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**Item No. 12.1.2**  
**Audit & Finance Standing Committee**  
**December 3, 2018**

**TO:** Chair and Members of Audit and Finance Standing Committee

ORIGINAL SIGNED

**SUBMITTED BY:**

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Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

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Brad Anguish, Director, Transportation and Public Works

**DATE:** November 9, 2018

**SUBJECT:** **2018/19 Winter Funding for Snow Removal Program for Seniors**

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**ORIGIN**

This is a staff initiated report.

**LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

Halifax Regional Municipality Council approved, Dec 11, 2012, that all budget increases are to be presented to the Audit and Finance Standing Committee, prior to submission to Council.

Halifax Charter, section 93(1) - The Council shall make estimates of the sums that are required by the Municipality for the fiscal year; Halifax Charter, section 79(1) - Specifies areas that the Council may expend money required by the Municipality; Halifax Charter, section 35(2)(d)(i) - The CAO can only authorize budgeted expenditures or within the amount determined by Council by policy; Halifax Charter, section 120(6) - The Municipality may maintain other reserve funds for such purposes as the Council may determine; Halifax Regional Municipality policy on Changes to Cost Sharing for Capital Projects - Changes requiring Council approval; and the Halifax Regional Municipality Reserve Policy - No reserve funds will be expended without the CAO's recommendation and Council approval.

Halifax Charter, section 35 (1) The Chief Administrative Officer shall (b) ensure that an annual budget is prepared and submitted to the Council.

Halifax Charter, section 79 (1) The Council may expend money required by the Municipality for:  
(av) a grant or contribution to  
(vii) a registered Canadian charitable organization.

**RECOMMENDATION ON PAGE 2...**

Audit & Finance Standing Committee Terms of Reference, Administrative Order One, Schedule Two, Section 8, which states:

The Audit and Finance Standing Committee shall review and make recommendations on proposals coming to Halifax Regional Council outside of the annual budget or tender process including:

- a) New Programs or services not yet approved or funded;
- b) Programs or services that are being substantially altered;
- c) Proposed changes in any operating or project budget items;
- d) The Commitment of funds where there is insufficient approved budget;
- e) New or increased capital projects not within the approved budget;
- f) Increases in project budget due to cost sharing; and
- g) Creation or modification of reserves and withdrawals not approved in the approved budget.

Administrative Order 2014-015 ADM Respecting Reserve Funding Strategies, Section 5 which states:

The Audit and Finance Standing Committee shall review and recommend to the Council for its consideration all impacts to the Reserves.

Reserve Business Case Q421 General Contingency Reserve.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Audit & Finance Standing Committee recommend that Regional Council:

Approve an increase to the Snow Removal Program for Seniors and Persons with Disabilities (the "Program") in an amount up to \$200,000.00, for a total 2018/19 operating budget of up to \$600,000.00, with funding to be found through operating efficiencies within Transportation and Public Works, or if operating efficiencies cannot be achieved, through the Risk Reserves: General Contingency Reserve, Q421, as per the Financial Implications section of this report.

### **BACKGROUND**

HRM's Senior Snow Removal Program, currently administered under contract to the YMCA, assists seniors (65 years of age or older) and persons with disabilities in lower income households with assistance to clear snow from steps, ramps and walkways (including access to fuel tanks), but not driveways.

Last winter, Halifax Regional Council approved a one-time increase of up to \$200,000 additional spending to be funded from year-end surplus or the General Contingency Reserve. The Senior Snow Removal Program provided service to 526 residents which represented an increase of 74 seniors being funded from the year-end surplus at a total additional cost of \$52,030.67.

### **DISCUSSION**

The 2018/19 Approved Operating Budget includes \$400,000 to fund this program. This amount is sufficient to serve approximately 450 households. During the 2017/18 Operating Budget discussions, TPW identified a \$200,000 increase in year two (2018/19) to bring this program to \$600,000 total funding as an "above the line option" for Council. This option was not approved by Council.

As of November 6, 2018, the program has one vacant spot still available for this winter and additional eligible applicants are being added to a waiting list. The YMCA has advised that approximately 85 of last year's program participants have not yet applied to the program which represents a potential minimum unfunded demand for this program of approximately \$65,000. Therefore, staff is seeking approval from Regional Council to increase funding to the 2018/19 program up to a maximum additional amount of \$200,000, as per past practice.

This program and its funding will be reviewed and brought forward by staff during the 2019/20 and

2020/21 budget discussions scheduled for January 2019.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Operating efficiencies across Transportation and Public Works will be sought to offset the cost, as the 2018/2019 Approved Operating Budget cannot accommodate the increase. Alternately, if sufficient operational savings cannot be achieved specifically within Transportation and Public Works, the increased cost will be offset using: Risk Reserves: General Contingency Reserve, Q421.

#### **Budget Summary, General Contingency Reserve, Q421**

Balance in reserve, October 31, 2018	\$11,677,539
Projected revenue to March 31, 2019	\$ 62,802
Commitments to March 31, 2018	<u>\$( 4,267,922)*</u>
Projected net available balance to March 31, 2019, as at Oct 31	\$ 7,472,419

Pending reports to Audit & Finance/adjustments of commitments:

Reduce commitment for YMCA, included in above commitments to \$1m	\$ 500,000
The LINK Performing Arts	\$( 1,000,000)
Purchase of fire boat	\$( 1,300,000)
Purchase of land	\$( 4,275,000)
Senior snow & ice program per recommendation	<u>\$( 200,000)</u>

Revised projected net available balance, March 31, 2019 \$ 1,197,419

\*Commitments include \$500k for Hospice Grant request, pending approval

Risk Reserve - General Contingency Reserve, Q421, is to receive the annual operating surplus of the Municipality as prescribed by the Provincial Financial Accounting and Reporting Manual, and can be used to fund operating costs, offset deficits, or fund new operating and/or capital expenditures. This is an unbudgeted withdrawal from the reserve.

### **RISK CONSIDERATION**

No risk to TPW budget; if operating efficiencies cannot be achieved, the intention will be to draw from the General Contingency Reserve, Q421.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

None specific to this report. Information about the program can be found on halifax.ca at <https://www.halifax.ca/transportation/winter-operations/senior-snow-removal>

And from the YMCA at <http://www.ymcafx.ca/ymca-programs/ymca-senior-snow-removal/>

### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no environmental implications associated with this report.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

Audit & Finance Committee may recommend that Regional Council not approve the additional funding for the Snow Removal Program for Seniors and Persons with Disabilities. This would result in some eligible program subscribers not being served this year.

**ATTACHMENTS**

N/A

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A copy of this report can be obtained online at [halifax.ca](http://halifax.ca) or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

Report Prepared by: Trevor Harvie, Superintendent – Winter Operations, Transportation and PublicWorks

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