



Halifax Regional Council
February 19, 2002

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: 
Kulvinder Dhillon, ~~Director~~ of Public Works & Transportation

DATE: February 12, 2002

SUBJECT: Snow Operation, Feb. 5, 2002, District 8

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

At the February 5, 2002 Council meeting, Councillor Hetherington requested a Staff Report regarding an equipment problem experienced in District 8 during the snow and ice operations that day.

BACKGROUND

HRM received approximately 30 centimetres of snow on February 5, 2002. The full East region snow and ice program was in place throughout the storm, including all the assigned in-house and contracted equipment. At approximately 11:00 a.m., the Councillor reported to staff that Arthur Street, Stephen Street and Cuisack Street were not plowed. Staff advised they would be to these streets as soon as they could.

DISCUSSION

A review of the subsequent events with the area snow supervisor provided the following information:

Due to the topography of these streets, i.e., steep grade leading to a dead end with restricted turning space, they are normally serviced with a HRM one ton plow unit in light snow and salting situations. In heavy snow situations, the one ton is used to open the street and the final clean-up is completed with a front end loader. In some situations, if traffic conditions and the amount of snow permits, a larger plow unit can be backed down these streets and the snow plowed out.

The February 5, 2002, snow storm commenced around noon on February 4, and while it stopped at around 8 a.m. on the 5th, snow continued to blow and drift for the rest of the day. The HRM one ton assigned to this route made a cut through these streets in the early morning hours of February 5th. The Councillor's request was received at approximately 11 a.m.. The truck could not respond right away, however, due to the snow and ice program 12 noon shift change, which normally occurs between 11:30 a.m. and 12 noon to permit replacement of operators. After the shift change, the truck arrived at the area at approximately 12:30 p.m. and attempted to plow Arthur Street. However, there was a taxi stuck at the top of the street, so the operator moved on to Stephen Street. The truck plowed to the bottom of this street and became stuck. A tow truck was called to assist in getting the truck out and took 2 hours to respond, and over one hour to get the truck out. The HRM truck sustained some damage in the towing process and the operator correctly had it checked by Fleet Services at Turner Drive before returning to his snow route. All 3 streets were subsequently plowed by approximately 5 p.m.

The usual practice in our snow and ice operations is to maintain equipment spares whenever possible. However, the spare one ton unit sustained fire damage earlier in the season and all other units were committed on February 5, 2002. As well, throughout these events, staff expected the situation regarding the stuck one ton to resolve itself at any minute and to move other equipment to the area would only leave another area short. Staff's intention was to respond promptly after the request was received, however the impact of the amount of snow and difficulty in getting towing services combined to slow their response time.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

All costs incurred are provided for in Public Works & Transportation's snow and ice budget.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

ALTERNATIVES

There are no recommended alternatives.

ATTACHMENTS

Not applicable.

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: P.J. Cochrane, Manager of Streets & Roads Services