



P.O. Box 1749  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
B3J 3A5 Canada

**Item No. 15.2.1**  
**Halifax Regional Council**  
**July 9, 2024**

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

Original Signed

**SUBMITTED BY:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Councillor Paul Russell, Chair, Audit and Finance Standing Committee

**DATE:** June 19, 2024

**SUBJECT:** **Microphone Technology & Hearing Hotspot Upgrades - Funding Request**

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**ORIGIN**

June 19, 2024 meeting of Audit and Finance Standing Committee, Item 13.2.2.

**LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

Legislative Authority is outlined in the attached staff report dated April 5, 2024.

Administrative Order One, *Respecting the Procedures of the Council*, Schedule 2 Audit and Finance Standing Committee Terms of Reference, Section 8:

8. The Audit and Finance Standing Committee shall review and make recommendations on proposals coming to the Council outside of the annual budget or tender process including:
  - (b) programs or services that are being substantially altered;
  - (e) new or increased capital projects not within the approved budget;

**RECOMMENDATION**

The Audit and Finance Standing Committee recommends that Halifax Regional Council approve the transfer of \$54,500 including net HST from capital project CI000021 - Public WiFi, to capital project CI200001 – IT Service Management.

## **BACKGROUND**

Audit and Finance Standing Committee received a staff recommendation report dated April 5, 2024 to consider the transfer of \$54,500 including net HST from capital project CI000021 - Public WiFi, to capital project CI200001 – IT Service Management for the replacement of microphone technology and hearing hotspot upgrades.

For further information refer to the attached staff report dated April 5, 2024.

## **DISCUSSION**

Audit and Finance Standing Committee considered the staff report dated April 5, 2024 and approved the recommendation to Halifax Regional Council as outlined in this report.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Financial implications are outlined in the attached staff report dated April 5, 2024.

## **RISK CONSIDERATION**

Risk consideration is outlined in the attached staff report dated April 5, 2024.

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Meetings of the Audit and Finance Standing Committee are open to public attendance and members of the public are invited to address the Standing Committee for up to five (5) minutes during the Public Participation portion of the meeting. Meetings are live webcast on Halifax.ca. The agenda, reports, video, and minutes of the Standing Committee are posted on Halifax.ca.

For further information on Community Engagement refer to the attached staff report dated April 5, 2024.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

Environmental implications are outlined in the staff report dated April 5, 2024.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

Alternatives are outlined in the attached staff report dated April 5, 2024.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1 – Staff recommendation report dated April 5, 2024.

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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: Dorothy Maponga, Legislative Assistant, Municipal Clerk's Office 902.478.2408

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**Item No. 13.2.2**  
**Audit & Finance Standing Committee**  
**June 19, 2024**

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

**-ORIGINAL SIGNED-**

**SUBMITTED BY:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Cathie O'Toole, Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** April 5, 2024

**SUBJECT:** Microphone Technology & Hearing Hotspot Upgrades - Funding Request

**ORIGIN**

This report originates from a need to identify an available funding source for the purchase and upgrade of Microphone Technology for Halifax Hall and to upgrade the Hearing Hotspot solution currently implemented in Council Chambers.

**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 – The Municipality may spend money for municipal purposes in accordance with this section; 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.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Audit and Finance Standing Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Council approve the transfer of \$54,500 including net HST from capital project C1000021 - Public WiFi, to capital project C1200001 – IT Service Management.

**BACKGROUND**

The existing microphone technology solution currently implemented in Halifax Hall is becoming deprecated. The Halifax Hall room in City Hall is used by various Boards and Committees multiple times a week. Critical

to their operation is a tabletop wireless microphone system. The system includes components such as: microphones, access point receivers, wireless desktop base, and controller switch. The existing wireless microphones are estimated at over 8 years old, exceeding the typical lifespan for audio equipment. As a result, the equipment is failing and is no longer supported by the vendor.

Also included in this report is the requirement to replace the Council Chamber Hearing Hotspot technology. This technology is integrated into the audio feed within the Chambers. Users with a hearing disability are able to, either by downloading a free mobile app or using an onsite provided mobile phone, connect directly into the Chamber technology audio feed. The user may use headphones, Bluetooth earbuds or a Bluetooth connection to their hearing aid to listen to the content.

## **DISCUSSION**

On March 21, 2024, the IT Investment Committee provide direction to Information Technology to further investigate and identify a funding alternative to allow for the upgrade of the microphone system in Halifax Hall at an estimated cost of \$48,000 including net HST. To proceed with this upgrade to Halifax Hall, a capital investment is required. The alternate source chosen is from the Public Wi-Fi expansion capital account CI000021. No additional locations to expand Public Wi-Fi have been identified and usage from existing installations has been lower than originally anticipated, negating any need for additions or enhancements to the existing service.

Additionally, the Hearing Hotspot technology currently implemented within Council Chamber is becoming incompatible with newer versions of Apple and Android mobile devices and cannot be upgraded as-is. Therefore, the technology needs to be replaced. Funding in the amount of \$6,500 including net HST is required to complete these necessary upgrades.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The required technology upgrades identified above are estimated to cost \$54,500 including net HST. Funding to be reallocated to capital project CI200001 – IT Service Management.

### **Capital Budget Summary:**

#### **Project Account No. CI200001**

Cumulative Unspent Budget	\$ 389,662
Plus: Approved Increase	<u>\$ 54,500</u>
Balance	\$ 444,162

#### **Project Account No. CI000021**

Cumulative Unspent Budget	\$ 67,520
Less: Unbudgeted withdrawals	<u>(\$ 54,500)</u>
Balance	\$ 13,020

## **RISK CONSIDERATION**

There are no significant risks associated with the recommendations in this Report.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

No environmental implications associated with the recommendations in this Report have been identified.

**ALTERNATIVES**

Audit and Finance Standing Committee could choose not to allow the transfer of capital, resulting in insufficient funding to enable the upgrades to Halifax Hall and Council Chambers audio technology capabilities.

**ATTACHMENTS**

None

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