

11.3.1

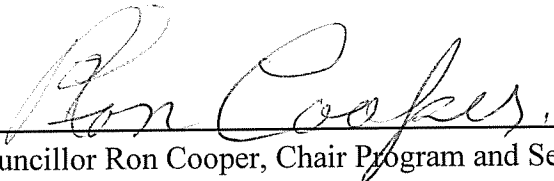
2002/2003 Budget and Business Plan Presentations
Council Report

- 1 -

Halifax Regional Council
February 12, 2002

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:


Councillor Ron Cooper, Chair Program and Service Review Committee

DATE: Thursday, February 7, 2002

SUBJECT: 2002/2003 Budget and Business Plan Presentations - Program and Service Review

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

As part of the 2002/2003 Budget and Business Planning process each HRM Director was given an Operating budget envelope (base budget from prior fiscal year with the addition of cost of living, salary and wages) to allocate funds for the provisions of services which they deemed a priority for their respective business unit. Each Director developed a Draft Business Plan that provided a comprehensive overview of the Goals (3 year) and Objectives (Year 1) that would facilitate the desired outcomes. Once these plans were reviewed by a Corporate Review Team and the Executive Management Team, Directors presented them to Program and Service Review Committee for comment.

BACKGROUND

The Director of each HRM business unit was asked to present the highlights of their proposed 2002/03 budget and business plan to the Program and Service Review Committee. The intent of these presentation was:

- to allow Directors an opportunity to clarify their operational decisions ,
- to inform Councillors of both operational and budget implications,

2002/2003 Budget and Business Plan Presentations
Council Report

- 2 -

- to enable both the Directors and Councillors an opportunity for dialogue ,
- to document Councillors recommendations for consideration, requests for information and comments during each business units' presentation,
- to distribute a comprehensive synopsis of the discussion points for all Council participants to review,
- to use the synopsis as a tool for the Directors and EMT to use as part of the consultative process in the 2002/2003 Budget and Business Planning decision making process.

The attached report provides a summary of the main discussion points and action items resulting from these presentations.

DISCUSSION

The attached Executive Summary is being provided to members of Regional Council in order to keep them informed of the discussion to date and requests for action.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

None

MULTI-YEAR FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

ALTERNATIVES

None

ATTACHMENTS

Executive Summary - Program and Service Review Committee 2002/2003 Budget and Business Planning

Additional copies of this report, and information on its status, can be obtained by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.
Report Prepared by: Cathy Nearing, Business Planning Co-ordinator

Executive Summary

Program and Service Review 2002/2003 Budget and Business Planning

Background

The Directors of each Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) business unit were provided an Operating budget envelope (base budget from prior fiscal year with the addition of cost of living, salary and wages) to allocate funds for the provisions of services which they deemed a priority for their respective business unit. Each Director developed a Draft Business Plan that provided a comprehensive overview of the Goals (3 year) and Objectives (Year 1) that would facilitate the desired outcomes. An Implication of the Proposed Business Plan Summary Sheet was completed by each Director which focused on the increase in services, decrease in services and expected services not being delivered as a result of these service delivery decisions.

The Proposed 2002/2003 Capital Budget decisions were a product of a meeting with the Directors or their representatives of each of HRM business unit to collectively decide the Capital priorities for HRM. All Capital requests could not be accommodated by the existing capacity and therefore a list of priorities were agreed upon in the event that extra funds became available to allocate and/or priorities were shifted once the consultative process was complete.

Objective of Program and Service Committee Presentations

The Director of each HRM business unit was asked to present the Implication Summary Sheet and focus on the service delivery areas (increase, decrease and expected not being delivered) that were impacted due to their priority decisions. The intent of these presentation was:

- to allow Directors an opportunity to clarify their operational decisions
- to inform Councillors of both operational and budget implications
- to enable both the Directors and Councillors an opportunity for dialogue
- to document Councillors recommendations for consideration, requests for information and comments during each business units' presentation
- to distribute a comprehensive synopsis of the discussion points for all Council participants to review
- to use the synopsis as a tool for the Directors and EMT to use as part of the consultative process in the 2002/2003 Budget and Business Planning decision making process

Discussion Points

The following is a high level synopsis of Councillors recommendations for consideration, request for information or general comments categorized by each business unit's presentation to date:

Information Services

The majority of the discussion was focused on the following items:

- the lack of technology available to the Councillors in the Council Chambers and to manage their day to day responsibilities
- the lack of access to a property database (Cityview) and questions of availability on the laptops for the new LIS
- the concern re the lack of available resources to maintain existing systems due to the number of large IT projects
- contracting costs for external trainers (\$ 185,000 allocated)and other staff, as well as lease of equipment versus own
- support for Microsoft as opposed to Corel
- the decision to not fund the Electronic Data Management System in the Capital Budget
- the arms length of the IT component in Library Services
- Councillors presented conflicting viewpoints in regard to a paperless workplace environment

Action Items:

- The Director to investigate and report the cost of installing the desired technology in the Council Chambers and provide report to Council
- The Director to provide information to Council re the access to the new LIS
- EMT and SMT to look at areas of integration in technological areas - ie Library, Water Commission
- To reevaluate the decision of removing the Electronic Data Management Project - will require more information on cost versus benefit and feasibility report

911 Services

The majority of the discussion was focused on the following items:

- the education component of this service should focus on the intent of this service as 80% of calls are non-emergency - could be in conjunction with the Call Centre

- 4000 line promotion (ex. non-emergency fire information)
- reason why both fire and ambulance respond to same call and is this cost effective?
- explanation on the philosophy of moving to Eric Spicer - core service in one spot, technical and career centre
- one page summary for Councillors to distribute to constituents explaining 911 mission and when to phone 911
- concerns that the intent of this service is not detracted when taking on new initiatives
(ie - alarm monitoring for HRM owned buildings).

RCMP

The majority of the discussion was focused on the following items:

- provision of statistics indicating that they are unable to meet the service demand in their jurisdiction - request for 2 FTEs in North Preston, 4 FTEs for Traffic and 4 FTEs for School Liaison
- various Councillors expressed concerns about traffic issues; long term benefits from school programs

Action Items:

- quantify statistics - portion of \$85,000 that is salary, traffic revenue recovery, comparison of statistics to others with similar geography and population, land mass versus per capita, total schools HRM versus RCMP at all levels (Finance and RCMP to report findings)
- Committee members recommended consideration for 6 FTE's - 2 North Preston and 4 Traffic. General consensus that the 4 school liaisons were important but members were apprehensive to recommend due to the budget limitations and impacts that HRM business units will be presenting - wanted the whole HRM picture.

Tourism, Culture and Heritage Services

The majority of the discussion was focused on the following items:

- discussion of September 11th impact on service delivery and the business units capability to analyze using historical data
- the implications of the Hotel Tax and the necessity to fund a financial services FTE to monitor (funded from tax)
- brief presentation to bring Councillors up to date on the Capital District Task Force - Urban Conservationist salary not in envelope (\$ 50,000)
- Alderney Gate budget will require \$75,000 per year on an ongoing basis - not in the

- envelope
- ensure that all major events recognize that this is now Halifax Regional Municipality not the City of Halifax; questions linking with Events Halifax, Commonwealth Games and interactive website

Action Items:

- forward post Capital District symposium report to Council

Financial Services

The majority of the discussion was focused on the following items:

- the development of fiscal accountability will be in conjunction with all business units
- clarification and education of financial policy will begin with the basics and examine if the existing policies are first understandable and relevant and then develop a framework with the staff, public and Council
- explanation of Strategic Project Support position and the impact this will have on long term capital projects
- concern about our approach in insurance claims, particularly as it affects seniors

Action Items:

- education session for Councillors re financial service delivery, policies and roles and responsibilities
- Financial Services to clarify and simplify capital reports
- Provide the capital asset subledger to Councillors to allow them to keep track of the activities
- LIC policy should be examined - creates public conflict when communication is unclear (reword letter)
- Need to develop an education component to clarify the definition and purpose of the environmental surcharge
- Asked if it was feasible to provide each Councillor with a breakdown of the budget implications in each of the respective districts prior to tabling budget at Council Feb 12th (Finance staff to respond)
- one page summary of all HRM financial policies
- one page summary of Regional Council committees
- performance indicator of public confidence should not be issues raised in management letter

Fire Services

The majority of the discussion was focused on the following items:

- absenteeism reduced by 15% from last year and costs remained relatively the same due to straight time overtime costs
- Fire Services is legislated to deal with buildings which pose a risk - able to enact safety standards/compliance
- Issue of financing rural fire departments - discussion as to the validity and fairness of the current tax structure.

Action Items:

- Chief to provide the number of positions that remain to be filled
- Recommended that the Committee ask the Mayor to write the Federal Government to request funding under the Security Infrastructure Program to fund the TMR and/or the CAD/RMS projects.
- Chief to inform the EMO to place the Councillors names on the emergency contact listing
- Councillors asked to view the report outlining the location strategy for Fire Stations in HRM

Real Property Services

The majority of the discussion was focused on the following items:

- the Aerotech, Bayers Lake and Burnside Business Parks future and cost were discussed in length - estimated that it would take 40 million investment to improve Parks to market value but assuming full cost recovery. There will be discussions with the Airport Authority to partner in the development and marketing of the Aerotech Park
- concerns were voiced in regard to this business unit only being capable of focusing on the most pressing daily maintenance deficiencies and health and safety issues due to budget constraints

Legal and Administrative Services

The majority of the discussion was focused on the following items:

- the previous by-law infraction committee that was put into place to streamline this exercise has not performed as expected however a new committee of representatives from all affected business units is now working on a By-Law Harmonization Project (facilitated by Community Projects)
- records management has become a challenge due to the requirements for

- destruction of documents, FIOPOP requests increased and multiple storage areas
- explanation of decision to contract out night time court and allowing internal staff more daytime work hours
- concerns about development agreement violations and a need for a development agreement registry
- performance indicators - concerns raised re: # infractions/capita and \$ claims versus \$ spent, would like to see infraction indicator broken out by type of infraction (specifically development agreement violations), would like to see an indicator regarding public participation on Community Councils

Action Items:

- Consensus of Councillors that more information be provided in detail of the proposed Capital item Electronic Data Management System - not enough information available at this time to ask this be considered in this years Capital Budget - require cost benefit analysis (to include current cost of records storage) and project scope.
- follow up on status of development agreement violation re: "Bernie's" in Bedford

Parks and Recreation

The majority of the discussion was focused on the following items:

- concern of Councillors on the focus of the Youth Strategy initiative focusing on youths who are not active may negatively impact the existing youth programs and centres. The Director explained that the Communities that are actively involved in this initiative will be the focus but there should be no fear that the existing programs will be negatively impacted
- in order for the Urban Forestry Program to be effective; another urban forestry vehicle and staff would have to be approved in the next years Capital Budget
- the Community Development Officer is currently examining the appropriate usage of the Captain William Spry Center
- focus on individual projects ensued and it was recommended by the Chair that each Councillor deal with these issues on an individual basis with the appropriate staff person
- the trails budget is a block fund of \$ 300,000 and will be mostly rural trails to which the community assists - the core trails funding may be assisted via ACOA
- concerns about school playgrounds, trails within the urban core and cemeteries
- concern that the focus on Capital District will be at the expense of other districts
- in the long-term, would like to make HRM parks and playground more accessible to individuals with disabilities

Action Items:

- a copy of the playground assessments be provided to each Councillor
- remove Urban Core in any reference to Capital District as this does not encompass all the geographical area
- Community Developer to meet with Councillor in Spryfield to assess and recommend some solutions
- report requested from business unit in reference to their view on the Metro Forum Bingo
- report requested to inform Councillors of steps being taken to bring current status of work to get national events hosted in HRM, Commonwealth Games bid
- request for a copy of the sports field selection criteria
- report requested providing an analysis of the sponsorship donations - compare 1999/2000 versus 2000/2001
- in Shubie Park Council Report include list of all campgrounds in HRM that compete with Shubie Park Campground
- request for business unit to add to Capital Budget: washroom facilities at Sir Sandford Fleming Park - a single washroom facility structure, that would be built so as not to be vandalized easily and would be freestanding as the other facilities are only open during limited canteen hours

Shared Services

The majority of the discussion was focused on the following items:

- information provided on the impact of Canada Post using the community name and civic address in their mail delivery
- discussion in regard to provision of printing services at such a high quality also means the need to replace equipment to enable this to continue
- question in regard to the expansion of the Call Centre service hours to 24/7 - the cost would be approximately \$ 198,000 per year and there has been no indication from the public that this service is necessary since the expansion of the service for the 4000 line to 7:30 to 10:00 7 days a week
- clarification requested if the 4000 line is to be used as a forwarding call tool for staff - answer is no and the Director requested that if this does occur to inform herself or staff
- the transit 6600 number will be eliminated in April 2002 and a marketing campaign will take place as well as a 3 to 4 month reprieve period for those still using the discontinued number

Action Items:

- request staff to investigate the feasibility of Councillors having access to allow the

- public a question and answer mechanism on the Internet
- report to be provided to Councillors to detail the amount of time an individual waits on the Call Centre line that fits within the 20% of not being answered within 20 seconds
- to investigate the possibility of providing Councillors with a business card that is also written in braille
- Councillors requested that the Annual Report not be removed from the business units responsibility and another Marketing FTE should be considered
- interested in receiving a six month report which outlines each HRM's business units usage of the service provided by this business unit
- Director to check on feasibility of using "City Watch" to do targeted information distribution to constituents

Solid Waste

The majority of the discussion was focused on the following items:

- Councillors supported the extended service for HHW
- the pros and cons of the current garbage bag limit within HRM
- the Councillors asked the Director to detail the education component of this business unit in areas of hazardous materials, packaging, milk cartons and the entire program to new residents of HRM
- a detailed explanation of the upcoming contract renewals for this business unit
- concerns about the rejection policy, particularly the first time offenders

Action Items:

- the Councillors agreed to place the weekly pick-up of green bins during the summer months back in the budget for consideration
- requested that the Director ensure consistency with the contractors to pick-up garbage that has not abided by the standards
- recommended that better communication within the business unit occur for public inquiries and complaints
- recommended that a mechanism be put into place to educate the public that when a pick-up truck breaks down, the refuse will be collected that same day
- explain the possibility of sponsoring home composting
- report on the work this business unit has accomplished with industry on packaging

Library Services

The majority of the discussion was focused on the following items:

- the Director would be open for discussion with other business units in the topic of

- smart card usage
- the topic of lease versus owned buildings - more leased than owned - cost effective??
- question asked about the amount of funds received and capacity for room rentals - difficult to price as access is provide to private, community and corporate groups at various rates.
- support for CAP sites
- discussion around library hours and cost standardizing

Action Items:

- performance measurement data by branch (Councillor Smith - Dartmouth North and Councillor Warshick - Woodlawn)
- begin tracking how many individuals are turned down for access to computer time

Police Services

The majority of the discussion was focused on the following items:

- unknown impacts on this business unit due to the pending terrorism legislation
- Councillors expressed concern over lack of traffic division - Chief responded that the traffic is dealt with and that a specific division is not justified
- statistics were provided: patrols 860 km of roadway, 1 officer to 507 citizens, density of population is 1087 per square km, 61 files per officer, 73 schools with 9 school liaisons,
- the cases have decreased but due to complexity of reporting and legislation the time to close a case is longer
- Pawn Shop by-law will be presented to Council in 2/3 weeks
- the daily reports provided to Councils should have a follow-up section to allow them to tell the constituents of the progress on the cases
- explanation of the building costs to date for the Police Station and status of the new station in Dartmouth
- discussion around HRM indicators compared to other communities - we are around the middle on most
- concerns that the traffic authority consider police views of traffic issues, accidents
- concern about public's perception of safety within HRM not being based on reality, business unit to work with media

Action Items:

- Council agreed that the 6 FTE's should be considered in this budget as well as a designated traffic officer - Family Violence was felt to be the highest risk area as well as the Cold Files.
- the Chief is expecting a report from RPS and Finance to detail the long term strategy for the Dartmouth Police Station and then will be better equipped to

respond to questions from Council

Public Works

The majority of the discussion was focused on the following items:

- based on existing projection this business unit will need more than 14 million per year to keep existing streets in an acceptable condition
- concern that maybe we had too high a standard for plowing and salting
- it was suggested to place more funds in the snow reserve but the Director stated concerns of taking from another budget would only negatively impact HRM
- explanation of paving strategy - not always the worst addressed first
- specifics were discussed and the Chair suggested that these be discussed on an individual basis
- many of the initiatives in this business unit are contingent on the outcomes and recommendations of the Regional Plan - not prepared to begin new development patterns until this has been tabled and approved
- concern that traffic division consider impacts on a broader basis than the immediate street being addressed

Action Items:

- the Director to ensure that the line painting begin at the appropriate time of year
- the Director to investigate the amount of salt being used by Contractors - Councillors feel it may be excessive
- the Director to examine the possibility of educating the public on their responsibility for sewer main breaks on their property
- the Director to re-examine the policy of charging the home-owner \$ 250.00 for camera work for sewer line breaks
- Councillors would like a list of the projects that have been requested from the budget period when most projects were cut and the status of these
- a letter be issued to residents of abutting areas when traffic initiatives may affect them

Planning and Development Services

The majority of the discussion was focused on the following items:

- there was concern voiced by Councillors that this business unit may be losing sight of the core planning services due to the allocation of resources to Regional Planning
- the commitment to the Regional Plan was discussed in detail and the impacts this will have on this business unit as well as the development patterns of HRM
- the Councillors suggested that this business unit required one point of contact and

the Director stated that it would be more efficient to have the first person contacted to take ownership of the inquiry to ensure the customer received the appropriate information

- the Director discussed the standardizing of by-law for HRM as a whole and that this was not in the best interest of the residents
- concerns were also expressed around the need for more investigators
- performance indicators - should add indicators re: response times and # of hand-offs for information inquiries by the public

Metro Transit

The majority of the discussion was focused on the following items:

- changes and/or cuts to bus routes - there are none planned for 2002/03
- lack of service enhancements re: access-a-bus, commuter rail, bus shelters and ferry service
- fleet replacement timeline
- implementation of university bus passes
- cost recovery ratio
- draft transit study (which is scheduled to be presented to Committee of the Whole on March 5)

Action Items:

- cost to implement ½ hour service on Saturdays
- report on Northwest Arm ferry
- John O'Brien to follow up on information provided re: Toronto advertising campaign aimed at obtaining provincial and federal funding for public transportation

Human Resources

The majority of the discussion was focused on the following items:

- explanation of the succession planning model was requested; it is an opportunity for staff to develop skill sets to apply and be successful candidates for job competitions, each HRM business unit has its own time frame for implementation of this model. Staff and union leaders have various levels of acceptance to this approach
- discussion took place in regard to staff morale, reasons for applying for new positions in the organization (ie - dissatisfaction in current job versus stepping stone to career advancement)
- amount of HR employees as compared to other municipalities, how HR tracks complaints from employees in Human Rights issues, union negotiations methodology, and Priority Placement Program mandate and approach
- all training offered by Human Resources is open to members of Regional Council

Action Items:

- the Director asked to revisit the presentation course requirements for HRM employees; it may be twofold - one for employees who present to Council and one for employees who are responsible for general presentations as part of their job. The Councillors stated that it would be beneficial if staff were clear, concise and effective in responding to Council inquiries - ability to present information in a condensed and precise fashion.
- need to track trends not only as individual business units but at a Corporate level
- the business unit to compile a listing of training resources and materials (catalogue) and advertise its existence
- provide statistics of the absenteeism figures for each business unit in HRM (Councillor Mosher)
- ratio of full time employees as compared to other municipalities (Councillor Warshick)

Community Projects

The majority of the discussion was focused on the following items:

- the performance of staff is being addressed by following the union process
- concern voiced that the by-law enforcement time is spent mostly on by-laws that are not a priority to Councillors - Director stated that there were no issues with capacity to perform the function but needed direction from Councillors to appreciate and learn their priority areas
- 8 vehicles will be leased for the by-law enforcement officers - more cost effective approach
- Animal Control contract expires the end of April 2002, discussions and examination of current process have begun - will return to Committee with report
- the new database has enabled the by-law enforcement officers to investigate the Pesticide complaint to determine if a physical visit is required
- LIS will facilitate an integrated solution for all business units in relation to By-Laws
- any misdirected by-law inquiry or complaint is acknowledged and copied to appropriate business unit - suggested that the Councillors could place a listing in their newsletters to aid in the public education component
- concern re the amount of unlicensed dogs - investigate the feasibility of visiting favorite dog walking places to license
- the viability and feasibility of the Youth Live initiative - agreed that this item would be deferred to the Mission Statement exercise
- Snow removal: explanation of the charging for service - direct cost flat fee of \$ 50.00 for first 20 minutes - To date there have been 91 complaints and 46 cleared by property owner, 45 cleared by Community Projects
- Snow clearing at schools is the School Board responsibility and cannot be treated the same as other property owners; a lien is placed on the property tax bill and HRM

- would have to bill the School Board directly for reimbursement
- the By-Law harmonization project will focus on enforcement and EMT has charged this business unit with the responsibility to lead

Action Items:

- investigate the idea of charging the resident for the cost of investigating a by-law non compliance
- concerns raised by Councillors about the lack of resources available after hours and weekends - a meeting to be scheduled with Councillors and business unit to determine the needs of Council and the best hours of operation for the by-law enforcement officers.
- to bring Animal Control report back to Committee and begin to work on the Taxi & Limousine By-Law in the spring of 2002

General Government

The majority of the discussion was focused on the following items:

- examination of the procedures and support of the organization to Councillors and the Councillors support office to take place
- the existence of new Councillors has created a different focus on expenditures - ie increase in advertising and promotion - therefore the Councillors may wish to review the allocation of funds in each budget category within the existing envelope to recommend change to the allocation
- needs and requirements differ for each Councillor due to personal style, comfort or time availability - issue of fairness and equity must be examined in the use of the Councillor's support office

Action Items:

- memo to be circulated to Councillors in reference to this business units service levels, budget and roles and responsibilities requesting discussion and further action
- distribute staff contact listing for failure to respond to inquiries within each business unit
- CAO committed to have staff available to assist/coordinate/facilitate service standards, budget expectations and recommendation session for Council
- an analysis of the Mayors office as compared to the Councillors Support office - workload

EMT

The majority of the discussion was focused on the following items:

- a review of the goals and objectives which had been presented to the CAO

- committee
- a review of the implication summary sheet at a corporate level

Action Items:

- investigate the possibility to form partnerships with the Community Groups to cost share traffic related initiatives - currently inconsistently applied
- clarification requested on the statements provided by the Director of Planning and Development re the expected services not being delivered - only the items under legislation would be the focus of this business unit during the Regional Planning process
- a Glossary of acronyms be provided - one exists in the budget book and will be updated and provided to Council and placed in the 2002/2003 Budget Book