

**HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE  
MINUTES**

**April 15, 2008**

**PRESENT:** Mayor Peter Kelly, Chair  
Deputy Stephen D. Adams  
Councillors: Steve Streach  
Krista Snow  
David Hendsbee  
Harry McInroy  
Andrew Younger  
Bill Karsten  
Jackie Barkhouse  
Jim Smith  
Mary Wile  
Patrick Murphy  
Dawn M. Sloane  
Sue Uteck  
Sheila Fougere  
Russell Walker  
Debbie Hum  
Linda Mosher  
Brad Johns  
Robert P. Harvey  
Reg Rankin  
Gary G. Meade

**REGRETS:** Councillor Gloria McCluskey

**STAFF:** Mr. Dan English, Chief Administrative Officer  
Ms. Mary Ellen Donovan, Municipal Solicitor  
Ms. Julia Horncastle, Acting Municipal Clerk  
Ms. Sheilagh Edmonds, Legislative Assistant

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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 9:45 a.m.

**2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES - None**

**3. FIVE YEAR TRANSIT PLAN (Deferred April 8/08)**

A PowerPoint presentation on this matter was submitted.

A staff report dated April 8, 2008, originally submitted at the April 8, 2008 Committee of the Whole meeting was before Council for consideration.

Ms. Cathie O'Toole, Director, Infrastructure and Asset Management and Mr. Mike Labrecque, Director, Transportation and Public Works addressed Council and provided a presentation on a Five (5) Year Approach to Transit Enhancements.

In her opening remarks, Ms. O'Toole advised that there were two reasons why staff have put forward this presentation, one being that the announcement of an additional \$13 million in funding from the Federal Transit Trust for HRM has been a catalyst for staff to revisit their 5 year capital plan; and secondly, Council must approve the timing and scope of some of the key projects to manage the impact that service increases will have on the operating budget and the tax rate.

Highlights of the presentation are as follows:

- C transit ridership in HRM is outpacing most places in North America
- C for every bus that is added to enhance the service, approximately \$200,000 is being added.

At 9:54 p.m. Councillor Walker entered the meeting.

- C depending where the satellite garage is located, it can save between 250,000 and 400,000 kilometres of deadhead a year.
- C the current gap in required buses to meet the service need is between 35-45
- C currently, service standard issues are primarily 'priority capacity' and 'meeting the service standards'.
- C the concept of neighbourhood busing was never contemplated in any of staff's approaches going back to 2006/07; staff believe there is benefit in the concept but the particulars need to be investigated given the pressing priorities in the other areas; this is something staff would pick up in the Transit Strategy.

- C staff has reached a point where it is ready for Council to make a decision as to how it sees transit over the next 10 years, and this will become the Transit Strategy.

At 10:03 a.m. Councillor Smith entered the meeting.

- C there is no service expansion in 2009/10 because there is a dependency in getting the satellite garage in place; in subsequent years, with the garage, service expansion would rebound.
- C there are no dependencies or barriers to prevent 103 Rural Express Route from going forward; but with the other proposed rural express routes, there are some dependencies, which are land acquisitions and the establishment of the Peninsula Transit Corridor.
- C some of the dependencies of the Peninsula Transit Corridor involve Council providing direction on how to deal with the traffic congestion issue at the Bayers Road area.
- C one of the dependencies for the Metro Link project is the siting of the Lacewood Terminal
- C the downtown shuttle is dependent on approval of a parking strategy and a revenue plan for the operating cost; this is underway and staff expect it to be before Council within the next couple of months.
- C the rural bus project is dependent upon, primarily, the completion of the rural express.
- C projects related to farebox technology and transit security do not have barriers or dependencies.
- C the Harbourlink Ferry is dependent on ensuring that consideration is given to impacts on HRM's conventional ferry service--land acquisitions probably will not be a barrier--there are some regulatory issues that would have to be worked through.
- C the Transit Garage main issue will be around site selection, and once Council gives staff direction on this, staff will begin working on it immediately; there are no barriers in terms of how staff will deliver it.
- C issues which staff will be looking for direction from Council on to help them move forward include the following: Bayers' Road traffic capacity, the location and timing of the Lacewood terminal, the location of the Satellite Garage; cost recovery level, service standards, fare increases, and a funding mechanism for public transit as a whole.

At 10:09 a.m. Councillor Hum entered the meeting.

- C Council's endorsement of this approach will give staff the ability to manage the Plan within the transit operation

Ms. O'Toole concluded her remarks by noting that whatever direction Council gives staff today will potentially change what was in the proposed Capital Budget provided on April 1, 2008. She added that before budget debate is concluded, staff will update the capital

supplementary sheets and capital summary sheets and provide Council a new Capital Budget.

Councillor McInroy advised that he had no difficulty with the elements in the Transit Plan but that he felt a 5 Year Transit Plan should be set aside until Council concludes its 2008/09 budget debate. He added that Council should identify what it sees as priority. He noted that, in his view, the new transit garage was a key priority in the budget.

**MOVED by Councillor McInroy, seconded by Councillor Fougere that Regional Council approve staff moving forward for the 2008/09 capital budget on a new satellite transit garage and 15 new buses as outlined in the presentation of the 5 Year Approach to Transit.**

Ms. O'Toole advised that if Council wanted staff to accommodate the Satellite Garage in 2008/09 they would amend the Capital Budget to include it. It is a \$25 million project and staff would budget \$19.6 million in 2008/09 and \$5.4 million in 2009/10.

A discussion ensued with staff responding to questions.

Councillor Uteck expressed concern that the local newspaper today indicated that all the gas tax funding was going to be allocated to Transit and, yet, last year Council approved a plan for those funds.

In response, Ms. O'Toole advised that gas tax allocation funds have been set up to the 2009/10 fiscal year and approved by Council and submitted to the Province. Any changes in gas tax allocation would have to go back through the Province. Ms. O'Toole noted that there have been periodic information reports to Council with respect to the Projects and staff can bring forward an updated information report on the status of the projects.

At 10:57 a.m. Councillor Mosher entered the meeting.

At 11:00 a.m. Council recessed.

At 11:18 a.m. Council reconvened with the same members present.

At 11:23 a.m. Councillor Snow entered the meeting.

In response to a request for clarification on the motion, the Mayor asked the Municipal Clerk to read the motion, as follows:

**MOVED by Councillor McInroy, seconded by Councillor Fougere that Regional Council approve staff moving forward for the 2008/09 capital budget on a new satellite transit garage and 15 new buses as outlined in the presentation of the 5 Year Approach to Transit.**

The Mayor noted that the other issues contained in the Plan would be moved to another time

frame for discussion.

In response to a question by Councillor Walker, Ms. O'Toole advised that her understanding of the motion is to request staff to re-work Year 1 of the proposed capital budget to accommodate the Satellite Garage, and Council would deal with Years 2-5 later on.

Mr. Labrecque noted that staff had included funds for a Strategy in Year 1 as well.

Councillor Walker indicated that he supported the 5 Year Plan as presented and, therefore, could not support the motion on the floor.

In response for further clarification on the motion, Mayor Kelly advised that it puts everything at bay pending further discussion on the overall proposal other than the buses and garage.

Councillor McInroy clarified that his intent with the motion was to prioritize and advance the garage from capital project perspective to the budget year currently under discussion. He noted that he supported all other elements in the Plan.

Councillor Mosher suggested a friendly amendment that would ensure the garage is the number one priority, but also gives staff direction to move ahead with the 5 Year Plan.

The mover and the seconder were in agreement to a **friendly amendment** that reads as follows: **provide endorsement of the 5 Year Transit Plan with the Satellite Transit garage as the number one priority in the 2008/09 capital budget.**

The motion now reads:

**MOVED by Councillor McInroy, seconded by Councillor Fougere that Regional Council endorse the 5 Year Transit Plan and that the Satellite Transit Garage be the number one priority in the 2008/09 capital budget**

Council recessed at 12:00 p.m.

Council reconvened at 1:26 p.m. with the same members present with the exception of Councillor Rankin. Councillors Snow and Hendsbee had joined the meeting at this point.

Staff responded to further questions.

**MOVED by Councillor Streach, seconded by Councillor Snow that the Design and Planning aspect in regard to Rural Transit, as noted in the 5-Year Transit Plan, be moved up to 2010-11.**

Councillor Fougere spoke in support of the motion and indicated that she would like staff to provide Council periodic updates on the following:

- C six month updates on the projects
- C timelines on Council's decisions regarding these projects and how they fit into

- the 5 Year Plan
- C the timeline on the functional plan and how it fits into that framework
- C cost benefit analysis, and business case and funding options for all the projects over the 5 year span.

Councillor Fougere noted it is important to recognize that any of the projects can change based on the information Council receives and that every project requires Council's approval as things go forward.

Councillor Uteck asked that as each project comes forward she would like to see the business case for it. She also asked if staff would provide an update on completion of gas tax projects.

Councillor Murphy requested that the minutes reflect that the public would have full engagement in the five (5) year plan.

Councillor McInroy called for the question on the motion, and Mayor Kelly asked the Municipal Clerk to read the motion on the floor, as follows:

**MOVED by Councillor McInroy, seconded by Councillor Fougere that Regional Council endorse the 5 Year Transit Plan and that the Satellite Transit Garage be the number one priority in the 2008/09 capital budget.**

**MOVED by Councillor Streach, seconded by Councillor Snow that the Design and Planning aspect in regard to Rural Transit, as noted in the 5-Year Transit Plan, be moved up to 2010-11.**

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

**MOVED by Deputy Mayor Adams, seconded by Councillor Mosher that staff provide a report outlining solutions and options to make community transit affordable.**  
**MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

#### **4. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Julia Horncastle  
Acting Municipal Clerk.