outhit

REGRETS: Councillor Steve Craig

STAFF: Mr. Richard Butts, Chief Administrative Officer  
Mr. John Traves, Municipal Solicitor  
Ms. Cathy Mellett, Municipal Clerk  
Mr. Liam MacSween, Legislative Assistant

*The following does not represent a verbatim record of the proceedings of this meeting.*

A video recording of this meeting is available:  
[http://archive.isiglobal.ca/vod/halifax/archive\\_2015-01-28\\_live\\_0.mp4.html](http://archive.isiglobal.ca/vod/halifax/archive_2015-01-28_live_0.mp4.html)

The agenda, supporting documents, and information items circulated to Council are available online:  
<http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/150128cow-agenda.php>

*The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m., and adjourned at 12:01 p.m.*

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Councillor Karsten, Chair, called the meeting to order in Council Chambers, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax.

**2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – NONE**

**3. Halifax Regional Police**

The following documentation was before Committee of the Whole:

- A staff recommendation report dated January 19, 2015
- A revised presentation dated January 28, 2015

The Chair invited Chief, Jean-Michel Blais, Halifax Regional Police (HRP) and Mr. Mike Moreash, Chair, Board of Police Commissioners to provide a presentation on the 2015-16 HRP Draft Budget and Business Plan.

Chief Blais introduced Commissioner Mike Moreash, Chair of the Board of Police Commissioners to provide introductory remarks pertaining to the 2015-16 HRP Budget and Business Plan.

Mr. Moreash stated that to fulfil the statutory requirement as outlined in the Police Act, the Board of Police Commissioners must provide a recommendation to Council respecting the HRP Budget. He advised that the Board of Police Commissioners has reviewed the 2015-16 Draft Budget and Business Plan and recommends approval by Regional Council. He advised that there has been a slight discrepancy with respect to the transfer of funds related to programming which has recently come to light, but noted that the Board of Police Commissioners is satisfied that the content and function of the budget provides for efficient and effective policing within the municipality.

The Chair thanked Mr. Moreash for his remarks as well as his continued work on the Board of Police Commissioners.

Chief Blais noted an amendment for the consideration of Regional Council has been presented by staff in relation to the 2015-16 Budget and Business Plan due to an issue that was identified with funding associated with Youth Advocate Program. He advised that the Youth Advocate program is managed by Parks and Recreation Services but had traditionally appeared in HRP's budget due to a requirement in the HRM Charter which stipulates that programming associated with community crime prevention falls under the responsibility of Police Services. He advised that a review of the HRM Charter has been ongoing in this regard and the intention of HRP was to transfer the funding of the Youth Advocate program to Parks and Recreation which was outlined in the draft budget that was presented to the Board of Police Commissioners in early January. He commented that he was overly optimistic that the issue would have been resolved by this time but has not. He explained that the intent of the proposed amendment is to address this issue.

Mr. John Traves, Municipal Solicitor, inquired if the proposed amendment will be provided to the Board of Police Commissioners for review and approval prior to the approval of the final 2015-16 Budget by Regional Council in March. Chief Blais replied in the affirmative and noted that he has requested that the Board of Police Commissioners consider this item at the next meeting to be held in February.

**MOVED by Councillor Mosher, seconded by Councillor Walker that that the Committee of the Whole direct staff to proceed to prepare the 2015/2016 Halifax Regional Police Business Unit Budget and Business Plan as proposed in the accompanying revised presentation incorporating additional direction provided by motion of Committee of the Whole for inclusion in the proposed HRM 15/16 Budget and Business Plan documents with the following amendment:**

**That Committee of the Whole directs that staff remove the reference to the budget transfer in the amount of \$532,000 and increase the proposed 15/16 Halifax Regional Police Budget by this amount.**

Chief Blais provided a presentation to Council pertaining to the 2015-16 Halifax Regional Police Draft Budget and Business Plan.

Chief Blais provided commentary with respect to the "Boots on the Street" position and advised that the \$100,000 that is provided for the Public Safety Officer Position from the Provincial government would be discontinued as the position will no longer be staffed by sworn officer, as stipulated in the funding agreement. He noted that the incumbent who serves as the current Public Safety Officer will continue his role in charge community policing and will act as the HRP liaison with the new Public Safety Office that has yet to be established. He advised that Police Services will be responsible for HRP's involvement in that endeavor and stated that HRP will always play a strong role with respect to community policing.

The Chair thanked Chief Blais, and HRP staff, for their presentation on the proposed budget and business plan for the HRP.

#### **4. Public Participation**

The Chair called three times for members of the public to come forward and speak on the budget. There were no members of the public who came forward to address the 2015-16 HRP Budget and Business Plan.

The Chair opened the floor for questions of clarification from Committee of the Whole.

Councillor Mosher proposed the following motion which was discussed at the January meeting of the Board of Police Commissioners:

**MOVED by Councillor Mosher, seconded by Councillor Whitman that Committee of the Whole request a staff report examining the implications of augmenting the proposal in the 2015-16 Halifax Regional Police Operating Budget to include the addition of a Sworn Officer as a police liaison for the HRM Public Safety Office and/or enhance the boots on the Streets Program.**

Councillor Mosher echoed Chief Blais' comments related to the loss of funding provided by the Province for the Boots on the Street program. She provided commentary with respect to the many strategic initiatives that HRP are undertaking and suggested that losing funding for a sworn officer position would not be beneficial at the present time. She requested further information from the Municipal Solicitor regarding whether or not an amendment to the HRM Charter is required to move the Public Safety Office out of Police Services to HRM administration.

Mr. John Traves, Municipal Solicitor, noted that the legal opinion issue referenced by Councillor Mosher was also raised in the CAO's budget presentation held on January 14, 2015 and advised that a response that will come forward to Regional Council in this regard. He further added that a legal opinion was provided to the CAO and Chief of Police respecting the movement of the Public Safety Office after Dr. Clairmont's recommendation was given and noted that Legal Services does not see a HRM Charter issue regarding the movement of the office from Police to HRM Administration.

The Chair suggested that Committee of the Whole deliberate on the main motion first and revisit the supplemental motion proposed by Councillor Mosher after the vote has taken place.

With respect to the main motion, Councillor McCluskey thanked members of the HRP force for their continued work and requested further information respect the Ceasefire program.

Chief Blais commented that Ceasefire is a community based program administered by the Community Justice Society which operates in North-end Dartmouth as well as East and North Preston. He further advised that the program is funded by the federal government.

Councillor McCluskey inquired about any progress made in policing the downtown and curbing violence related to drinking and the potential closure of drinking establishments at an earlier time. Chief Blais responded by noting discussions with the provincial Minister of Municipal Affairs on this subject and commented that he intends to follow up with him in this regard.

In response to a follow up question from Councillor McCluskey respecting obtaining tips from the public, Chief Blais commented that the priority from a policing perspective is to get the information on the particulars of the incident right away rather than obtaining the identification of the person making the call. He advised that HRP also utilizes programs such as Crime Stoppers to obtain information from the public respecting crime.

Councillor Johns thanked Chief Blais and staff for their presentation and inquired if there were any updates respecting the usage of red light cameras. He also requested further information with related to future plans for HRP to obtain a firearms range.

Chief Blais commented that HRP is currently exploring the possibility of partnering with an existing firearms facility or to create its own. He cited difficulties associated with the availability of the existing range and noted that one that is currently utilized by police force it also not readily available. With respect to Red Light Cameras, Chief Blais commented that there usage is within the legislative purview of the province. He stated that his is favorable to the usage of red light cameras as he had worked in jurisdictions where they have been used. He further remarked that he will follow up with provincial authorities on this matter.

Councillor Johns suggested that there may be an opportunity to utilize the former Sackville Landfill site for an outdoor firearm range. He advised that he had looked in to this matter before and it may be worth discussing with the CAO. Chief Blais thanked Councillor Johns for the suggestion and noted that he would take his comments under consideration.

Mayor Savage stated that he does not hear discussions pertaining to downtown violence as frequently as he had in the past and inquired if police are having an impact in the downtown.

Chief Blais noted that the response in the downtown is not due to the efforts of police alone but speaks to the collaborative work of community partners. He advised that police have worked with downtown bars, restaurants, and businesses to properly train staff, utilize downtown cameras to dissuade criminal activity and raise the level of awareness respecting downtown violence. He noted that these efforts have helped in curbing some of the issues that had been prevalent in the downtown and advised of his expectation to continue work in this regard.

In response to a follow up question from Mayor Savage, Chief Blais discussed plans outlined in the budget to hire a Junior Communications advisor to assist HRP's Public Relations Unit with both internal and external communications.

Mayor Savage commended Chief Blais and Chief Superintendent Wells of the RCMP for providing strong leadership in policing and noted that the Municipality is well served by both police forces.

In response to a follow up question from Councillor Adams, Chief Blais noted that all of the requested positions within the budget will be staffed by civilian members.

Councillor Watts echoed Mayor Savage's comments and noted the great work undertaken by HRP as well as the RCMP. She requested further information on the domestic violence strategy document and inquired whether or not there will be further engagement with the community in this regard. She requested further commentary in relation to future plans for a new police station.

Chief Blais noted his expectation that the domestic violence strategy document will be completed by next year and advised that there is a great deal of work to be done in that regard. He advised that studies have shown that domestic and sexualized violence is underreported across the country and remains a very high priority for HRP. He advised that HRP has been involved with many outside groups on this initiative such as the Avalon Sexual Assault Centre and other community based organizations.

With respect to the a new police station, Chief Blais noted that HRP is currently working on a business plan to present to Council and advised that community accessibility will be a very important component of any future plans. He provided further commentary with respect to cost pressures associated with wages and benefits and noted HRP's commitment to provide policing in a strategic and efficient manner.

Deputy Mayor Nicoll agreed with Chief Blais assessment to work smarter to achieve better efficiencies. She requested further information with respect to combating gun violence and inquired as to what Police have been doing to reach at risk youth in this regard.

Chief Blais noted that HRP have identified several priority areas such as mental health, addictions, and youth at risk. He commented that both HRP and the RCMP have a very robust youth engagement programs which involve community response officers who work closely to engage students and youth within the community.

In response to a follow up question from Deputy Mayor Nicoll, Mr. Brad Anguish, Director of Parks and Recreation noted that there are 32 participants in the Souls Strong program. He advised that there are six caseworkers who are assigned to certain areas. He advised that the program is administered by Ms. Sharon Martin, Program Manager, Youth Advocate Program.

Councillor Fisher provided commentary on the usage of COMSTAT (Complaint Statistics) in his community and noted that positive affect it has had in reducing crime in the area. He advised that citizens want to be more involved and help in eliminating crime in the area.

Chief Blais agreed with Councillor Fisher's assessment and noted that police cannot do our work without the trust and support of the public. He further noted that the COMSTAT model allow police to do predictive analysis to determine where crime is likely to take place so that they are able to deploy the necessary resources to the area.

Councillor Outhit advised that residents must be more diligent to report crime when it occurs and noted that the COMSTAT model is very important. He commented that he spent great deal of time speaking to residents in his district and noted nothing but praise for the work that is undertaken by the Police.

Councillor Dalrymple noted that crime has decreased across the municipality over the past several years and commented that it is a story that is not getting communicated as well as it should. He noted that the reduction in crime is directly related to the actions of both police forces and the community support provided by the Board of Police Commissioners. He noted that positive presence of police is prevalent in all areas of the municipality and is appreciated by residents. He stated that he had just finished his term on the Board of Police Commissioners and thanked Mr. Moreash and the other members of the Police Commission for their hard work. With respect to the budget he expressed concern that the largest part is yet to come as contract negotiations with the Halifax Regional Police Association are forthcoming

Councillor McCluskey requested further information with respect to the Youth Advocate Program and the communities in which it operates. Mr. Brad Anguish noted that he would provide the necessary information with respect to the Youth Advocate Program.

Councillor Hendsbee joined the meeting at 11:40 a.m.

In response to a follow up question, Chief Blais noted that the part-time intercept monitors will need a background in police work and strong transcription skills to be able to advise senior police management when issues come about during the course of an investigation.

Councillor Mosher commended Chief Blais for reaching out to members of HRM's diverse communities with respect to policing issues and noted that he is also following up on Trauma Awareness training for first responders which was discussed in length at the Board of Police Commissioners. She requested further information as to why the current firearms range used by the Police cannot continue to be utilized.

Chief Blais stated that the facility that has been used in the past is currently under review by HRP and noted that tactical shooting response time for officers is very important.

In response to a follow up question from Councillor Mosher, Chief Blais referenced a recent report that recommends that police officers need to spend more time on firearms training. He advised that police officers must meet an annual qualification on a yearly basis to maintain skills in this regard, but noted that more practice throughout the year would be beneficial. He further advised that there was only one instance in the past year where a bullet was fired by a HRP officer.

Further discussion ensued.

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

With respect to the supplemental motion proposed by Councillor Mosher, Councillor Outhit requested further clarification as to the intent of the proposed motion.

Councillor Mosher stated that comments regarding the liaison with the Public Safety Office from HRP were not communicated to the Board of Police Commissioners when it was discussed at the last meeting. She noted that the motion is intended to augment or enhance the Boots on the Street Program to maintain the funded position by the province currently in the Public Safety Office.

Councillor Dalrymple expressed his support for the staff report.

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

**4. Public Participation**

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

**5. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:01 p.m.

Cathy J. Mellett  
Municipal Clerk