

**HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
MARCH 2, 1998**

PRESENT:
(9:30 a.m.)

Mayor Walter Fitzgerald
Deputy Mayor Reg Rankin
Councillors: Bill Dooks
Gordon R. Snow
David Hendsbee
Ron Cooper
Harry McInroy
Jack Greenough
Condo Sarto
Clint Schofield
John Cunningham
Graham L. Downey
Larry Uteck
Howard Epstein
Bill Stone
Ron Hanson
Barry Barnet
Bob Harvey
Peter Kelly
Jack Mitchell

REGRETS:

Councillors Bruce Hetherington
Russell Walker
Jerry Blumenthal

ABSENT:

Councillor Stephen Adams

STAFF MEMBERS:

Mr. Ken Meech, Chief Administrative Officer
Mr. George McLellan, Commissioner, Regional Operations
Deputy Chief David McKinnon, Police Services
Commissioner Gary Greene, Fire Services
Ms. Jane Nauss, Assistant Municipal Clerk

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Mayor Fitzgerald called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

1. 1998/99 PROPOSED OPERATING BUDGET

1.1 POLICE

C Copies of the RCMP presentation were distributed to Council.

Deputy Chief McKinnon addressed Council noting the following:

- C RCMP will be requesting an additional staff complement of three that is not included in this draft budget (\$212,000);
- C This budget incorporates the full impact of the contract settlement;
- C There is a proposed reduction of 16 (net change is actually 11 as there have been 5 clerical positions added) in sworn positions - down to 403;
- C It is anticipated that between 20 - 31 personnel will retire within the next 12 months.

Councillor Greenough requested a copy of the presentation to which Deputy Chief McKinnon agreed.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor Greenough as to the difference between Community Services (\$24.6 million), and Outside Policing (\$11.6 million), Deputy Chief McKinnon advised that Community Services entails uniform and detective personnel, with Outside Policing entailing the RCMP.

Councillor Greenough suggested that Council await a report on the Provincial audit and the municipality's Activity Based Costing (ABC) project, prior to making a decision on police service staffing levels.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor Schofield if a number of positions are now manned by civilians (since amalgamation), Deputy Chief McKinnon advised that administrative and management positions have been eliminated. Further, there have been a number of shifts from police to civilian personnel in a number of areas.

In response to comments made by Councillor Schofield, Mr. Ken Meech, Chief Administrative Officer advised the proposed tax rate is calculated on the Police Services budget which incorporates the full impact of the contract settlement. With respect to early retirement, staff should have the benefit of the Provincial Audit and the ABC project that Councillor Greenough referenced, prior to coming to a consensus as to the composition of Police Services.

Deputy Chief McKinnon advised that several members of the Police Commission were apprehensive of staff's recommendation to reduce the number of positions, and understood that the Police Commission supports the draft Operating Budget for Police Services, with reservations. At the request of Councillor Kelly, the Hon. Alan Abraham, Chair, Halifax Regional Police Commission, confirmed the comments of Deputy Chief McKinnon.

The Hon. Alan Abraham noted the Police Commission was under the impression that the three personnel requested by the RCMP were included within the budget. Further, the Board felt there should be more personnel.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor Kelly on crime statistics (detailed) over the past year, Deputy Chief McKinnon advised that information, as at the last quarter, is available.

At the request of Councillor Kelly, Deputy Chief McKinnon clarified the position requirements of various departments within Police Services.

Councillor Cooper took his place at the meeting at 10:10 a.m.

With respect to comments made by Councillor Kelly that the Province should pay for costs involved for those municipal officers involved in the Casino operation, Mr. Ken Meech, Chief Administrative Officer, advised the problem would be as to whether the municipality could convince the Province to do so.

In response to comments made by Councillor Barnet as to when the results of the ABC project would be available, Mr. Ken Meech advised within the next 1 ½ months and that it had not been the intention of staff to have this information available for this year's budget.

Councillor Barnet requested staff identify areas in the former Halifax County Municipality and the former City of Halifax areas, regarding population shifts.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor Barnet on police to population ratios, Deputy Chief McKinnon advised of the following:

- C in the core area - 1:496 (HRM)
- C RCMP - varies through their jurisdictions - 1:1200 (Eastern Shore area); 1:800 - 900 (suburban area).

With respect to caseloads, Councillor Barnet enquired information on the caseload per officer of HRM Police personnel and the RCMP. In response, Mr. Ken Meech suggested the comparison between both would not be based on "apples to apples." For an example, Mr. Meech advised that with the RCMP arrangement, we are paying for specialized service. Further, through the Policy and Service Review, HRM needs to come to a consensus across the board as to what ratios are going to be utilized.

Councillor Barnet requested information (dollars and cents) respecting actual costs to HRM, per person, in terms of RCMP costs and HRM costs.

Councillor Hendsbee suggested there be an increase in fees for insurance companies who request information (\$25 per letter) on accident reports for insurance claims. Further, the Councillor enquired if there are any opportunities for recoveries for insurance activities; also if there are any opportunities for proceeds of crime .

In response, Deputy Chief McKinnon advised the Federal and Provincial governments have signed a Proceeds of Crime Agreement, however, the Province has not as yet made a determination as to how those proceeds will be awarded to the municipalities. The Deputy Chief understood there were funds in the Province's hands being utilized for training and other purposes. In the meantime, staff have been actively pursuing same.

Councillor Hendsbee suggested Mayor Fitzgerald approach the Province on this, as Chair of the UNSM.

Councillor Downey advised the residents in District 12 were concerned with the level of policing, particularly in the downtown area, due to increased crime.

Councillor Harvey requested statistics on level of crime as well.

Deputy Mayor Rankin suggested the model of the organization should serve the taxpayer. Deputy Mayor Rankin suggested the model of the organization should serve the taxpayer. The Deputy Mayor enquired on the following:

/HRPS - what is the total Police Services staff complement; how many per 100 staff are sworn officers/supervisors; how many are civilian; how many are on foot patrol;

/RCMP - what is the HRPS under contract to RCMP total staff complement; how many per 100/staff are sworn officers/supervisors; how many are civilian; how many are on foot patrol.

Should there be any anomalies or irregularities, the Deputy Mayor requested clarification.

Mr. Ken Meech advised there is an allocation in the overall Operating Budget for potential wage increases, but not to respective budgets due to unfinished collective agreements. If wage increases were not included in the Police Services budget, the budget increase would be 3.2 percent as opposed to 8.6 percent.

Councillor Stone stated that residents are concerned with speeding and anticipated that radar checks could be improved in the future. Further, the Police Budget cannot be reduced.

Councillor McInroy suggested that managing animals on leashes is not an essential service and will waste valuable time of Police personnel.

Councillor Dooks suggested that Council needs to determine the level of provincial funding the municipality is to receive prior to reflecting further on this budget. Any amount of funding will affect every departmental budget. Mayor Fitzgerald anticipated having this information by the end of the week.

Councillor Hanson suggested there be a budget supported by both staff and the Police Commission.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor Kelly on the number of personnel to retire, Deputy Chief MacKinnon advised there could be 31 within the next fiscal year. Currently, there was a list of graduates (18) from other communities who wish to work for HRM. To make up the shortfall, staff will approach the market and then review positions which could be comprised of civilians. It was noted that the Province was offering a training school in the province and that those cadets, upon graduation, could apply.

Councillor Kelly enquired on the costs involved to provide cross walk guard service in house.

Councillor Stone suggested that the municipality should not become involved with providing cross walk guard service - at least not in the Police Service budget. Also, Animal Control should not be included in this budget.

Councillor Schofield advised there was a good working relationship between the RCMP and HRM Police Services.

Mayor Fitzgerald requested information on the following:

- C cost of Police Services at the time of amalgamation;
- C number of police in each District at the time of amalgamation;
- C police ratios at the time of amalgamation and current;
- C Port Police - what is the future for this service.

In closing, Deputy Chief MacKinnon advised that Chief MacDonald would not support positions not being filled. Staff can supply statistics as requested by Council, however, Deputy Chief MacKinnon respectfully requested that Council review the situation on the basis of quality of life. Further, as Halifax generates a high number of visitors, Council was requested to not make assumptions on numbers alone.

Mayor Fitzgerald thanked Deputy Chief MacKinnon for his presentation and invited Superintendent Stan Ferguson, RCMP, to address Council.

Through the use of overheads, Supt. Ferguson reviewed the following:

- C RCMP Community Policing
- C Organizational Chart
- C Operational Highlights (Tantallon detachment, Airport, Community Offices, Cole Harbour initiatives
- C Additional Members
- C Financial Implications for HRM
- C Positive Features of Provincial Policing
- C Advantages of RCMP Contract
- C Statistics.

Advantages of a RCMP Contract include:

- C reduction in administration costs;
- C strike free police environment;
- C civil liability protection;
- C integrated communications;
- C high police standards;
- C personnel rotations (“new blood”);
- C long term contractual agreement (to the year 2012);
- C external review;
- C accountability at the local level;
- C community-based policing philosophy;
- C specialized services.

In addressing the request for three additional personnel, Supt. Ferguson advised that due to a population shift, it is anticipated that two officers would go to Lower Sackville and one would be assigned to Tantallon.

Councillor Hendsbee suggested that funds should be allocated to those civilians who assist the RCMP i.e. cell phones and gasoline costs. Reference was made to the Cole Harbour and Sackville Victim Services Group.

Councillor Stone suggested that Council should focus on the Community Offices.

Deputy Mayor Rankin assumed the Chair.

In response to an enquiry from Deputy Mayor Rankin for a consensus in principle, for 3 additional officers, all agreed.

Councillor Hendsbee requested a copy of the RCMP Budget.

MOVED by Councillors Harvey and Hendsbee that three positions be carried forward as part of the Operating Budget package, to be revisited at a later date,

with further consideration to be deliberated upon at the end of the budget discussions. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Following a break at 12:40, the meeting resumed at 1:15 p.m. with the following members in attendance: Mayor Fitzgerald, Deputy Mayor Rankin, and Councillors Dooks, Snow, Hendsbee, Cooper, McInroy, Greenough, Sarto, Schofield, Cunningham, Downey, Uteck, Stone, Hanson, Adams, Barnet, Harvey, Kelly, and Mitchell.

Absent with regrets were Councillors Hetherington, Blumenthal, and Walker. Also absent for the afternoon Session was Councillor Epstein.

1.2 FIRE

C Copies of overheads were distributed to Council.

Members of staff in attendance included Commissioner Gary Greene, Mr. Bill Mosher, Deputy Chief, Support Services; Mr. Mike Eddy, Deputy Chief, Operations; and, Mr. Gordon Roussel, Financial Co-ordinator.

With the use of overheads, staff reviewed:

C Fire Station Locations within a 2,224 square mile radius;

C Statistics;

 / 62 stations (17 in the core area; 45 in the non core)

 / 442 paid personnel

 / 1,100 volunteer fire fighters

 / 17,000 annual inspections, investigations & other prevention services
(1,500 alarms; 1,100 batteries)

 / 11,500 annual emergency responses

 / \$26.2 million dollar budget;

C Change in Operating Budget & Staff Complement - Core and Non Core;

C Priorities - Operations Division include:

 / Ratification of Collective Agreement

 / Staff Postings for More Effective Response

 / First Responder Medical Program near completion

 / Increased involvement in Public Education Programs

 / High Angle, Confined Space and Water Rescue Programs Developed

 / Planning Process involving all groups initiated.

C Priorities - Support Services include:

 / Recruit Training Program Instituted

 / Specialized Training Programs Enhanced

 / Performance Management System Developed

- /Promotional Routines for Career Advancement Conducted
- /Fire Prevention Programs Increasing Contact with Public
- /Ongoing Mechanical & Building Maintenance Programs.

Councillor Barnet referenced a situation in Upper Sackville where a portion of the rural area is serviced by the core Fire Department. The Councillor enquired as to how revenue sharing is handled. In response, Mr. Bruce Fisher, Budget Co-ordinator, advised he would review the matter and provide the information to the Councillor.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor Adams as to why fire fighters are being transferred from one area to another within the region, Chief Gary Greene advised that since the Collective Agreement has been approved (there were previously six in place), there is now the ability to transfer fire fighters throughout the region. Chief Greene stressed if one Regional Fire Service is to be realized, integration of the force must take place. As well, this will alleviate shortage of staff in any particular area plus any operational concerns.

With respect to the numbers that could be transferred, Deputy Chief Eddy advised there has been no more than 25 percent being considered at this point in time.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor Kelly on the number of individuals who were to retire, Commissioner Greene advised that 12 are eligible to retire this year. Further, volunteer fire fighters will be considered, when attempting to replace those who will be retiring.

Councillor Kelly enquired as to how the potential unavailability of volunteers in Station 8 being able to respond to fires during the day, will be handled. Commissioner Greene advised that should this be the case, the plan will have to be revisited.

With respect to Fiscal Services, Councillor Kelly referenced "Compensation Adjustments" - \$3,500,000 (97/98) - and enquired what portion remained in the account (taking into consideration wage parity, police costs). In response, Mr. Bruce Fisher, Budget Co-ordinator, advised that as wage settlements could be retroactive to November, 1997, potentially, a portion of the funds could be utilized. Councillor Kelly requested staff determine how much was actually expended, to which Mr. Fisher agreed.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor Kelly if \$4,700,000 (1998/99) was sufficient or was staff underestimating this figure, Mr. Ken Meech advised that staff has changed its assumptions due to the fact that in 1998/99, the actual increases for Police have already been incorporated into their budget. Therefore, the \$4.7 million is over and above that figure. It is not expected to have settlements that would equal the Police, however, the estimate has been upgraded to be more realistic and feel comfortable with this figure.

With respect to honorariums (\$233,000) for volunteer fire fighters, Deputy Chief Eddy advised a formula has been developed by the core volunteer groups (over a period of 10

months) and presented same to senior staff. Both groups support the proposal and a policy is currently be drafted. The formula is that 1 point will be given to a fire fighter; 1.2 points for a Lieutenant, and 1.3 points for a Captain. Points will be earned through their involvement in the department (public education and fire prevention programs), attendance at training sessions, attendance at emergency calls, etc. The parameters are outlined in the proposal.

Councillor Hendsbee referenced the Nova Scotia Fire Fighters School and enquired if this facility still operates. In response, Commissioner Greene advised that staff have had some negotiations with the school to become partners, in training, with the municipality. These talks are ongoing. Within the next few years, staff will work towards locating a permanent training facility, hopefully in the rural area.

Councillor Hendsbee referenced the Forestry Rate that the municipality receives from the Province for the protection of Crown lands, noting there has been a decrease in the budget from approximately \$3,000 to \$900. In response, Deputy Chief Eddy advised the decrease in funding was more than likely due to the fact that forest and brush fires were lower than last year - accordingly, fire departments were billed less than the previous year.

Councillor Hendsbee suggested the municipality bill insurance companies for services provided. Reference was made to Australia where 80 percent of the budget for Fire Departments is provided by insurance companies. The Councillor enquired if the municipality had researched this concept or approached the UNSM. In response, Commissioner Greene advised this process has already been undertaken, particularly with motor vehicle accidents; also there have been occasions when the urban core has charged the insurance industry as much as \$15,000 based on the use of their resources. This is not indicated in the Operating Budget as a revenue item, however, as these costs are difficult to predict.

Further, the Councillor referenced Page E-20 - Lawrencetown - noting there was a slight change in "Salaries Reg" - \$56,000 . The Councillor suggested it should read \$61,000; and "Benefits Salaries" should read \$13,700.

Commissioner Greene referenced the value of volunteer fire fighters and advised it was anticipated that a program whereby an auxiliary service (volunteers) would fill in for paid staff sick leave and holidays, would be implemented during 1998.

Reference was made to Station 8 (Bedford) and the fact that if the municipality hired paid fire fighters to replace the volunteers, it would cost approximately \$500,000. Councillor Schofield requested further clarification, in writing, on this aspect.

In response to enquiries from Councillor Greenough regarding staffing, Commissioner Greene advised that replacement fire fighters were hired through a combination of new recruits and volunteer fire fighters.

Councillor Snow referenced the fact that the community of Milford receives \$2,400 per year through an area rate, however, there was no indication of this in the Dutch Settlement budget. The Councillor requested this be reviewed by staff.

The Councillor referenced the fact that \$22,300 collected through an area rate for the communities of Oldham and portions of Enfield, did not appear to reflect the area rate applied to the communities for fire services. The Councillor requested staff review this.

In response, Deputy Chief Eddy advised that staff are developing contracts with the fire services outside HRM service boundary as to what it is expected of them to deliver. Once the Hubbards/Black Point agreement is finalized, same will be utilized as a model for the Enfield and Milford stations.

Councillor Dooks referenced the fact there is often the need to expand fire stations. As part of the expansion process, there is a need for an architect or an engineer to prepare plans before the expansion can take place. This can prove to be an expensive endeavour. The Councillor suggested affected fire stations should be relieved of these costs with the required work carried out in-house, by HRM staff. The Councillor requested that Fire Services develop a plan to assist rural fire departments which require *small* additions. The Councillor stated that the area rate currently has to cover the costs of the design and addition.

Commissioner Greene advised his staff could provide a response on the payment aspect of the Councillor's question, however, the architectural/design aspect would be outside of the Fire Services purview.

Councillor Dooks reiterated his concern noting that costs for minor expansions to rural fire stations may have to be covered through the general rate.

Councillor Stone referenced the Knightsridge Fire Station enquiring why the tower has been shifted from one location to another. In response, Deputy Chief Mosher advised he would look into the matter. In response to a further enquiry from Councillor if staff have considered not using this area for training, since there is a training school in Waverley. In response, Deputy Chief Mosher advised that the Waverley School was used for controlled burns and that in Knightsridge, this could not take place due to the residences in the area. Further, there were no plans in the future to remove training from the Knightbridge station.

In response to a further enquiry from Councilor Stone, Deputy Chief Mosher advised that the ambulance company in the Knightsridge Station is to move to the Spryfield Station. Any ambulance calls would be responded to by the Spryfield area, across Dunbrack Street.

Councillor Stone enquired if there was to be any change in apparatus in the Knightsridge Station. In response, Deputy Chief Eddy advised the apparatus would revert back to what it was in the past.

Councillor Sarto referenced page E-9 - Fire Services - Rural Departments - requesting clarification on the transfer of dollars (\$638,595) from the general rate to offset operating costs. In response, Commissioner Greene advised this is a transfer from the general rate in order to make up for the commercial sector in the rural area (as there are no commercial area rates).

Councillor Greenough congratulated Commissioner Greene for completing his final Operating Budget presentation prior to his retirement from Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM). Commissioner Greene was commended for his contribution over the years to the former City of Dartmouth and HRM. Members of Council and those in the gallery responded with a round of applause.

Councillor Hendsbee referenced the procurement of capital projects referenced by Councillor Dooks (design standards). The Councillor suggested that municipal standards are above those required in the industry and that staff (design and engineering) address this concern.

Councillor Hendsbee noted the municipality was not receiving a capital fund allocation to the extent it did in the past and enquired if these funds will continue.

With respect to the tendering of fire apparatus, Councillor Hendsbee referenced a recent pumper truck incident at which time frustrations were experienced by the volunteer fire departments due to time delays and resultant additional costs involved. The Councillor anticipated the "blanket tender policy" would ensure these types of incidents would not occur again.

Mayor Fitzgerald thanked Commissioner Greene and his staff for their presentation.

1.3 REGIONAL OPERATIONS

Councillors Mitchell, Stone and Dooks left the meeting at this point in time (2:30 p.m.).

Members of staff in attendance included Mr. George McLellan, Commissioner; Mr. Lou Cotinho, Manager, Support Services; Mr. Kulvinder Dhillon, Director, Engineering & Transportation Services; Mr. Brian Smith, Director, Business Operations, and Mr. John MacKay, Director, Works and Natural Services.

Through the use of overheads, Mr. McLellan reviewed the following:

- C Organization Chart
- C Summary - Proposed 1998/99 Operating Budget (Net Expenditures)
- C Summary - Proposed 1998/99 Operating Budget (Net Budget with Salary Increase)

- C Issues
 - solid waste (net increase \$4.84 million) - (\$3,260K increase in expenditures) (\$1,580K decrease in revenue)
 - bus fares (increase of \$1,087K - includes fare increase of \$600K)
 - Sidewalk Plowing (\$2,688K to cover total city; \$513K for HRM property only) - Mr. McLellan advised he would provide further information on this aspect.
 - Parks (increase of \$200K).

- C Commitment to Service Delivery
 - Surveys
 - Regional Operations Advisory Panel (ROAP)
 - Citizens Survey
 - Continued stakeholder group interaction
 - Service demands are increasing.

- C Divisional Details and Proposed Budgets
 - Engineering & Transportation Services
 - Business Operations
 - Support Services
 - Works & Natural Services.

- C To Improve Operational Efficiency
 - Building Transition Project
 - Streetlight Acquisition Project
 - Energy Retrofit Project
 - Regional Infrastructure Planning
 - Aggressive Solid Waste C&E Program.

Councillor Barnet referenced recoveries noting in the past, that when capital works were undertaken, they were budgeted back to the capital project. The Councillor expressed concern that some capital projects (design component) are being charged back to the capital projects yet does not show as a recovery.

In response, Mr. Kulvinder Dhillon advised the design, construction and traffic are funded through the general tax rate. During last year's Operating Budget deliberations, discussion took place as to whether the engineering salaries back to the capital projects. It was agreed that this would not occur as it was an internal transfer.

Councillor Barnet referenced the Millwood Commons Project which was carried out in-house. Components of the project were billed back to the Operating Budget to offset wages. In response, Mr. Dhillon advised he would review this aspect.

In response to an enquiry from Commissioner McLellan if this project was partly funded through Solid Waste, Councillor Barnet responded it was partly funded through Solid Waste.

Councillor Greenough referenced sidewalk snow plowing and if staff have considered plowing only one side of the street. In response, Mr. McLellan advised this suggestion could be looked at.

Mayor Fitzgerald advised it was 3:30 p.m. and that various Councillors had other commitments. Accordingly, it was suggested the meeting adjourn to March 9, 1998 - 9:30 - with Regional Operations' staff to continue with their presentation.

2. ADJOURNMENT

**MOVED by Councillors Kelly and Greenough to adjourn the meeting at 3:40 p.m.
MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Jane Nauss
ASSISTANT MUNICIPAL CLERK