



**HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES
December 9, 2015**

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

REGRETS: Councillors: Linda Mosher
Brad Johns

STAFF: Ms. Amanda Whitewood, Director Finance and ICT
Ms. Karen Brown, Municipal Solicitor
Ms. Sherryl Murphy, Deputy Clerk
Mr. Andrew Reid, 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_2015-12-09_live.mp4.html

The agenda, supporting documents, and information items circulated to Council are available online: <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/151209cow-agenda.php>

The meeting was called to order at 9:36 a.m. and adjourned at 11:41 a.m

1. CALL TO ORDER

Councillor Karsten chaired the meeting and called it to order at 9:36 a.m.

Committee of the Whole agreed to add an In Camera Personnel Matter item to the agenda following Item 5 – Halifax Transit Debate. Councillor Karsten stated that as per the Municipal Solicitor, no motion was required to waive the rules of order.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – NONE

3. Halifax Transit Presentation

The Committee of the Whole had before them the following:

- A staff recommendation report dated November 30, 2015 with an attached staff presentation entitled 2016/17 Halifax Transit Draft Budget and Business Plan
- A handout with revised slides 3 and 7 of the staff presentation

Mr. Eddie Robar, Director, Halifax Transit presented the 2016/17 Halifax Transit Draft Budget and Business Plan. Mr. Robar noted a revision to slides 3 and 7, indicating that transit services has 933 employees and not 927.

4. Public Submissions

The Chair opened the floor to any public submissions. The Chair called three times for anyone wishing to speak. No members of the public came forward.

5. Halifax Transit Debate

The Chair inquired whether the budget would be approved without the Moving Forward Together Transit Plan first being reviewed. Mr. Robar responded that the process for synthesizing public feedback was prolonged and Transit would not be returning until March 2016 with the Plan. He added that funds were allocated so that if implementation of the Plan did not occur there may be savings in the budget. The Chair requested that a revised timeline on the Moving Forward Together plan be provided to Council.

MOVED by Councillor McCluskey, seconded by Councillor Watts

THAT the Committee of the Whole direct staff to proceed to prepare the 2016/2017 Halifax Transit Budget and Business Plan as contained in the presentation received by the Committee of the Whole Council held on December 9, 2015, incorporating additional direction provided by motion of Committee of the Whole for inclusion in the proposed HRM 16/17 Budget and Business Plan documents.

Mr. Robar responded to a number of questions posed by members of Council:

- Regarding 933 and not 927 employees, he stated that the later had been last year's statistic.
- Regarding the number of supervisors, he stated that the number encompassed road supervisors, mobile road dispatch and communications for day to day service.
- The Woodside ferry terminal renovations would cost \$1 million and the Halifax terminal renovations \$530,000.
- Voice stop announcement was still in a testing phase before further implementation. Mr. Robar explained that it was considered the best and most consistent system to implement.
- Regarding vacancy savings, he indicated there was an increase largely due to difficulty recruiting bus mechanics. He explained that retention strategies were underway to attract more mechanics and that there had been no effect to service.

- The Moving Forward Together Plan would be implemented over a five year period and an examination of the capacity of the Business Unit would need to occur to deliver any acceleration to that timeframe.
- He confirmed that the Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) data would be made public on an Open Data platform.
- Regarding opportunities for mechanics apprenticeship, he stated that there were opportunities for apprenticeship as part of the retention strategy and these strategies involved the Nova Scotia Community College.
- The Moving Forward Together Plan was not dependent on the bridge re-decking project; however, implementation would be required to take into account the significant challenges of re-routings.
- Regarding the Universal Accessibility Plan, he highlighted that Transit was attentive to the Plan and formalized implementation would occur in the near future.
- Regarding alternative energies such as Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) versus Electrification, he stated that the Transit industry was moving in the direction of the later given the benefits of maintenance savings and sustainability. He stated that CNG may be used as a stepping stone toward electrification.
- Regarding the Integrated Mobility Plan, Mr. Robar stated that Planning and Development would be working on that plan to provide an overarching perspective on mobility.

MOVED by Councillor Craig, seconded by Councillor Dalrymple to amend the motion with the addition of the following:

THAT the Committee of the Whole direct staff to include in the proposed HRM 2016-17 budget and business plan documents, options for expansion and increased flexibility of door-to-door paratransit service for persons who are unable to use the conventional transit system. Consideration is to be given to not tying service to conventional routes and their timetables, and expanding capacity and service through partnerships.

Councillor Craig commented on legislative limitations around accessible taxis. He highlighted the challenges of residents requiring transportation services who live outside the conventional transit service boundary.

Council held discussions on the amendment in terms of the potential cost implications and how the request would relate to policy such as the Universal Accessibility Plan. A suggestion was made that the issue first needed to be addressed in a policy document before entering the budget.

In response to whether the request would require a staff report, Councillor Craig stated that the amendment intended to provide direction to the Business Unit to consider the matter within their budget documents. He stated that the amendment was not prescriptive as to what form the direction would be and whether a report was required or not.

Mr. Robar suggested that an evaluation of the service could be brought forward as a deliverable in Transit's Business Plan, which would then be subject to Transportation Standing Committee and Council's further review. In response to Councillor Nicoll's suggestion, he stated that the request could also be dealt with in the form of a deliverable within the Universal Accessibility Plan.

Councillor Walker recognized the service provided by Access-A-Bus service but highlighted the difficulty that no-shows and cancellations accounted for one third of requests. He highlighted the challenges of accessible taxis in terms of fares. He also stated that similar services were provided by the Need-A-Lift service.

THE AMENDMENT WAS PUT AND PASSED.

Discussion resumed on the main motion.

Mr. Robar responded to questions posed by Council:

- The Moving Forward Together Plan would be focused on reliability of service and communication with customers so that new technology would contribute towards higher ridership figures over the next three years.
- Regarding the Integrated Mobility Plan, the project charter was being worked on and the plan would tie together development and transit.
- There are no construction plans for a terminal in Hammonds Plains in the 5 year Transit plan; however, it could be strategically considered by Council in the future. He added that further insight into service improvements would be made available through the transit technology data.
- Impact of the MacDonald bridge re-decking was compensated for in Transit's budget.
- Regarding a request from Deputy Mayor Whitman for a comparative estimate on the revenue per passenger per kilometer, Mr. Robar stated that he would follow up with that information.

A vote was taken on the motion as follows:

MOVED by Councillor McCluskey, seconded by Councillor Watts

1. **THAT the Committee of the Whole direct staff to proceed to prepare the 2016/2017 Halifax Transit Budget and Business Plan as contained in the presentation received by the Committee of the Whole Council held on December 9, 2015, incorporating additional direction provided by motion of Committee of the Whole for inclusion in the proposed HRM 16/17 Budget and Business Plan documents.**
2. **THAT the Committee of the Whole direct staff to include in the proposed HRM 2016-17 budget and business plan documents, options for expansion and increased flexibility of door-to-door paratransit service for persons who are unable to use the conventional transit system. Consideration is to be given to not tying service to conventional routes and their timetables, and expanding capacity and service through partnerships.**

THE MOTION WAS PUT AND PASSED AS AMENDED.

6. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:41 a.m.

Kevin Arjoon
Municipal Clerk