

HALIFAX

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Item No. 14.1.5
Halifax Regional Council
February 27, 2018

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:

Original Signed by 

Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: February 14, 2018

SUBJECT: HRM Parade Float

ORIGIN

- August 15, 2017, Regional Council Motion:

MOVED by Councillor Karsten, seconded by Councillor Hendsbee that Halifax Regional Council request a staff report with recommendations to obtain a new primary Halifax Regional Municipality Float, allowing for the existing float to be available for use at community events. **Motion Put and Passed Unanimously**

- December 13, 2017, Regional Council Motion:

MOVED by Councillor Karsten, seconded by Councillor Nicoll that Regional Council approve the "Advanced Tender Project List" in Appendix A of the Budget Report dated December 5, 2017.

- January 17, 2018 Regional Council Budget Committee - Motion approved to place \$40,000 in the parking lot to maintain a second Municipal float.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, 79 (1) The Council may expend money required by the Municipality for (z) acquisition of equipment, materials, vehicles, machinery, apparatus, implements and plant for a municipal purpose;

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council:

1. Direct staff to develop a call for proposals to create a new HRM Parade Float to replace the current primary Float, for approval upon 2018/19 Budget approval, with funding from Capital Account CD990003, Cultural Spaces;
2. Refer the funding request of up to \$40,000 to provide for the storage, maintenance and operation of the secondary Parade Float to the 18/19 Budget Committee of the Whole; and

3. Subject to Regional Council's approval of increased funding, direct staff to retain the current Parade Float as the secondary Halifax Regional Municipality Parade Float to be used as per scheduling requirements.

BACKGROUND

Staff operates a parade float which represents the Municipality at approximately 18 parades per year. These parades range from large scale urban regional parades with attendance of more than 50,000, such as the Holiday Parade of Lights in downtown Halifax, to medium size and smaller rural community parades.

HRM has had five official parade floats since amalgamation. The current HRM parade float is 25 feet long, 10 feet wide and 14 feet in height, and was constructed in March 2012 by Tamarack Communications, the successful applicant of a request for proposals procurement process.

On August 15, 2017, Regional Council passed a motion requesting a staff recommendation on obtaining a new primary Halifax Regional Municipality parade float and maintaining the existing one for use at community events.

DISCUSSION

Parade Float Operation

The HRM parade float operational program has been in place since amalgamation and is led by Parks and Recreation event staff. Event staff manage the scheduling and budget of the parade float, with Parks staff driving the float in parades. Events request attendance of the HRM float and the schedule is based on the HRM Float Selection Process (Attachment 1). Once the schedule is confirmed, it is shared with the Mayor's Office and the Councillor's Support Office in order to allow for Mayor and Councillor scheduling.

The HRM parade float has an operational budget of \$15,000 which is allocated within the operating budget for Parks and Recreation. For the 2016/17 fiscal year, the total actual costs of operation were \$14,000 (\$4,000 for maintenance and \$10,000 for staff wages to drive the float). Maintenance costs include repairing infrastructure on the parade float including materials, sound and painting, as well as decorating for theme parades (St. Patrick's Day, Pride Festival and the holiday season).

Scheduling Conflicts

During the 2016/17 fiscal, the parade float attended 17 parades throughout the Municipality. Due to scheduling conflicts (i.e., parades occurring on the same day at approximately the same time), the parade float was unable to attend 4 parades; 19% of the annual schedule requests. As per the scheduling process, parades which do not receive the parade float in one year typically receive it the following year. However, there have been occurrences, typically the second weekend in August, where parades have received the parade float once every three years due to the demand.

As stated in the scheduling process, in the case of scheduling conflicts, staff work with the parade organizers to try and find a solution, however, it has been noted that most parades can seldom move their traditional date and start times.

Secondary Parade Float History

In 2009, a secondary parade float was created at the request of the former Mayor to support representation from HRM at both regional and community parades. However, there was no budget assigned to build or maintain a secondary parade float. At the conclusion of the 2011 parade season, the secondary parade float only consisted of a wooden picnic table attached to a truck bed. Without additional resources and funding, the secondary parade float was of sub-standard quality which was not a positive reflection of the HRM brand. As such, the operation of a secondary parade float was discontinued.

During the 2013, 2014 and 2015 parade seasons, Parks and Recreation staff worked with Halifax Fire and

Emergency Services to offer a solution for parade scheduling conflicts by requesting “the Queen” (HRM’s Antique Fire Engine) be used as a secondary parade float entry when possible. However, that vehicle was only able to attend parades within the urban/suburban core as it could not travel on highways and had limited driving capabilities. Following the 2015 parade season, Halifax Fire and Emergency Services communicated that due to wear on the engine, the vehicle was no longer available for parades.

New Primary Parade Float

The current parade float cost approximately \$50,000, which included the purchase of a new truck bed and sound system. The budget for the parade float was approved by Regional Council on May 24, 2011, and funded from the Event Equipment and Infrastructure budget of the Marketing Levy Special Events Reserve (MLSER).

Since the creation of the 2012 parade float, the Special Events Advisory Committee (SEAC) recommended that event infrastructure, in particular the cost of future HRM parade floats, should not be funded from the MLSER. It was SEAC’s position that the MLSER is focused on economic and tourism creation at a level above the community celebrations supported by the parade float. The MLSER is focused on economic and tourism creation, whereas the parade float focuses on community celebrations. Subsequently, Regional Council approved a new business case for MLSER which does not include funding for event equipment and infrastructure. Therefore, identification of an alternative funding source is required to fund the creation of a new primary parade float. To that end, staff has included funding in the draft 2018/19 capital budget, in account CD990003, Cultural Spaces. That account supports the development and maintenance of cultural structures such as artifacts, monuments, markers, commemorative signage, public art and banners. The account is funded from the new Cultural and Events Reserve, Q621, and inclusion of a new parade float would be consistent with the reserve business case. A new parade float which would include float construction, new trailer flatbed and new sound system, is estimated to cost \$65,000.

Retaining Secondary Parade Float

If Regional Council chooses to maintain the current parade float as a secondary parade float, it would impact the operational budget as more parades could be attended. Attendance at the additional parades would result in expenditure increases for staff wages, as well as theme decoration (for holiday parades). It is expected that a second float would have similar costs as the primary float, between \$10,000-15,000 annually, depending on the number of parades. As well, additional indoor heated space would be required to store the additional parade float, which is estimated at \$30,000 if commercial storage is required. Staff believe, at least for 18/19, that additional space can be arranged inside the current parade float location to store the second float; however, this location is slated for demolition in 2019. This increased operational funding is not currently accommodated within the 18/19 draft Operating Budget and will therefore need to be considered by Council during the 2018/19 COW Budget debate.

Next Steps

Following receipt of Regional Council’s direction, staff will proceed with a call for proposals in order to be able to initiate the work as soon as possible. It should be noted that with the advanced capital approval, the process to procure a replacement float can commence right away; however, awarding of a tender cannot occur until Regional Council approves the 2018/19 Capital Budget, currently anticipated for April 2018.

The timeline for a new primary parade float has a tentative completion date for August 1, 2018. The procurement and construction process of a new parade float is estimated at 3 months. The current parade float would attend any parades until the new one is completed including Sackville Snow Days Parade in February, St. Patrick’s Day Parade in March and potentially Canada Day Parades and Pride Parade in July. The visual concept of the new parade float would be proposed as part of the call for proposals, and confirmed through a committee of staff from Parks and Recreation and Corporate Communications.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Staff has included \$65,000 funding in the Capital Account CD990003, Cultural Spaces, in the 18/19 draft

Capital Budget for a new parade float. Funding to cover the additional estimated \$40,000 operating costs associated with the use of a second float would need to be considered during the 18/19 Budget COW as a "Parking Lot" item.

RISK CONSIDERATION

There are no significant risks associated with the recommendations in this Report. The risks considered rate Low. To reach this conclusion, consideration was given to financial and reputational risk.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

None at this time.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

None identified.

ALTERNATIVES

- Alternative 1: Regional Council could choose to direct staff to replace the existing float using the existing base and infrastructure. The estimated capital cost would be between \$45,000-\$50,000 and would not require additional operating funding, but would not allow for a secondary parade float.
- Alternative 3: Regional Council could choose to maintain the status quo and operate the current parade float as the primary float, and not approve additional funding for a new float. This would result in no secondary parade float and no improvements to the existing float.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: HRM Float Selection Process

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.

Report Prepared by: Paul Forrest, Coordinator, Culture & Events 902 490 6979

Attachment 1
HRM Float Selection Process

Float Selection Process

1. The selection process will be applied to parades that have been confirmed before the posted deadline. All late information will only be considered based on availability.
2. If on any date there is more than one parade request, the following process will take place:
3. The priority for the HRM Float will be to participate in Regional Scale parades. Regional Scale parades can be defined as having a large attendance of 25,000 people or more. These large-scale parades indicate there is a regional interest in the parade from citizens outside the community boundaries.
4. If there is more than one Regional Scale parade on any date with conflicting event times, the HRM Float will attend the larger of the Regional Scale parades. The HRM Float will then attend the next largest scale parade if applicable and if scheduling allows it. Staff will work with all parade organizers to find possible solutions to schedule conflicts.
5. If there is no Regional Scale parades and one community parade available, the HRM Float will attend the community parade.
6. If there is no Regional Scale parades and more than one community scale parade on any date with conflicting event times, the HRM Float will operate on an annual alternating schedule and will participate in the parade that it did not attend the previous year. This schedule is to ensure that the HRM Float visits as many communities across the municipality as possible. Staff will work with all parade organizers to find possible solutions to schedule conflicts. The following is an example of the float being requested to attend three parades in HRM on the same date with conflicting start/finish times resulting in the situation where the float can only attend one parade on that date:

Year 1 - HRM float attends the parade in Community A
Year 2 - HRM float attends the parade in Community B
Year 3 - HRM float attends the parade in Community C
Year 4 - HRM float attends the parade in Community A
(Alternating schedule repeats)