

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

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HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE  
MINUTES

April 28, 2011

PRESENT:

Mayor Peter Kelly  
Councillors: Steve Streach  
Barry Dalrymple  
David Hendsbee  
Lorelei Nicoll  
Darren Fisher  
Bill Karsten  
Jackie Barkhouse  
Mary Wile  
Jerry Blumenthal  
Dawn Sloane  
Sue Uteck  
Jennifer Watts  
Russell Walker  
Debbie Hum  
Linda Mosher  
Brad Johns  
Robert Harvey  
Tim Outhit  
Reg Rankin  
Peter Lund

REGRETS:

Deputy Mayor Jim Smith  
Councillors: Gloria McCluskey  
Stephen Adams

STAFF:

Mr. Richard Butts, Chief Administrative Officer  
Ms. Cathy Mellett, Municipal Clerk  
Ms. Krista Tidgwell, Legislative Assistant  
Ms. Shawnee Gregory, Legislative Assistant

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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Kelly called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m.

**2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – NONE**

**3. BUDGET DELIBERATIONS**

Council agreed to discuss Community Development as the first Order of Business.

**Library**

This matter was discussed later in the meeting, see page 4.

**Community Development**

A copy of the presentation respecting Community Development was before Council.

Mr. Austin French, Manager, Planning Services Community Development, delivered a presentation to Council.

Councillors Harvey and Streach entered the meeting at 10:18 a.m.

Councillor Sloane expressed concern with Tunes at Noon being cut; noting the cultural importance it brings to downtown Halifax. She further commented on the sponsorship opportunities from individual who have expressed an interest in supporting the program.

**MOVED by Councillor Sloane, seconded by Councillor Blumenthal, that Halifax Regional Council allocate \$6,000 into the parking lot towards Tunes at Noon and review the proposed sponsorships to off set the operating cost. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

Staff responded to questions of clarification respecting capital funding for HRM's cultural events and community visioning.

Councillor Mosher entered the meeting 10:28 a.m.

Councillor Blumenthal requested that staff identify the costs associated to make the Bloomfield Center accessible, such as the installation of a pool lift and an elevator.

Councillor Uteck requested staff provide additional information respecting Development Services:

- identify the current number of Fleet vehicles within the Business Unit and to what Division are they assigned
- with respect to the decrease in uniform clothing charge, was there a policy change or reduction of employees

- if construction activity has increased, why is there a decrease in occupancy and variance permits
- what is Market Development as identified under budget line C-710
- provide a breakdown of the \$1.7 million in transfers to outside facilities
- identify the dollar amount respecting the 50% decrease to the recreation budget for education and training

Councillor Uteck advised that her questions have been forwarded to staff and had requested that Council be copied on staff's responses.

Councillor Watts noted the importance of the Regional Plan and asked whether consideration could be given to fast tracking the review. HRM needs to have the secondary plan in progress (ie. green plan) in order to address the pressures for community involvement. She further noted the importance of HRM supporting its recreational services as residents have expressed concern with affordability.

**MOVED by Councillor Watts, seconded by Councillor Sloane, that Halifax Regional Council request a staff report outlining the proposed plan around proposals for indoor facilities, community facilities, role of the multi-district facilities and identify future budget implications for HRM. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

Councillor Barkhouse entered the meeting at 10:49 a.m.

Staff responded to concerns raised respecting cuts to cultural program funding. It was noted that a staff report will be coming forward to Council identifying the conversion of the Dartmouth Heritage Museum to a Regional Museum.

In response to a question raised by Councillor Sloane respecting funding for First Nations events, staff advised that the Special Events Advisory Committee is reviewing this application and a report will be provided to Regional Council.

Council recessed at 10:57 a.m.

Council reconvened at 11:07 a.m. with Councillor Outhit in attendance.

## **Library**

A copy of the presentation respecting Halifax Public Libraries was before Council.

Ms. Judith Hare, CEO, Halifax Public Libraries delivered a presentation to Council, noting that she would provide copies of the Central Library Capital Campaign brochure to Council.

Council entered into discussion with Ms. Hare responding to concerns and questions of clarification. Highlights were as follows:

- concern with funding cuts to the mobile library service (book mobile); \$290,000 is needed to maintain the service

- there are alternative methods of service delivery for those affected by the mobile library service cut such as books by mail or traveling to a near by library branch
- concerns regarding the state of the Spring Garden Road Library building; cost to keep the facility operating
- concerns respecting libraries not being accessible to all communities; the need for libraries within rural and suburban areas
- suggested formation of a committee and additional investment in the Community Facility Master Plan with regard to reviewing communities that do not presently have library service

Councillor Blumenthal suggested that Ms. Hare contact the Accessibility Advisory Committee and staff respecting accessibilities issues.

Ms. Hare further provided clarification respecting the increase to administrative costs within the library budget, commenting that it is a catch all for the various programs.

**MOVED by Councillor Streach, seconded by Councillor Blumenthal, that Halifax Regional Council allocate \$290,000 into the parking lot towards the Mobile Library Service and that the Library Board give consideration to maintaining this program.**

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

During the ensuing discussion, Council requested staff provide the alternative methods should the Mobile Library Service not be reinstated, as well as review the possibility of ordering books online and picking them up at a local library branch or a local school.

Council recessed at 11:58 a.m.

The meeting reconvened at 1:06 p.m.

**Transportation and Public Works**

Mr. Ken Reashor, Director of Transportation and Public Works (TPW), provided the presentation on the Proposed Budget & Business Plans 2011 – 2012 for Transportation and Public Works.

Councillor Streach entered the meeting at 1:18 p.m.

A discussion on the presentation ensued with staff responding to questions.

Councillor Uteck requested to know what the dollar value per home would be on a flat area rate rather than the current assessed value formula for residents living within one kilometre of a transit route.

Mr. Fisher indicated that HRM currently had two transit rates; 5.1 cents per \$100,000 assessed value of a home and a local area rate for homes within one kilometre of a transit route per \$100,000 assessed value.

**MOVED by Councillor Uteck, seconded by Councillor Mosher that Halifax Regional Council request that staff seek additional information regarding the possibility of changing the Transit funding formula for the local transit area rate to a flat fee rather than the assessed rate.**

A discussion on the motion ensued with staff responding to questions.

Mayor Kelly advised that the motion would be ruled out of order as it was not in line with the budget debate; noting that it could come back to Council at a later date for further discussion.

Mr. Butts recommended that staff come back to Council with a full report on this matter.

Mayor Kelly noted that the rates would not change this budget year; however, they could for the 2012/13 budget based on the outcome of the future report.

As the motion was ruled out of order, no vote was taken.

Councillor Watts requested that Council and staff consider reinstating the amount originally provided in the proposed Transportation budget for bike lanes and Active Transportation (AT) support as the budget had been reduced from \$500,000 to \$100,000.

**MOVED by Councillor Watts, seconded by Councillor Uteck that Halifax Regional Council request that the Active Transportation budget be reinstated to \$500,000 from \$100,000 and that staff look for the additional \$400,000 within their budgets. Possible funding sources include but are not limited to:**

- **Road Corridor Land Acquisition Account CTU00897**
- **Unanticipated funds raised for the Skating Oval any other sources of funding.**

Councillor Watts requested that this item be put in the Parking Lot for discussion.

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

The discussion on the presentation continued with staff responding to questions.

Councillor Blumenthal suggested that parking be removed from Bayers Road so that area could be used as a reversing lane. He also suggested that the transit rate be changed from within one kilometre of a transit route to two kilometres.

As a result of Mr. Reashor's statement that Metro Transit is not making money off of monthly transit passes, Councillor Sloane again suggested that HRM create a day and week pass for transit and requested that this be looked at again. She also requested that a parking strategy be looked at again.

Mr. Reashor indicated that the eco mobility project around the Commons was a scaled down version of a parking strategy that staff was investigating to see if it would be more reasonable and that they were recommending implementation of a parking fee strategy.

Councillor Johns requested a report on the potential for wifi on transit. He also requested that all budget reports, from 2011 forward, include the detailed change report by Business Unit Division Cost Centre by cost element.

**MOVED by Councillor Johns, seconded by Councillor Sloane that Halifax Regional Council reallocate the money assigned to Rankin Drive this budget year to do work within the same envelope of \$560,000 to address existing issues on the portion of Sackville Drive between Beaverbank and Lucasville Road. Phase 3 of the Rankin Drive project will be completed in 2012/13.**

Discussion on the motion ensued with staff responding to questions.

Councillor Johns stated that while it was important to complete phase 3 of the Rankin Drive project, priorities have changed as a portion of Sackville Drive was in poor condition and had 20,000 cars driving on the road per day while Rankin Drive was a crescent street with less traffic and 35 residents.

Mr. Phillip Townsend, Director of Infrastructure and Asset Management, advised that it was his understanding the HRM was coordinating the Rankin Drive job along with Halifax Water and that was what was driving the schedule. He stated that Sackville Drive would be a number one priority issue in the 2012/2013 budget; however, Rankin Drive must be finished as it was a timing issue.

Mr. Dave Hubley, Manager of Design and Construction, confirmed that it would be more costly to do this street work independent of Halifax Water as it would create double the paving if Halifax Water completed their pipe project work first as HRM would have to repave anyway.

Councillor Johns advised that he was prepared to wait for actual figures the next day.

In response to a question posed by Councillor Rankin, Mr. Reashor stated that staff intended to proceed with the extension of transit service on Highway 103; however, they would not know the full costs until they actually tendered the work. He advised that there was sufficient budget to carry the project.

Councillor Nicoll suggested the implementation of an HRM card that residents could use to pay for parking and transit.

Councillor Uteck advised that, upon speaking with Mr. Butts, she would be withdrawing her earlier motion.

The meeting recessed at 2:54 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 3:08 p.m. with the same members present with the exception of Councillor Johns.

### **Infrastructure and Asset Management**

Mr. Townsend provided the presentation on the Infrastructure and Asset Management Proposed Budget & Business Plans 2011-2012.

A discussion on the presentation ensued with staff responding to questions.

Councillor Blumenthal requested an assessment of the Needham Centre to investigate what it would cost to repair and upgrade the facility rather than waiting to build a new one; noting that it did not have to be included in the current budget.

Councillor Harvey stated that Council should start closing the infrastructure gap and taking care of existing HRM facilities rather than building new.

**MOVED by Councillor Watts, seconded by Councillor Harvey that further discussion of the longer term capital/ project budget pressures be referred to the Audit & Finance Standing Committee for a discussion & report on the following:**

- **The impact of continued asset decline on the capital budget and consider options to mitigate the impact, and**
- **A more detailed understanding of new capability projects, by program and service line, and their impact on capital budget in the short, medium and long term; and**
- **That the Audit and Finance Standing Committee consider options to increase the capacity of the capital budget to meet both the need to maintain our existing assets and grow services as approved by Council.**

Discussion on the motion ensued.

Councillor Hendsbee noted that the motion may be premature.

**MOVED by Councillor Hendsbee, seconded by Councillor Karsten that the requested report be tabled pending forthcoming reports such as the Peninsula Study and the Long Term Rink Strategy.**

Councillor Watts stated that the Audit and Finance Standing Committee could work in tandem with these other reports.



Mr. Townsend clarified that, despite the direction of the main motion, this issue would not be resolved in one report and would instead be the start of an ongoing, multi-departmental relationship between budget planning staff and the Audit and Finance Standing Committee.

A vote was taken on the tabling of the report.

**MOTION DEFEATED.**

Discussion on the main motion continued.

Mr. Townsend stated that staff receive more requests than they can manage each year and the motion ensures that staff can deal more effectively with such requests.

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

Discussion on the presentation continued.

As all of the budget presentations were now complete, Mayor Kelly thanked staff.

The meeting recessed at 3:56 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 4:09 p.m. with the same members present

**Parking Lot Items**

Mayor Kelly stated that since Council had completed the department presentations they could now discuss how they wished to deal with the Parking Lot items.

Councillor Sloane agreed to withdraw her earlier motion with the understanding that 'Tunes at Noon' would be funded through adjustments to the Community Development internal allocations as well as through fundraising.

Regarding Councillor Uteck's withdrawn motion, Council and senior staff agreed to enable the discussion on the Transit funding formula for the local transit area rate to be brought to Council for future policy discussions.

It was advised that Councillor Johns would withdraw his motion moved under the Transportation and Public Works presentation.

Regarding the Book Mobile Parking Lot item, Councillor Streach moved the following motion:

**MOVED by Councillor Stretch, seconded by Councillor Dalrymple that HRM contribute 50% (\$148,000) one time funding to the Halifax Regional Library Board**

**for one of the following purposes.**

- **Continue the mobile service until the bookmobile reaches the end of its useful life (we understand to be 2 years); or**
- **Contribute to the development of other forms of alternative service delivery for the mobile service.**

**The above funding is conditional that it be used exclusively for the continuance of the mobile service; either through the bookmobile; or an alternative means of providing the service.**

A discussion on the motion ensued.

As a member of the Halifax Regional Library Board, Councillor Uteck advised that the Board had not yet guaranteed to provide the other half of the required funding.

It was noted that this was a one time funding offer.

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

Regarding the Active Transportation Funding Parking Lot item, Councillor Watts moved the following motion:

**MOVED by Councillor Watts, seconded by Councillor Sloane that Halifax Regional Council fund Active Transportation work by an additional \$400,000 through:**

- **Setting the floor of fundraising for the Skating Oval at \$900,000, from \$500,000; and**
- **Redirecting this additional budget capacity as it occurs to fund Active Transportation work for 2011/12 up to a maximum of an additional \$400,000.**

**All money contributed through fundraising to the Oval will go to the Oval. It is a matter of any HRM debt capacity could be reallocated to Active Transportation.**

A discussion on the motion ensued with staff responding to questions.

Several Councillors expressed concern that additional funding should be used for sidewalks or to reduce the tax rate instead.

Mr. Townsend clarified that all money donated to the Skating Oval would go to the Oval and if this fundraising caused capacity in HRM's allotted Oval funding, this money could be displaced to build capacity for Active Transportation funding.

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

Mayor Kelly suggested moving into Regional Council to ratify the budget now that the Parking Lot issues had been dealt with.

Councillor Outhit requested a response for a previous question.

In response to an earlier question posed by Councillor Outhit, Mr. Fisher stated that on existing homes HRM was getting an additional \$7,000,000 in revenue for capped and uncapped single family homes and \$2,900,000 for new homes, multi unit dwellings and land. He indicated that the \$25,000,000 was split evenly between commercial and residential.

Council agreed to adjourn to Regional Council to consider approval of the 2011/2012 Operating and Project Budget.

**4. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Cathy J. Mellett  
Municipal Clerk