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Item No. 14.2.4
Halifax Regional Council
November 28, 2017

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed

Councillor Bill Karsten, Chair, Audit and Finance Standing Committee

DATE: November 17, 2017

SUBJECT: Potential Changes to the Audit and Finance Standing Committee Member
Composition

ORIGIN

Agenda Item 12.7.1 of the November 15, 2017 meeting of the Audit and Finance Standing Committee.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

HRM Charter, Section 48 2 (f) "The responsibilities of the audit committee include any other matters as may be determined by the Council."

RECOMMENDATION

The Audit and Finance Standing Committee recommends Regional Council request a staff report considering potential changes to the member composition of the Audit and Finance Committee to include one or two members of the public.

BACKGROUND

The Joint Municipal Accountability and Transparency Committee (JMAT) was established in December 2016 by the Provincial Minister of Municipal Affairs with the mandate as follows:

- Ensure that mechanisms are in place to support the requirement of transparency and accountability to the public;
- Strengthen local government expense policies;
- Increase transparency of local government staff and elected officials' expenses to the public;
- Improve audit function on staff and elected officials' expenses; and
- Recommend amendments to the Municipal Government Act (MGA) where applicable.

A report was submitted to the Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs from the JMAT Committee on March 30, 2017.

DISCUSSION

There are six recommendations contained in the JMAT report, one of which is a recommendation '*to strengthen municipal audits and audit committees*'. It recommends this be done by amending the Municipal Government Act to require that a position be created for at least one independent person on municipal audit committees and require that municipalities advertise any vacant position.

The Audit and Finance Standing Committee believes there is merit in asking for a staff report on this matter to determine if HRM is currently following best practices in terms of Audit and Finance Standing Committee composition. The Committee passed a motion asking that Regional Council request a staff report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial implications have not been identified and would have to be identified in a subsequent staff report.

RISK CONSIDERATION

Risk considerations have not been identified and would have to be identified in a subsequent staff report.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Audit & Finance Standing Committee meetings are open to public attendance, a live webcast is provided of the meeting, and members of the public are invited to address the Committee for up to five minutes at the end of each meeting during the Public Participation portion of the meeting. The agenda, reports, minutes, and meeting video of the Audit & Finance Standing Committee are posted on Halifax.ca

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable

ALTERNATIVES

Alternatives were not provided.

ATTACHMENTS

None.

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

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