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Item No. 8
Halifax Regional Council
August 23, 2022

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

Original Signed by 

SUBMITTED BY:

Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: August 5, 2022

SUBJECT: Annual Workforce Report 2021-22

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

The Executive Standing Committee passed a motion January 22, 2018 to direct staff to provide an annual workforce report to the Executive Standing Committee following fiscal year end which would include information on workforce demographics and trends, staffing and workforce planning, absenteeism, Grievance Activity by Issue/Association as well as an update on HRM's *People Plan* goals including, Leadership, Talent, Culture & Performance, Diversity & Inclusion, Safe Workplaces & Healthy Workforce.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, SNS 2008, c. 39

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

Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) spans approximately 5,500 square kms, and is comprised of diverse urban, suburban and rural communities. As the largest municipal government in Atlantic Canada, Halifax Regional Municipality employs over 3,500 permanent full-time and part-time staff to provide our citizens with a wide range of services.

DISCUSSION

The HRM Annual Workforce Report provides a high-level overview of the HRM workforce at the close of the fiscal year on March 31, 2022. The annual workforce data provides information on how key workforce initiatives are progressing and informs the strategic direction for Human Resources in the upcoming fiscal period.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

No community engagement was required for this report.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Annual Workforce Report Attachment 2021-22

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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Halifax Regional Municipality

Annual Workforce Report

2021/22

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Overview

The intent of the report is to provide Council with a 'state of the union' of the workforce that delivers HRM's services to its citizens. The fiscal year data provided in this report begins on April 1st and concludes on March 31st of the following year. This report will look at data reflective of our workforce demographics as well as activities associated with the 'lifecycle' of our workforce from recruitment to departure.

It is a key objective that HRM's workforce is both reflective of the communities it serves and is inclusive. Where possible, the information presented in the report will focus on indicators which reflect HRM's progress towards making the workforce more diverse, equitable and inclusive.

Distribution and Demographics

Workforce Distribution

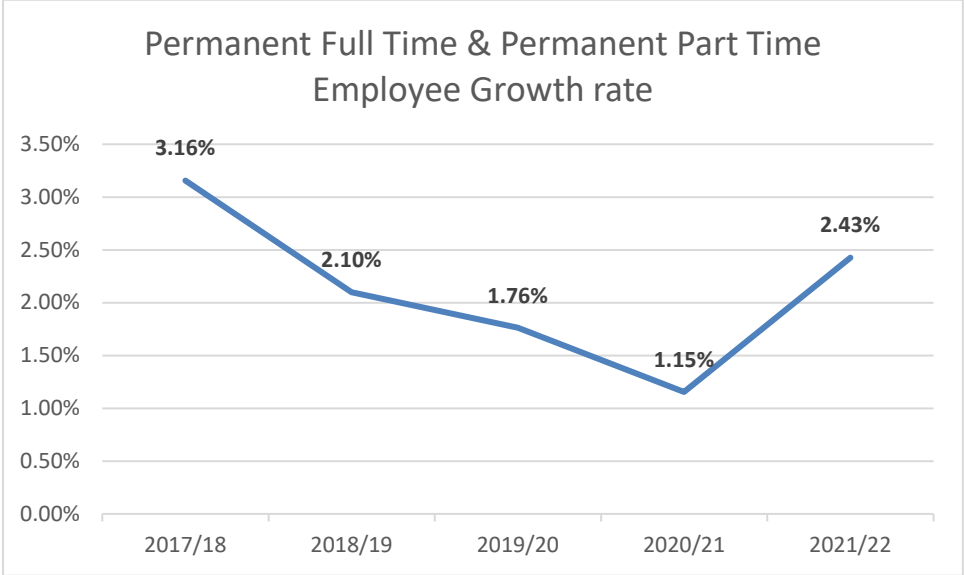
Workforce Distribution	Permanent Full Time and Permanent Part Time	Other*
2017/18	3,334	1,621
2018/19	3,404	1,501
2019/20	3,464	1,645
2020/21	3,504	1,162
2021/22	3,589	1,085

* In terms of workforce distribution, "Other" includes temporary part time employment mainly consisting of recreation programmers, crossing guards, students and seasonal positions. It does not include volunteer firefighters, Halifax Regional Library staff, Halifax Regional Council, inactive employees (those on a leave of absence), and other temporary part time employees within the Halifax Forum and or any staff with Agencies, Boards or Commissions as these staff are not legally employees of HRM.

The total number of permanent full time and part time staff is defined as the total headcount of active employees as of March 31, 2022.

From 2017/18 to 2020/21, the percentage growth in permanent full time and part time staff was trending down. However, in 2021/22, the growth in the number of permanent full time and part time staff was 2.4%, which represents the highest level of growth since 2018/19. Much of this growth is associated with the need for additional staff to deliver services in relation to the growth of development and infrastructure in the Municipality.

An audit of employee information in 2020/21 contributed to the reduction in the number of “Other” employees as well the reduction in hiring some casual positions in Parks and Recreation and Public Works due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Demographics of All Permanent Employees

Workforce Demographics	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Number of Permanent Employees	3,334	3,404	3,464	3,504	3,589
Average Employee Age	46.67	46.03	45.84	45.91	45.72
Average Employee Years of Service	12.3	11.85	11.45	11.46	11.16
Percentage of Male/Female*	71/29	71/29	71/29	70/30	69/31

*This is based on information as recorded in SAP upon hire. SAP only offers male or female options to capture sex assigned at birth which is required for benefit administration.

Demographics by Employee Group

Union Groups	Total Permanent Employees	Male	Female	Average Age	Average Years of Service
ATU 508	822	717	105	48.03	8.50
CUPE 108	264	232	32	47.90	11.71
HRPA	645	426	219	42.68	13.38
IAFF 268	484	438	46	43.99	13.86
Non-Union	712	343	369	46.94	11.21
NSUPE 13	602	258	344	44.67	10.11
NSGEU 107	60	50	10	47.42	9.26
HRM	3,589	2,464	1,125	45.72	11.16

Over the past five years, a downward trend in the overall average age and years of service in our workforce demographics was noticed, as our employees have moved through the employment lifecycle to retirement, with the exception of a slight increase in the average age in 2020/21. This one-year increase may have been a reflection of the economic uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in a delay in retirement decisions.

The trend also indicates that the ratio of female to male identifying employees remains static and less than the overall female to male ratio in the NS working population as reported by Statistics Canada. The largest variance in the female to male ratio is noted in International Association of Firefighters (IAFF), Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) and Canadian Union Of Public Employees (CUPE). We continue to build recruitment and retention strategies to increase representation of females in our workforce. Our operational business units are responding as well, giving preference or designating positions for women in non-traditional roles. The 2021/22 fiscal year marks the first time where female employees make up more than 30% of the workforce since 2015/16. In particular, we have seen an increase in female representation within the CUPE and IAFF workforce and in leadership positions, with 40% female representation.

Recruitment

Recruitment	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Number of Candidates from Employment Equity Groups	3,539	5,587	10,337	7,898	7,894
Total Number of Hires	1,267	1,253	1,426	1,213	1,584
Number of Hires from Employment Equity groups	238	219	399	305	564
Percentage Hired from Employment Equity groups	18.78%	17.47%	27.98%	25.14%	35.60%

The percentage of hires from employment equity groups has increased to almost double what it was five years ago, and we have seen a significant increase (over 10%) in the numbers this past year.

Since June 2017, candidates have had the ability to self-identify as a member of an Employment Equity group at the time of application. The initial options were limited to larger over-arching categories, such as Racially Visible Persons. In April 2019, the self-identification process was further enhanced to allow candidates to provide more specific self-identification information; for example, they could identify as ‘African Nova Scotian’.

The increase in the number of hires from Employment Equity groups is encouraging and supports our continued efforts in the following initiatives to increase diversity, including:

- The on-going implementation and management of the Hiring and Community Engagement Strategy which includes attendance at Job Fairs and Information Sessions.
- Implementation of the Fair Hiring Policy which states that the Halifax Regional Municipality is committed to a fair hiring process that meets the requirements of the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act (NSHRA) to be non-discriminatory and to provide accommodation throughout all assessment and selection activities. The purpose of this hiring policy is to apply the principles of fair hiring to all elements of the recruitment process, ensuring consistent, equitable hiring practices that support a skilled, diverse workforce capable of providing excellent public service. This policy is referenced and adhered to throughout the recruitment process. The

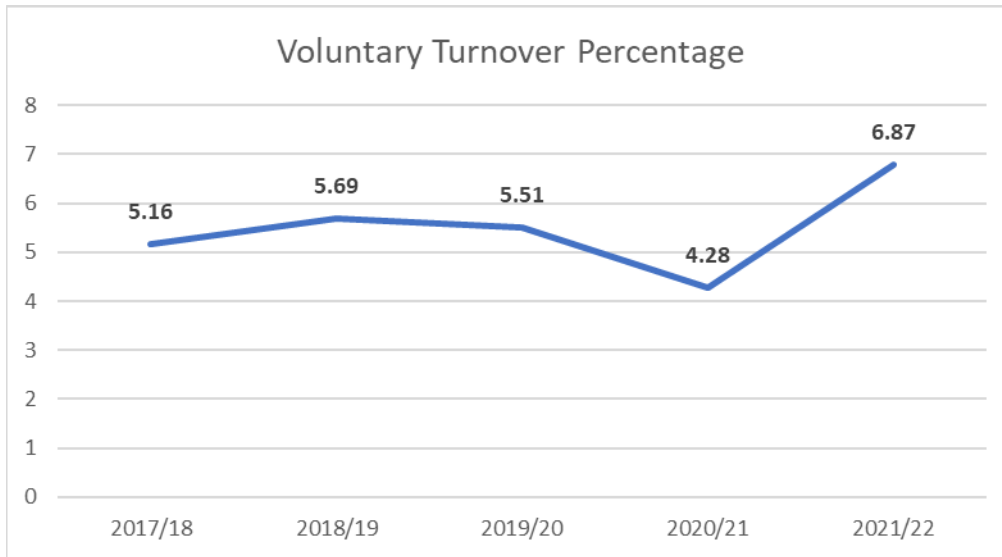
Staffing Plan is reflective of the requirements of the policy and reviewed during every recruitment.

- **Hiring Manager Certification:** This training is provided to every new Manager that is going to participate on an interview panel. This training has been in place for several years and covers all aspects of the recruitment process with a particular focus on the Fair Hiring Policy and best practices. Upon completion of the training, Hiring Managers understand concepts such as a designated versus preferred competition and interview bias. This training ensures more consistent and transparent recruitment processes.

Departures

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Employee Resignations	74	88	78	50	128
Turnover Percentage - Resignations Only	2.22%	2.58%	2.25%	1.43%	3.56%
Employee Retirements	98	106	113	100	119
Turnover Percentage - Retirements Only	2.94%	3.11%	3.26%	2.85%	3.31%
Total Voluntary Turnover Percentage	5.16%	5.69%	5.51%	4.28%	6.87%

*Total Voluntary Turnover Percentage is based on the total number of employee resignations and retirements divided by the total permanent employees headcount as of March 31st each year.



Total Employee Turnover has been relatively stable the three years prior to pandemic, before a dip in 2020/21, followed by a notable increase in 2021/22. The past year had the highest number of retirements and resignations of the past five years. It is also the first time in five years that there are more resignations than retirements, with more than double the number of resignations than in the previous year. As shown above, there was a decrease in turnover during the height of the pandemic which may have been the result of some retirement/resignation decisions being deferred from 2020/21 to 2021/2022. The labour market continues to be highly competitive. According to the Nova Scotia Labour Force Survey, “During the peak of COVID-19, candidates may have been hesitant to make a change; however, after living through the pandemic, they are more optimistic about making a move. As the largest population centre in NS, Halifax accounts for half of the provincial labour force and employment. Approximately half of the jobs gained during the economic recovery of 2021 were in the Halifax region (+11,900 jobs, +5.2%).” Additionally, the overall number of new jobs posted online increased by 54.8% in 2021, compared to 2020, as the Nova Scotian economy recovered.

We will continue to monitor to see if it is a post pandemic bump or the sign of a longer-term trend. An on-line Exit Survey was developed and launched in April 2022. The on-line format will allow departing employees the opportunity to complete the survey. The survey data can provide business unit specific information as well as organizational insight. Improved data will allow us to identify trends earlier and, where applicable, inform action in response to what we have learned.

Other Workforce Data

Absenteeism

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to impact absenteeism in the workplace. Employees who are feeling unwell were advised to stay home and follow the guidance of Public Health. The global

pandemic has changed how sick leave usage is perceived. We recognize the need for employees who are unwell to stay at home and not risk spreading their illness in the workplace.

At the same time, we recognize the need to support employees to remain well at work. The Wellness Strategy was introduced to the organization in October 2021. We continue to engage senior leaders in reviewing health and wellness trends within their business units and, subsequently, considering specific wellness related training and initiatives to support wellbeing of their respective team members. Employee engagement survey data provides further information on how the municipality can support employee wellness. Further to the new strategy, additional programs and initiatives are in development. In collaboration with our Internal Communications team, health and wellness related messaging is regularly distributed highlighting different aspects of the Wellness Strategy and supports available.

Grievance Detail

Grievances Filed	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
ATU Local 508	17	21	19	20	19
CUPE Local 108	33	14	16	12	28
CUPE Local 4814	2	1	1	0	0
NSUPE Local 13	9	9	10	1	4
IAFF Local 268	2	4	0	11	11
HRPA	11	2	9	6	5
Total	74	51	55	50	67
Grievances Resolved					
Resolved in grievance process	40	41	55	72	54
Resolved with third party (mediation, arbitration)	0	1	0	3	11

Over the past five years, the average number of grievances filled annually is 59, with the number of grievances filed in the last three fiscal years below that average. However, there were more grievances in 2021/2022 than the previous three years. One of the drivers of increased grievances in 2021/2022 was the introduction of the Mandatory Vaccine Policy. Most grievances are resolved internally, without requiring third party involvement; however, the use of a third party increased in the last year because many hearings were postponed during the pandemic due to public health restrictions.

A grievance filed in one fiscal year may still be active at the start of the following year. At March 31, 2022, there were 87 total active grievances.

Conclusion

Human Resources collects key data to help inform our strategic initiatives in support of the organization. Some trends and observations of the data for 2020/21 are noted below:

- Efforts to increase the diversity of our workforce are starting to show results. Existing efforts will continue as we work toward further enhancements to reinforce our commitment to building a diverse, equitable and inclusive workforce. The Employment Equity Program and Enhanced Workplace Culture goals in the 2022/23 business plan address these efforts.
- Demographics are not changing significantly year over year. Minor fluctuations in age and years of service as older employees retire and younger people enter the workforce. The male to female employee ratio has not changed significantly. Removing Fire and Police, historically male dominated professions, has little impact. Ratio is still 65.9% male to 34.1% female. We continue to work with internal and external stakeholders to impact positive change in this area.
- Turnover is up relative to our historical trend. Where we have historically been lower than the average, we are now tracking closer to the average in other organizations as reported by the Conference Board of Canada in its most recent report on turnover.

In addition to the initiatives specifically noted, Human Resources has several initiatives in progress aligned with the 2021-25 Strategic Priorities Plan. Two other initiatives of note:

SAP Business Foundations Program

The SAP Business Foundations Program is a multi-year business transformation project undertaken to achieve consistent and automated business processes, reduce manual interventions, and improve data quality, access, and insights. The first phase implementation of the Employee Central system has been completed. The functionality of this system will enable the development of more streamlined business processes to enhance mass employee movements and hiring in Transit, Fire, Public Works and Parks and Recreation. The improved reporting and organizational display will help ensure accurate and complete data for improved management decision making.

Strategic Human Resources Planning

Human Resources is collaborating with Business Units to identify current and future human resource needs to achieve operational goals and strategic plans. Key priorities that support organizational objectives such as employee development and succession planning include:

- **Hiring and Community Engagement Strategy:** This is a multi-year operational Human Resources plan that considers current trends and challenges of recruitment and retention that drives deliverables for the year.
- **Employee Engagement:** An Engagement Survey is administered to the organization on a regular basis by a third-party provider. The results of the survey are provided to the organization and the Business Units. Human Resources supports the organization and Business Units to develop initiatives to respond to the survey results and drive positive change in workplace culture and employee engagement.
- **Employee and Leadership Development:** Programs include the annual Internship Program, Engineers in Training Program, Aspiring Leaders Program, and a catalogue of in-house training programs that can be completed both in person and remotely.
- **Flexible Working Environment:** This policy was developed in 2021 to allow employees the flexibility to work from locations outside of the office and adjust their hours to meet their personal needs. The program was further refined to allow even greater flexibility to work remotely.
- **Succession Planning:** The Succession Planning Process was introduced in 2021 with full implementation in 2022. This program provides structured processes to support long-term strategic plans for employee development and prepares our current employees to fulfill future opportunities.

Definition of Terms

- **FTE (Full Time Equivalent)**
Used for budget purposes to quantify the number of positions approved by the Executive Management Team and Council. The FTE count records only permanent positions (both full time and part time). One FTE is equal to one annual work year as defined by the applicable Collective Agreement and/or Non-Union Terms of Employment.
- **Employee Headcount**
The actual number of employees (people not positions) employed at HRM at a specific point in time.
- **Permanent Employee**
An employee who has been hired in a position on a permanent basis without a predetermined time limit.
- **Temporary Employee**
A temporary employee means an employee who is hired (a) for up to eighteen (18) continuous months in any one temporary position, or (b) for the period for which an

employee is absent from her/his permanent position where the Employer has chosen to cover off that permanent position for a period.

- **Seasonal Employee**

An employee who is hired in a position designated to perform duties on a seasonal basis. The employee is hired with a predetermined termination date.

- **Student Employee**

“Student” is a person who is engaged in a recognized work/study program at a school or university whose course of study requires or permits the student to participate in study related work programs as an integral part of the certificate, degree or diploma, co-op students, students working in seasonal jobs, and students working in jobs where at least some of the funding is obtained from outside agencies.