



**HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES
August 4, 2015**

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

STAFF: Mr. Richard Butts, Chief Administrative Officer
Mr. John Traves, Municipal Solicitor
Ms. Sherryl Murphy, Deputy Municipal Clerk
Ms. Phoebe Rai, 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_2015-08-04_live.mp4.html

The agenda, supporting documents, and information items circulated to Council are available online: <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/150804cow-Agenda.php>

The meeting was called to order at 10:01 a.m. and recessed at 12:22 p.m. Council reconvened in at 1:04 p.m. and recessed at 3:20 p.m. Council reconvened in at 3:47 p.m. and adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Savage called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – NONE

3. WINTER OPERATIONS 2014/2015 – STRATEGIC DIRECTION RECOMMENDATIONS

The following information was before Committee of the Whole:

- A staff recommendation report dated July 22, 2015
- A copy of the staff presentation dated August 4, 2015
- An extract of minutes from the Regional Council meeting of February 24, 2015
- Correspondence dated July 28, 2015 from Pat Shaw
- Correspondence package from the Accessibility Advisory Committee for circulation to Regional Council

Mr. Bruce Zvaniga, Director of Transportation and Public Works and Mr. Darrin Natolino, Superintendent of Winter Operations presented to the Committee of the Whole on strategic direction recommendations to improve the delivery of Winter Operations services. A copy of the presentation is available online and in the Committee file.

MOVED by Councillor Mosher, seconded by Councillor McCluskey

THAT Committee of the Whole recommend that Halifax Regional Council:

- 1. Endorse the following strategic directions to improve the delivery of the Winter Operations services as described in the discussion section of the July 22, 2015 staff report by:**
 - a. Increasing 311 call centre capacity to respond to calls and e-mails during severe weather events;**
 - b. Increasing capacity to monitor and measure performance and quality of contracted and in-house service delivery;**
 - c. Take necessary actions to improve compliance with snow-related parking prohibitions;**
 - d. Improve operational readiness by securing additional equipment capability and strengthening winter operations planning; and**
 - e. Stabilizing winter operations expenditures.**
- 2. Improve Sidewalk clearing by:**
 - a. Working within existing approved contracts and resources, direct staff to return to Regional Council in December 2015 with options to improve sidewalk service outcomes, including service coordination, street intersections, and accessibility; and**
 - b. Extending the remaining nine sidewalk service contract routes through the 16/17 winter season and direct staff to return to Regional Council in November 2016 with recommendations on the sidewalk program commencing in the 17/18 winter season.**

Councillor Mosher provided commentary with respect to the snow events of winter 2014/2015, highlighting the negative outcomes for public safety, particularly for those with accessibility concerns. She expressed her view that service standards must be enhanced to prevent a repeat in future years, especially with respect to sidewalks and Priority 2 (P2) streets. Councillor Mosher also expressed concern regarding performance-based contracting, citing a recent Auditor General report from Ontario that found a resulting reduction of service standards after its implementation. She concluded by advising that the

guiding principle in determining service standards should be public safety outcomes, with less of an emphasis on financial concerns.

Mr. Natolino responded that staff have found that the service standards in place are appropriate and the issue lies in consistently achieving those standards. With respect to sidewalk-clearing standards, he highlighted that there are already service contracts in place under the current standards, so modifying the standards may be difficult and the legal department would need to be consulted. He agreed that when contracts are renegotiated there should be additional wording to address accessibility and other concerns. With respect to performance-based contracting, Mr. Natolino advised that the report cited by the Councillor recommends increased oversight to mitigate a decrease in standards, which staff has already implemented.

Councillor Whitman expressed concern that the report focused too heavily on increasing the capacity of 311 to handle large volumes of calls from residents when he felt the focus should be on reducing call volumes. He noted that the consultants from Grant Thornton did not meet with Councillors and cancelled a meeting with Mr. Paul Vienneau who was to share ideas on improving snow clearing with regard to members of the accessibility community. Councillor Whitman questioned the assertion that the winter weather of 2014/2015 was atypical and inquired about the type of plow used to remove snow from sidewalks.

In response, Mr. Natolino cited historical data that suggests that the 2014/2015 winter weather was different than usual, with the key challenge being that there was less melt than expected. He noted that larger snow plows that had been used on sidewalks in the past had created problems and caused significant damage to property, which is why smaller plows were introduced. However, he informed Council that the smaller plows have less horsepower and thus are less effective on large volumes of snow. He stated that because there was no melt, the snow banks became too high and snow had to be removed from streets that had never seen snow removal before.

Councillor Mason suggested that the biggest issues from the past winter were related to resources and standards. He concurred with Councillor Mosher that service standards need to be reevaluated with a focus on qualitative issues rather than budget. He expressed frustration that the questions from Councillors were not more thoroughly explored and that the report did not present enough options to improve the snow clearing program.

Councillor Watts remarked that there is a significant difference between how ice and snow events must be handled, and she commented that the municipality's response to ice events during the past winter was lacking. She indicated that because sidewalks were not passable for several weeks, residents were walking on streets on along the tops of snowbanks, which is very dangerous. She cited climate change literature that suggests that this type of winter may be the "new normal" going forward and asked whether Winter Operations staff is engaging with climate change researchers for long term planning. Councillor Watts also questioned why the service standard for streets includes a column for the service level indicating "bare pavement" or "snow covered, passable" while the service standard for sidewalks contains no such minimum service levels.

Mr. Natolino responded that staff acknowledges the difference between ice and snow events, but anti-icing strategies were not viable due to extreme conditions. He noted that in the past, the municipality has maintained a list of available backhoes but did not pay a retainer to ensure that the equipment would be available if needed. This past winter the equipment was not available when it was needed due to other demands. He indicated that staff have been looking to secure additional equipment on retainer as well as considering different technologies such as "belly-blades" for the municipality-owned fleet. With respect to addressing ice on sidewalks, Mr. Natolino stated that the major issue in implementing change is timing with contracts and matching standards.

Councillor Johns noted that Sackville has some performance-based contractors responsible for snow clearing and advised that in his experience, contractors will meet the standard, whereas in-house crews often exceed the standard. He suggested that any cost-savings achieved through the use of

performance-based contracts should be directed towards augmenting the service standard. Councillor Johns also voiced concern that residents calling 311 regarding snow removal were not provided with a tracking number.

Ms. Jane Young, Manager of Citizen Contact Centres indicated that all calls to 311 are logged and residents are provided with a service request number; however, when the timeframe is within the service standard there is no action taken other than logging the call.

Councillor Rankin expressed concern that the discussion being held was not timely and Council did not have the proper opportunity to make changes to the snow-clearing program in advance of the 2015/2016 winter season. He asked staff whether they are confident that they have built upon lessons learned and secured the required resources and equipment to prepare for the upcoming winter.

Mr. Zvaniga responded that staff has secured additional equipment to increase capacity to respond to unusual circumstances, and the performance-based contractors will also add additional equipment. Mr. Natolino indicated that his level of confidence in the municipality's readiness for the upcoming winter is very high.

Councillor Karsten commented that there were some key moments that should have been handled differently during the winter, but he is not persuaded that the service standards need to be revised.

Councillor Adams remarked that standards are meaningless if they are not met and commented that informing residents of what the standards are in response to complaints was not helpful. He expressed concern that the new tenders for snow removal are restrictive with respect to requirements for operator training and equipment inventory and could lead to a monopoly situation.

Mr. Natolino agreed that the main challenge is consistency in meeting the standards. He also noted that at the mandatory bidders meeting there were fifteen companies present, six to seven of which were fully qualified to take on the work. He emphasized the importance of working with experienced contractors with fully trained operators.

Councillor Hendsbee applauded the work of performance-based contractors in Lawrencetown and the move toward installing Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) technology on in-house Winter Operations equipment. He noted that the population of the municipality is aging and questioned whether additional funds were needed for the senior snow removal program in the upcoming year.

Mr. Natolino responded that the budget for the senior snow removal program could be expanded through Council's direction.

Councillor Dalrymple indicated that in his experience, private contractors utilized by the municipality do not begin clearing snow as quickly as in house crews, which created problems during flash freezes. He commented that some contractors did not have the necessary street sweepers to remove sand from streets, leading to the use of improvised equipment that created problems. He asked whether these issues would be addressed in new contracts through clear guidelines on the use of brine and equipment requirements.

Mr. Natolino responded that new contracts stipulated mandatory use of brining and pre-salting where conditions are favourable. Regarding street sweeping, he noted that the municipality was using all mechanical sweepers within a 200-kilometer radius which is what led to the equipment shortfall, but contractors are working to increase their access to this type of equipment.

Councillor McCluskey informed Council that her main concern from the past winter is with respect to seniors and disabled communities, noting that some residents lost their jobs because they could not travel to work. She questioned why the recommendations of the Accessibility Advisory Committee were not more thoroughly considered in the report, and why cars were not towed more quickly when necessary.

Mr. Natolino responded that the municipality is looking to expand contracts with tow truck providers and build in lessons learned from the previous winter.

Deputy Mayor Nicoll questioned whether staff were considering the recommendation in the Winter Operations Review by Grant Thornton to partner with the province on training for operators. She questioned whether there was a municipal coordination committee convened in cases of extreme weather.

Mr. Natolino responded that staff are interested in expanding the training program with Provincial coordination, and noted that the municipal coordination centre is convened during hurricanes and snow events and was activated several times during the past winter.

Council recessed at 12:22 p.m. and reconvened at 1:04 p.m.

Councillor Craig noted that the report does not include a comparison of best practices with other municipalities. He indicated that in his opinion, the organizational culture needs to shift toward continuous improvement for all staff. He also highlighted that a number of points made by the Accessibility Advisory Committee were not included and questioned why end users of the service were not consulted in drafting the report.

Councillor Walker suggested that staff consider towing cars more quickly rather than repeated ticketing in order to more effectively dissuade motorists from blocking snow clearing efforts. He stated that there are different techniques to clearing snow from cul-de-sacs and noted that when different operators are not well coordinated there can be problems. Overall, he commented that the main issue from the past winter was that the snow was not cleared fast enough to keep up with changing weather patterns.

Councillor Outhit expressed his view that densely populated urban areas with hills and narrow streets are not a good fit for performance-based contracting, and he echoed Councillor Adams' concerns of creating a monopoly. He also suggested that during extreme weather, rather than fining contractors who do not meet standards, the focus should be on understanding and addressing the challenges being faced.

Councillor Fisher questioned whether performance-based contractors will be required to have AVL installed on their trucks, and he noted that he feels that standards, especially those for sidewalks and bus stops, need to be revisited. Mr. Natolino informed Council that AVL has always been required in performance-based contracts.

Mayor Savage stepped down from the Chair at 1:30 p.m. to speak to the matter. Deputy Mayor Nicoll assumed the Chair.

Mayor Savage commended the efforts of staff during a difficult winter, but indicated that due to climate change winters may be difficult to predict and the municipality must prepare itself accordingly. The Mayor noted that he attended the June 15, 2015 meeting of the Accessibility Advisory Committee and heard detailed accounts of the challenges that faced those residents who have difficulty traversing snow, and he had encouraged Grant Thornton to include accessibility considerations in the report. He remarked that the city is working hard to become more accessible, so he was disappointed not to see recommendations focused on addressing those issues. With the respect to the report on sidewalk service outcomes, he requested that staff consult regarding opportunities for improvements in accessibility for the coming year and return to Council before December, if possible.

Mayor Savage resumed the Chair.

Mr. Zvaniga advised that staff will develop a full plan for sidewalk clearing that takes into account accessibility concerns and can return to Council with options before December.

Councillor Mason commented that it is important to have solid service standards in place especially if the municipality is moving toward performance-based contracts. He also suggested that standards need to be met every time, with punitive measures in place if they are not.

Councillor Whitman asked staff to comment on page 37 of the staff report dated July 22, 2015 which indicates that the municipality does not need to secure any additional equipment. He noted his dissatisfaction with the way service standards are reset in situations where there is a new weather event before the standards are met. Councillor Whitman expressed interest in receiving an estimate of what it would cost for streets to be consistently cleared from curb to curb. He concluded by requesting clarification on the "Impacts of New Performance Based Contracts" slide (page 16) from the presentation.

Mr. Natolino responded that staff is satisfied with the composition of the in-house fleet but indicated that they are looking to build capacity through agreements with equipment providers so there is sufficient access to equipment in extreme circumstances. He agreed that the resetting of standards is problematic and highlighted that by having more oversight over both in-house and contracted service providers, staff will be able to better monitor and determine whether service standards were met after each storm. Regarding the slide referenced by Councillor Whitman, Mr. Natolino highlighted that by shifting to more performance-based contracting and using large companies, there will be more access to equipment as well as superintendents, supervisors and expert project managers.

Councillor Watts indicated that she believes that the major issue with the grader equipment is that it must be mobilized more quickly when needed, as opposed waiting for a thaw after an ice event. Addressing the matter of resetting service standards between storms, she suggested that after several storms in a row the system is no longer adequate. She remarked that a system should be developed that would address when an area has not been plowed after multiple storms for a number of days.

Councillor Johns asked staff where the contractors' salt domes would be located and how many graders are owned by the municipality. Mr. Natolino responded that the city has only ever owned one grader but has had as many as four to five on retainer. He indicated that the new salt domes will be within the service areas and that he would follow up with the Councillor on the exact locations.

Councillor Mosher provided commentary with respect to the past deployment of sandboxes for use by residents. Mr. Natolino responded that the use of street sandboxes had been discontinued for good reason, but Council may direct staff to revisit that option.

Councillor Mosher reminded staff that the original motion at Council referenced options for icy conditions when salt does not work, and she noted that she feels that the report does not do enough to consider that issue. Mr. Zvaniga responded that there is more work to be done and that staff are studying techniques to deal with icy conditions, such as the use of a "belly blade," as they work to develop best practices.

Councillor Rankin expressed concern that Council was not given the opportunity to enact changes to Winter Operations policies that would come into effect in advance of the upcoming winter.

Councillor Karsten remarked that there was once a program whereby residents would "adopt" a catch basin to ensure they were clear and he asked staff whether there was a list of catch basins online or another way to identify them. He also requested the figure for the number of Tier 1 calls to 311 during the 2014/2015 winter.

Mr. Natolino responded that staff has created an online application using GIS that was included in performance-based tenders, but he noted that Google Maps is one of the best ways for residents to identify the locations of catch basins. Regarding the possibility of marking catch basins similarly to fire hydrants, Mr. Natolino commented that even the markers on fire hydrants were buried this past winter. Mr. Natolino advised that there were approximately 6400 Tier 1 calls to 311 related to snow and ice clearing on streets, with an additional 1500 calls regarding sidewalks over the 2014/2015 winter season.

Councillor Adams requested a definition of the term “liquidated damages.” Mr. John Traves, Municipal Solicitor, responded that the term generally refers to an attempt to qualify what the damages are worth without a trial. He noted that this would be set out in the contract that in the event of a default, the damages would be in a certain order of magnitude. Mr. Natolino added that contractors are given 24-hour advance notice of route inspections before staff assess liquidated damages.

Councillor Adams stated that he observed little difference between in-house crews and contracted crews and that assessing liquidated damages to contractors in that case seems unfair. He also expressed concern that the recommendations on sidewalks are to come forward in December when there could be snow as early as November, and he asked why the recommendations could not be presented earlier. Mr. Richard Butts, Chief Administrative Officer advised that it is extremely difficult to make changes to Winter Operations procedures in a short period of time due to existing contracts.

Mayor Savage asked whether there was anything that could be done to improve sidewalk clearing ahead of the upcoming winter. Mr. Zvaniga responded that this winter, staff will pay greater attention within current contracts to clearing sidewalks and focusing on the needs of the accessibility communities, with contract changes to follow in subsequent years.

Councillor McCluskey addressed three suggestions from the consultant report and requested staff’s comment: ensuring that school route sidewalks are treated according Priority 1 (P1) service standards, finding a way to keep municipal vehicle bays available for trucks, and converting wing-blade plows to straight plows to reduce damage.

Mr. Natolino responded that school routes would need to be defined and that staff would look to Council to give direction on that aspect. He indicated that Fleet Services supports more than just the snow program but does prioritize snow equipment when it is snowing and outsources when needed. He highlighted the efficiency of using wing-blades as it allows one truck to clear two lanes and concluded by noting that the best way to reduce damage to property is to have a variety of equipment and to use the right tool for each job.

Councillor Craig referenced the dialogue with the Accessibility Advisory Committee and asked whether there could be greater coordination between street and sidewalk plows to ensure that sidewalks do not get cleared and then filled in again by street plows.

Mr. Natolino indicated that within the street contracts, a clause has been added for areas with limited or no snow storage between the curb and sidewalk that they must coordinate with sidewalk clearing. He advised that sidewalk plows are much slower vehicles than street plows, and to try to coordinate every street would mean pairing a street plow with a sidewalk plow, thereby creating inefficiency.

Councillor Dalrymple questioned whether private contractors are able to subcontract and whether they are required to provide a list of the equipment operated by their subcontractors.

Mr. Natolino responded that contractors are permitted to subcontract with prior approval as long as the work stays under the control of the contractor. He advised that when bidding, the contractor must submit a resource and equipment list including the name and equipment list for any subcontractors they intend to use.

Deputy Mayor Nicoll emphasized the need for better coordination to ensure sidewalks are kept clear and asked whether there should be a storm category, short of declaring a state of emergency, whereby all vehicles would be required to be off the roads. Mr. Natolino responded that the Motor Vehicle Act does provide that ability, but the issue would still be adherence. Mr. Traves noted that section 139 of the Motor Vehicle Act is specific to parking, and if the intent is to prevent motor vehicles from moving at all throughout the city, a state of emergency would need to be declared.

The following amendment to the motion was MOVED by Councillor Mosher, seconded by Councillor Fisher:

3. Request a staff report to consider the cost implications to revise the service standards with respect to: bus stops, sidewalks, and Priority 2 (P2) streets to ensure public safety is met.

Councillor Mosher noted that climate change is affecting winter conditions and without changes to service standards the same issues, such as ice events, will likely be faced in future winter seasons.

Councillor Mason commented that if sidewalks and bus shelters on the peninsula, in downtown Dartmouth and in Burnside are not clear, the city is effectively pushing residents who would ordinarily rely on the bus system into their cars or walking on the streets, and he cited a report by Dr. David Gordon of Queen's University that indicates that between 15,000 and 30,000 workers in the municipality may be directly affected.

Councillor Watts suggested that there needs to be different standards for snow and ice events, noting that when there is four inches of ice on the sidewalk, the standard cannot be to pavement but sidewalks should be salted regularly and black with grit. She suggested the amending motion be modified to specify that the standards be revised with respect to both snow and ice.

Councillor Craig expressed an interest in learning more about how data is collected to determine whether or not standards are met, and indicated that this will be key to determining whether standards need to be revised.

Councillor Rankin asked staff to include not only the cost implications of enhancing service standards but also a source of income to cover that expense.

Councillor Watts indicated that the report should also address how to ensure that the ramps at intersections between sidewalks and streets are cleared.

Councillor Whitman suggested that to have different standards for streets, sidewalks, and bus stops is not useful, because for many residents there is little utility to having the street cleared in 12 hours if they cannot reach the bus stop for 48 hours after a storm. He suggested having one timeline for all three types of thoroughfare.

Councillor Mosher reiterated that this is a public safety issue, and highlighted that the savings achieved based on the cost per kilometer of performance-based contracting versus in-house crews should be used to enhance the service provided.

Councillor Karsten suggested that revising the standards may be a knee-jerk reaction. Councillor Mosher responded that in the past, the standards were consistently exceeded.

Council then voted on the amendment as follows:

3. Request a staff report to consider the cost implications to revise the service standards with respect to: snow and ice for bus stops, sidewalks, intersections, the ramps at intersections, together with Priority 2 (P2) streets to ensure public safety is met.

MOTION TO AMEND PUT AND PASSED.

Council recessed at 3:20 p.m. and reconvened in at 3:47 p.m.

Councillor Mason questioned what could be done to prevent the piles of snow from being pushed back and forth between contractors, increase towing rather than ticketing of parked cars, and ensure that fire hydrants are cleared in a timely manner.

Mr. Butts responded that there was collaboration with Halifax Water and Halifax Fire Services to clear catch basins and fire hydrants efficiently. Mr. Traves noted that there is a bylaw to prevent the depositing of snow, but the problem is in enforcing the bylaw. He suggested that education, rather than enforcement, should be the focus. Mr. Butts added that if Council directs so, staff could increase efforts to prosecute those who do not adhere to the bylaw; however, he cautioned that it is not just contractors depositing snow, often it is single family homeowners.

Mr. Natolino agreed on the need to be more robust with respect to towing inappropriately parked cars during snow and ice events. He indicated that this will require greater cooperation with contractors and securing additional towing capacity.

Councillor Watts noted that 311 is a useful tool to collect information from residents on areas that may have been missed during snow clearing efforts. She suggested that there should be greater coordination between 311 and Winter Operations staff, especially when there are multiple weather events during a short period of time.

The following amendment was MOVED by Councillor Watts, seconded by Councillor Craig:

- 4. Change the 311 call centre process so requests for service, both road and sidewalk, are held on a list in the same chronological order and not restarted with each new storm.**

Ms. Young clarified that when a call arrives within the service standard timeframe, 311 does not dispatch the request; crews would only be dispatched if the service standards have been exceeded. In the event of multiple storms, 311 is advised to stop dispatching but it continues to record all calls received. She agreed that, if directed by Council, 311 staff would work with Winter Operations staff to improve the policy regarding multiple weather events and the resetting of service standards.

Mr. Traves suggested that the motion direct staff to explore increased coordination between 311 and Winter Operations staff to ensure that there are not extended periods of time that service standards are not met cumulatively.

Councillor Craig referenced the statement in the report that out of 62 total events in 2014/2015, only 6 did not meet service standards, and he questioned how the response to an event is categorized if the standard is reset before the roads are cleared.

Mr. Natolino responded that in cases where the standards are reset, the response to the event is considered to have met the service standard. He indicated that there is no category or way to measure the response to events when a new event begins before the service standard timeframe elapses.

Ms. Margaret Pike, Training and Development Lead for Citizen Contact Centres clarified that there is a process in place for Tier 2 inquiries, e.g. residents calling 311 after multiple weather events to inform staff that their road has not been plowed in multiple days. She indicated that in that case, crews are not dispatched immediately but the message is passed along to the appropriate Road Operations supervisor. Ms. Pike noted that one issue is that residents may not be making it clear to the 311 operators that there is an ongoing issue and that their street has not been plowed in a number of days. She indicated that the current procedure should address the concerns expressed by Council.

Responding to a question from Councillor Johns, Ms. Young indicated that residents are always provided with a service reference number and agreed to follow up to ensure the practice is consistently followed.

Councillor Craig suggested that instead of relying on the caller to bring forward how long it has been since their area was plowed, the 311 agent should be proactive and ask the caller how long it has been. Ms. Young agreed to work with partners to develop new scripting for 311 agents. Mr. Natolino cautioned that in a blizzard, a resident may not be able to determine that a street has already been plowed due to significant accumulation overnight.

Council proceeded to vote on the amendment as follows:

4. **Direct staff to explore increased coordination between 311 and Winter Works staff to ensure there are not extended periods of cumulative time that service standards are not met.**

MOTION TO AMEND PUT AND PASSED.

Deputy Mayor Nicoll expressed interest in receiving the report on improving sidewalk clearing before the date indicated in the recommendation in order to enact changes for the upcoming winter.

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Nicoll, seconded by Councillor Rankin

THAT item 2a of the main motion be amended to direct staff to return by November 2015, rather than December 2015, with options to improve sidewalk service outcomes.

Mr. Natolino informed Council that staff was developing a plan that would be rolled out in phases over the next eighteen months, noting that change needs to be incremental due to contracts already in place. Mr. Butts advised that staff would bring forward what can be accomplished for the 2015/2016 winter season, but indicated that there are limitations on what can be changed in the short term.

MOTION TO AMEND PUT AND PASSED.

An amendment was then MOVED by Councillor Hendsbee, seconded by Councillor Dalrymple as follows:

5. **Request a staff report regarding the possibility of HRM assuming the ice and snow control service for the upcoming 2015-16 winter season for the community of Mineville and the few remaining subdivision streets in the Lawrencetown area that are not currently under HRM Performance based contracts.**

Mr. Butts inquired whether the amendment moved by Councillor Hendsbee was regarding municipality-owned streets. Councillor Hendsbee responded that half of the streets in Mineville are municipality-owned but the provincial government is doing winter maintenance.

MOTION TO AMEND PUT AND PASSED.

Councillor Craig questioned how curb-to-curb plowing can be achieved. Mr. Natolino responded that the ability to plow curb-to-curb depends on coordination and resourcing, but indicated that conditions can be the key factor as it is not feasible to clear ice from curb-to-curb on every street.

Councillor Watts noted that there are areas in the city currently considered Priority 2 (P2) but there may be extenuating circumstances that require more frequent snow clearing than other P2 areas, citing Northwood Manor, schools, and businesses that employ large numbers of residents with accessibility concerns. She questioned if there was a way to prioritize these areas in extreme conditions.

Mr. Zvaniga responded that it is challenging to identify those situations in the municipality and determining which will have special priority, noting that this was the purpose of the P1 and P2 designations. He indicated that when there is a special circumstance that has been brought to the attention of a Councillor, that Councillor should contact himself or Mr. Natolino to find a solution.

Councillor Watts provided commentary with respect to the senior and disabled snow program, highlighting the challenges created by multiple weather events in a row. She informed Council that there were times during the last winter where after being plowed out once, participants in the program were informed that the service provider was not able to return to plow additional times when the pathways have become

subsequently blocked. She inquired whether there was adequate funding for the program to respond to keeping the walkways clear through to the sidewalks on an ongoing basis.

Mr. Natolino responded that to achieve the level of service indicated by the Councillor would be difficult and would require a very high level of coordination. Mr. Butts indicated that staff would examine the program further.

Councillor Watts also expressed interest in receiving information from staff regarding the impacts of climate change on winter operations, with a focus on long-term implications. She noted that at the meeting of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities in February 2015 there was considerable discussion surrounding resiliency. At the meeting, Councillors were informed that as an effect of climate change, maritime climates may experience more ice events. Councillor Watts indicated that she would like to understand from staff how these considerations are being incorporated into planning exercises for winter operations and whether there are funding sources that could be tapped into to support those efforts. It was agreed that such a discussion would be more appropriate at the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee.

Councillor Whitman requested clarification on the term “stabilizing” from recommendation 1e. Mr. Butts responded that stabilizing in this context refers to ensuring predictability, reducing the hourly component, consolidating resources, moving accountability and standardizing the fleet.

Councillor Outhit expressed concern regarding the expansion of performance-based contracts, noting his understanding that HRM plows are restricted from entering those areas, which reduces flexibility in responding to extreme conditions. He suggested slowly rolling out performance-based contracts in some areas but only within certain parameters.

Councillor Mason brought forward an amendment to item 3 of the motion to add P1 streets to the list of service standards being reconsidered. The amendment was accepted by Council as follows:

- 3. That Council request a staff report to consider the cost implications to revise the service standards with respect to: snow and ice for bus stops, sidewalks, intersections, the ramps at intersections, together with Priority 1 (P1) and Priority 2 (P2) streets to ensure public safety is met.**

Councillor Watts requested clarification on recommendation 2b of the motion. Mr. Butts responded that the recommendation of staff is to extend some contracts by one year so that all contracts will expire at the same time. Mr. Natolino added that this will affect three routes on the peninsula. Councillor Watts indicated that she would not support a motion that extends sidewalk service contracts in her district as she believes a majority of residents are not satisfied with the service. Mr. Natolino clarified that the contracts in question are not the routes that were added two years ago, they are P1 and P2 routes that the municipality has been clearing since the late 1990s.

Deputy Mayor Nicoll encouraged staff to consult and coordinate with the Halifax Regional School Board as they prepare the report in response to item 3 of the motion.

The question was called on the amended motion. The Chair noted that each item within the amended motion will be voted on separately.

MOVED by Councillor Mosher, seconded by Councillor McCluskey

THAT Committee of the Whole recommend that Halifax Regional Council:

- 1. Endorse the following strategic directions to improve the delivery of the Winter Operations services as described in the discussion section of the report dated July 22, 2015 by:**
 - a. Increasing 311 call centre capacity to respond to calls and e-mails during severe weather events;**

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

MOVED by Councillor Mosher, seconded by Councillor McCluskey

THAT Committee of the Whole recommend that Halifax Regional Council:

- 1. Endorse the following strategic directions to improve the delivery of the Winter Operations services as described in the discussion section of the report dated July 22, 2015 by:**
 - b. Increasing capacity to monitor and measure performance and quality of contracted and in-house service delivery;**

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

MOVED by Councillor Mosher, seconded by Councillor McCluskey

THAT Committee of the Whole recommend that Halifax Regional Council:

- 1. Endorse the following strategic directions to improve the delivery of the Winter Operations services as described in the discussion section of the report dated July 22, 2015 by:**
 - c. Take necessary actions to improve compliance with snow-related parking prohibitions;**

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

MOVED by Councillor Mosher, seconded by Councillor McCluskey

THAT Committee of the Whole recommend that Halifax Regional Council:

- 1. Endorse the following strategic directions to improve the delivery of the Winter Operations services as described in the discussion section of the report dated July 22, 2015 by:**
 - d. Improve operational readiness by securing additional equipment capability and strengthening winter operations planning;**

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

MOVED by Councillor Mosher, seconded by Councillor McCluskey

THAT Committee of the Whole recommend that Halifax Regional Council:

- 1. Endorse the following strategic directions to improve the delivery of the Winter Operations services as described in the discussion section of the report dated July 22, 2015 by:**
 - e. Stabilizing winter operations expenditures.**

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

MOVED by Councillor Mosher, seconded by Councillor McCluskey

THAT Committee of the Whole recommend that Halifax Regional Council:

- 2. Improve Sidewalk clearing by:**
 - a. Working within existing approved contracts and resources, direct staff to return to Regional Council in November 2015 with options to improve sidewalk service outcomes, including service coordination, street intersections, and accessibility;**

AMENDED MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

MOVED by Councillor Mosher, seconded by Councillor McCluskey

THAT Committee of the Whole recommend that Halifax Regional Council:

- 2. Improve Sidewalk clearing by:**
 - b. Extending the remaining nine sidewalk service contract routes through the 16/17 winter season and direct staff to return to Regional Council in November 2016 with recommendations on the sidewalk program commencing in the 17/18 winter season.**

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

MOVED by Councillor Mosher, seconded by Councillor McCluskey

THAT Committee of the Whole recommend that Halifax Regional Council:

- 3. Request a staff report to consider the cost implications to revise the service standards with respect to: snow and ice for bus stops, sidewalks, intersections, the ramps at intersections, together with Priority 1 (P1) and Priority 2 (P2) streets to ensure public safety is met.**

AMENDED MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

MOVED by Councillor Mosher, seconded by Councillor McCluskey

THAT Committee of the Whole recommend that Halifax Regional Council:

- 4. Direct staff to explore increased coordination between 311 and Winter Works staff to ensure there are not extended periods of cumulative time that service standards are not met.**

AMENDED MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

MOVED by Councillor Mosher, seconded by Councillor McCluskey

THAT Committee of the Whole recommend that Halifax Regional Council:

- 5. Request a staff report regarding the possibility of HRM assuming the ice and snow control service for the upcoming 2015-16 winter season for the community of Mineville and the few remaining subdivision streets in the Lawrencetown area that are not currently under HRM Performance based contracts.**

AMENDED MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Cathy J. Mellett
Municipal Clerk