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Item No. 12.1.1
Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee
April 4, 2019

TO: Chair and Members of Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee

-Original Signed-

SUBMITTED BY:

Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: March 25, 2019

SUBJECT: Regional Watersheds Advisory Board - Advertised Skillset

ORIGIN

Requirement in the Public Appointment Policy to advertise for vacancies on Regional Council's advisory boards and committees.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Administrative Order 1, Respecting the Procedures of the Council, Schedule 5 the Terms of Reference for the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee (ESSC), Section 13 identifies that the Regional Watersheds Advisory Board (RWAB) is an advisory committee to ESSC.

The Public Appointment Policy – Governing citizen appointments to HRM agencies, boards, committees and commissions and external boards approved by Halifax Regional Council in August 2011.

Regional Watershed Advisory Board Terms of Reference, Appointments

The Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee is designed to be both the nominating and appointing body for members of the Board, except for the members appointed by each of the Community Councils, for which the Community Council will serve as both the nominating and appointing body. Appointments shall be made in accordance with the Public Appointment Policy adopted by Regional Council.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee direct the Municipal Clerk to advertise for Regional Watersheds Advisory Board members, including the preferred skillset as outlined in the discussion section of this report.

BACKGROUND

The Municipal Clerk's Office (MCO) conducted a survey of board and committee members in 2018 with the aim of hearing from current members on the appointment process, onboarding and training, MCO secretariat services, and recognition and value. At the close of the survey, 51 out of 104 responses were received. In their feedback, respondents indicated that when advertising to fill vacancies through public appointment process there was a lack of clarity over what skills and experience to include in their application.

In reflecting upon the feedback collected from the survey and recent amendments to the Public Appointment Policy on August 14, 2018, which provides for external committees a check-in on the desired committee skillsets with the aim to narrowing skill gaps in current board compositions, staff are piloting a review of internal advisory committee skillsets at the nominating body level. Information and feedback on this pilot will help to inform a larger review of the Public Appointment Policy which is currently underway.

DISCUSSION

The Composition of the Regional Watershed Advisory Board (RWAB) is established in the Terms of Reference adopted by Council:

- Up to five (5) water related professionals at large
- Up to two (2) seats for current faculty members at post-secondary institutions or for research scientists, with doctoral training, working in watershed management
- Up to two (2) representatives of Environmental NGO's or Recreational Organizations
- One (1) Citizen at large may be appointed by each Community Council

Based on the results yielded from the Board and Committee survey, the MCO is piloting consultation with the respective nominating bodies to review the desired skillset for various committees, including RWAB (Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee), and the Western Common Advisory Committee (Halifax and West Community Council), during the 2019 Spring recruitment session. A review of the skillsets will help to reduce skill gaps and ensure that new appointments complement or augment the existing board.

The results of this pilot will be incorporated into an extensive review of the Public Appointment Policy. Staff anticipate that the new policy will be brought before the Executive Standing Committee for consideration sometime this year.

The Municipal Clerk's Office, in consultation with Energy & Environment, have identified the following preferred skillset that reflect the terms of reference of the Board:

- Knowledge of the Halifax Regional Municipality's watersheds
- Understanding of watershed management generally
- Knowledge of water quality measurement and water quality issues
- Awareness of regulations and policies pertaining to water resources
- Some awareness of the municipal governance structure and municipal planning processes

This report recommends that the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee review and provide direction on the preferred skillset, that will be used to augment the composition requirements when recruiting for RWAB applicants.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no budget implications to this report.

RISK CONSIDERATION

Not applicable

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

This report and recommendation was generated based on feedback received from a committee and board member survey.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable

ALTERNATIVES

None

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Regional Watersheds Advisory Board Terms of Reference

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/commcoun/index.php> then choose the appropriate Community Council and meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210, or Fax 902.490.4208.

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Regional Watersheds Advisory Board Terms of Reference

Purpose: As subject matter experts, with respect to watershed management, the Watersheds Advisory Board:

1. Advises the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee on municipal policy projects as required under the HRM Charter, the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy, and Secondary Planning Strategies, and as may be specifically assigned by the Environment & Sustainability Committee;
2. As required by the HRM Charter, the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy, and Secondary Planning Strategies, to fulfil the legislated requirements with respect to municipal development activities;
3. Performs duties as directed by Regional Council on matters described in the Municipal Planning Strategies.

Composition:

- Up to five (5) water related professionals at large
- Up to two (2) seats for current faculty members at post-secondary institutions or for research scientists, with doctoral training, working in watershed management
- Up to two (2) representatives of Environmental NGO's or Recreational Organizations
- One (1) Citizen at large may be appointed by each Community Council

Terms:

To build and maintain technical and procedural expertise, six (6) of the twelve (12) members shall be appointed for a two-year term and the remaining six (6), for a three-year term.

Governance:

On behalf of Regional Council, The Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee shall provide oversight to the Advisory Board Workplan, Terms of Reference, Appointments, and other Governance matters.

Policy Development and Review Projects:

The Halifax Regional Municipality is enabled through the HRM Charter, as an act of Provincial legislation, to be the primary authority for planning within its jurisdiction. The Municipal Planning Strategies enacted by Regional Council are the overarching municipal policy set. The HRM Charter defines the mandate and authority of the municipality in planning matters and municipal planning provides statements of policy to guide the development and management of the municipality including establishing policies to provide a framework for the environmental, social and economic development within the Municipality. All assigned policy projects must comply with these policies and legislative directions.

Officers:

The Board shall have a Chair and Vice Chair to be elected from among its members at the first meeting following composition and at the first meeting of the calendar year. The Vice Chair shall act a Chair in the absence of the Chair. The Chair and Vice Chair may be reappointed for subsequent terms providing they are still members of the Board.

Staff Complement:

The municipality shall supply Board support from the Clerk's Office. The Manager of Energy and Environment shall be the primary staff liaison.

Meetings:

The Board shall meet monthly or as required to conduct the business of the Board. Additional meetings may be scheduled at the discretion of the Chair in consultation with the Clerk's Office.

Quorum:

The quorum for regular meetings shall be in accordance with Section 74 of Administrative Order 1 – Quorum of Committees.

Appointments:

The Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee is designed to be both the nominating and appointing body for members of the Board, except for the members appointed by each of the Community Councils, for which the Community Council will serve as both the nominating and appointing body. Appointments shall be made in accordance with the Public Appointment Policy adopted by Regional Council.

Vacating a Position:

During the term of Office a member may vacate their position on the Board in accordance to the procedures set out in Section 68 of Administrative Order 1 – Vacating a Position on Committee.

Procedure:

Meeting procedures shall be governed by the HRM Administrative Order 1 – Respecting Procedures of Council as it related to Committee Procedures.

Approved February 19, 2013

Amended: May 14, 2013