

# HALIFAX

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**Item No. 5**  
**Halifax Regional Council**  
**May 17, 2022**

**TO:** Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

**SUBMITTED BY:** Original Signed by   
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** April 20, 2022

**SUBJECT:** Safe Workplace Update Q3-Q4 2021-22

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## INFORMATION REPORT

### ORIGIN

On December 3, 2019, Regional Council passed the following motion:

MOVED by Councillor Karsten, seconded by Councillor Nicoll

THAT Halifax Regional Council:

1. Amend its June 19, 2018 resolution to require a semi-annual reporting schedule for Safe Workplace updates (Q1/Q2 and Q3/Q4) rather than quarterly reporting; and
2. That the semi-annual reports include the following information:
  - The type of harassment complaint made under the Policy
  - The method of conflict resolution employed
  - Number of active files

MOTION PUT AND PASSED

### LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

*Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*, subsection 34(1), as follows:

#### **Council and Chief Administrative Officer Relationship**

**34 (1)** The Chief Administrative Officer is the head of the administrative branch of the government of the Municipality and is responsible to the Council for the proper administration of the affairs of the Municipality in accordance with the by-laws of the Municipality and the policies adopted by the Council.

## **BACKGROUND**

On June 19, 2018, Regional Council passed the following motion: MOVED by Deputy Mayor Mason, seconded by Councillor Mancini:

THAT Halifax Regional Council expresses support for the actions and response from the Chief Administrative Officer, June 11, 2018, regarding HRM's commitment to a safe workplace, responding to the Employment Systems Review and the Human Rights Commission report, and;

That the Chief Administrative Officer be directed to provide quarterly public progress reports to Regional Council, subject to the appropriate redaction of personal information on the following:

1. the findings of the external HR consultant regarding HR processes, procedures and implementation;
2. a plan to implement the recommendations of the consultant;
3. results to date and issues that may be identified during implementation of both the ESR review and the external HR consultant reports;
4. open and completed harassment and discrimination complaints involving workplace bullying, sexual harassment and race both through regular HR processes and the newly established hotline, and;
5. with quarterly reports to begin no later than September 2018.

On December 3, 2019, Regional Council amended the June 19, 2018 motion to require a semi-annual reporting schedule and to require the reports to include the type of harassment complaint made under the Policy, the method of conflict resolution employed, and the number of active files (see origin section for wording of the motion).

## **DISCUSSION**

In accordance with Regional Council's direction, the following information provides a semi-annual update for the period from October 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022 on: the Employment Systems Review (ESR) and the external HR consultant review of processes, procedures, and plan to implement the recommendations of the consultant; results to date and issues that may be identified during implementation of both the ESR review and the external HR consultant reports; open and completed harassment and discrimination complaints involving workplace bullying, sexual harassment and race, both through regular HR processes and the CAO's hotline.

### **Employment Systems Review Report**

The Employment Systems Review Report (ESR) is located on HRM's website as follows: [ESR Report](#).

### **External Review**

HRM, through a request for proposals, secured an external consultant to undertake a comprehensive review of HR policies, programs and organizational practices that support a safe, healthy, diverse, inclusive and harassment-free environment. The review also included the mechanisms that support it, such as conflict resolution processes and procedures, communications and messaging to employees, employees/managers' roles/accountability in maintaining a harassment, discrimination-free and respectful workplace, training to support the policy and program, as well as any information, technology, operational or structural changes that might be required.

The report was completed and presented to Regional Council on January 28, 2020. The report is located on HRM's website as follows: [Report](#). An update on the implementation of the recommendations was provided to Regional Council in an Information Report on January 11, 2022.

The report outlines a total of 90 items for review and implementation, 89 of which were accepted by the organization. Sixty-eight (68) of those items are now at 100% completion and, of the 21 items remaining, 13 are at 75% completion or higher. The external review/KPMG report outlines 31 items for review and implementation, 27 of which were accepted by the organization. Twenty (20) of those items are at 100% completion, and the seven remaining items are all above 50% completion.

The recommendations arising from the KPMG and ESR reports closely align with the operational plans of Human Resources. The following list highlights achievements since the last report to Regional Council on October 5, 2021 regarding the recommendations:

- **Employment Equity Committee** – The committee has continued its work toward the three goals identified for year one of this program:

- **Goal 1** - Develop and implement an awareness campaign which focuses on communicating the foundational concepts of Employment Equity, including our position as an organization and dispelling myths and misconceptions regarding Employment Equity.

**Update:** The awareness campaign has been drafted and is in its final review stages.

- **Goal 2** - Finalize the details regarding HRM's organizational stance on designating and preferred positions and postings for those in underrepresented groups.

**Update:** A jurisdictional scan on designated hiring policies has been completed. Work will continue over the next year.

- **Goal 3** - Create a fulsome plan that focuses on increasing diverse representation in leadership positions within HRM, with a focus on the five equity groups.

**Update:** A pilot program is under development for non-union leadership positions. The organization has also developed a Succession Planning Program which will be implemented over the next year.

The development of the Employment Equity Program will continue over the next 3-4 years. The program is now into year two and the Employee Equity Committee will soon develop new goals for the next year.

- **Policy Enhancements** - An inclusive review of all HR policies, including the Workplace Rights Harassment Prevention Policy, is underway. Many policies have been updated and are in the final stages of review. Updates to the following policies have occurred since the last reporting period:

- Deferred Salary Leave Plan Policy
- Flexible Work Arrangements Policy
- Jury Duty Court Leave Policy
- Leave for Government Declared Emergency Policy
- Leave of Absence Policy
- Purchased Leave Plan Policy
- Reservist Leave Policy

- **Website Improvements** - All internal policies and collective agreements have been added to the external facing Halifax.ca website under the Employment section.

- **Community Outreach and Engagement** – HRM's employment-related outreach work continues

with both in-person and virtual events. We now have an extensive database of community partners of whom we engage with regularly. Recent events include YMCA speed Interview Event, ISANS event for youth, Public Sector Job Fair as well as individual meetings with several community partners.

### **Open and completed harassment and discrimination complaints**

As noted previously, the *Workplace Rights Harassment Prevention Policy* supports Halifax Regional Municipality in its commitment to provide a harassment-free environment where all persons are treated with dignity and respect. The Policy addresses harassment based on prohibited grounds of discrimination specified under the *Nova Scotia Human Rights Act*. These grounds consist of age, race, colour, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, physical or mental disability, irrational fear of contracting an illness or disease, ethnic, national or aboriginal origin, family status, marital status, source of income, political belief, affiliation or activity, and an individual's association with another individual or class of individuals having the characteristics of any of the prohibited grounds. This Policy also extends to other forms of harassment not linked to a prohibited ground.

#### **Complaints Filed:**

Between October 1, 2021 and March 31, 2022, there were **thirteen (13)** formal harassment complaints filed under the Workplace Rights Harassment Prevention Policy, as follows:

Personal Harassment - 9

Poison Workplace - 4

**Total – 13**

#### **Complaints Resolved:**

Between October 1, 2021 and March 31, 2022, there were **thirteen (13)** harassment complaints resolved as follows:

Referred back to the business unit - 4

Alternate dispute resolution - 2

No further proceedings under the policy - 7

**Total - 13**

#### **Current Active Complaints:**

Total of active harassment complaints as of March 31, 2022 - **thirteen (13)**.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications associated with this information report.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

No community engagement was required.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

No attachments.

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.

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