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Information Item No. 4
Audit & Finance Standing Committee
September 17, 2025

TO: Chair and Members of Audit & Finance Standing Committee

FROM: Brad Anguish, Acting Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: September 11, 2025

SUBJECT: Action Plan - Management of Hiring Practices Audit Update

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

March 20, 2024, Audit and Finance Standing Committee motion (Item No.13.1.1):

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Deagle Gammon, seconded by Councillor Lovelace

THAT the Audit and Finance Standing Committee request the Chief Administrative Officer develop an action plan to address the recommendations from the Management of Hiring Practices Audit and report back to the Audit and Finance Standing Committee in six months.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide a progress update regarding the recommendations from the Management of Hiring Practices Audit.

Of the 17 recommendations, including the 40 associated actions:

- 12 recommendations are complete
- 2 recommendations have been partially completed/in progress
- 3 recommendations are in progress
- 0 have not started

The risks identified are in relation to the significantly high volume of manual administrative tasks required to complete a competition while maintaining quality assurance. The current applicant tracking system (BrassRing) has limited system functionality for all users (candidates, hiring managers and human resources). An additional increase in manual responsibilities on existing team members could potentially increase the risk of human error. In collaboration with Information Technology, Human Resources is in the process of preparing for the configuration and integration of a new module in SAP – SuccessFactors that will replace the current applicant tracking system. At this time, we cannot confirm what efficiencies may be identified as a part of this project.

BACKGROUND

The Municipal Auditor General conducted a Management of Hiring Practices Audit for the period April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2023. This was the first time since the 1996 amalgamation of the former municipal units that hiring practices have been audited. The objective of the audit was to determine if the municipality has consistent, fair, and equitable hiring practices that help establish a diverse and skilled workforce.

The criteria used for the audit were:

1. Policies and processes should adequately address and support fair, equitable, and confidential hiring practices.
2. Recruitment and selection activities should comply with hiring policies and procedures.
3. Key personnel should have adequate training and tools to comply with hiring policies and procedures.
4. Hiring practices should be monitored to ensure consistency in the hiring process.

At the conclusion of the audit, the Municipal Auditor General presented 17 recommendations for improvement in the [report](#) dated March 20, 2024, all of which were accepted by Human Resources.

DISCUSSION

The Human Resources - Talent Acquisition team lead the required work in collaboration with Total Rewards and Employee Relations team members to respond effectively to each of the 17 Auditor General recommendations. The action plan varies in complexity, some required engagement with other internal key partners and/or research to inform policy updates and business process changes. A detailed Action Plan including status of completion or anticipated completion dates is included as *Attachment 1 - Action Plan Response to Hiring Practices Audit*.

The efficiency of hiring processes is an important consideration as we worked towards implementing the recommendations of the Auditor General. The Corporate Planning & Performance team was engaged to collaborate with Human Resources to conduct a Hiring Process Analysis this included reviewing a high-level process map to identify process areas and sub areas in the current state hiring process.

At the conclusion of this review, there were 16 viable process changes that were shared for consideration. 5 have been implemented, 6 are in progress and 5 have not started due to the reliance on technology configuration in the new applicant tracking system. This project is currently in progress and system functionality will be explored.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

No community engagement was required.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Administrative Order One, the Procedures of Council Administrative Order, at Schedule 2, Audit and Finance Standing Committee Terms of Reference

1. (1) The purpose of the Audit and Finance Standing Committee is to provide advice to the Council on matters relating to audit and finance.

(2) The other purposes of the Committee are to:

(a) fulfill the requirements as outlined in Section 48 of the *HRM Charter*; and

(b) assist the Council in meeting its responsibilities by ensuring the adequacy and effectiveness of financial reporting, risk management and internal controls.

[...]

3. The Audit and Finance Standing Committee shall meet at least twice in each fiscal year as an Audit Committee to:

[...]

(b) carry out the responsibilities of the Audit Committee as outlined in subsection 48(2) of the *HRM Charter*, including

[...]

(iv) reviewing matters arising out of any internal audit that require further investigation, and

(v) undertaking other actions determined by the Council to be the duties of the Audit Committee.

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, S.N.S., c. 39

7A The purposes of the Municipality are to

(a) provide good government;

(b) provide services, facilities and other things that, in the opinion of the Council, are necessary or desirable for all or part of the Municipality, and

(c) develop and maintain safe and viable communities.

48 (2) The responsibilities of the audit committee include

(a) a detailed review of the financial statements of the Municipality with the Auditor;

(b) an evaluation of internal control systems and any management letter with the Auditor;

(c) a review of the conduct and adequacy of the audit;

(d) such matters arising out of the audit as may appear to the audit committee to require investigation;

(e) such other matters as may be determined by the Council to be the duties of an audit committee;

(f) any other matters as may be determined by the Council.

50 (1) The Auditor General is responsible for assisting the Council in holding itself and the Municipality's administrators accountable for the quality of stewardship over the public funds and for achievement of value for money in the Municipality's operations.

(2) The Auditor General shall examine, in the manner and to the extent the Auditor General considers necessary, the accounts, procedures and programs of the Municipality and any municipal body of the Municipality, as that term is defined in Section 461 of the Municipal Government Act, or person or body corporate receiving a grant from the Municipality, to evaluate

(a) whether the rules and procedures applied are sufficient to ensure an effective control of sums received and expended, adequate safeguarding and control of public property and appropriate records management;

(b) if money authorized to be spent has been expended with due regard to economy and efficiency;

(c) if money has been spent with proper authorization and according to an appropriation;

(d) if applicable procedures and policies encourage efficient use of resources and discourage waste and inefficiency; and

(e) whether programs, operations and activities have been effective.

(3) In addition to the duties under subsection (2), the Auditor General shall examine those programs, policies and procedures as are requested by the Council to the extent that such examination can be reasonable accommodated.

(4) The Auditor General shall file annually with the Council a work plan of the Auditor General's activities.

(5) The Auditor General shall update the Council on any substantial departure from the work plan.

(6) The Auditor General shall

(a) report annually to the Council in a public meeting;

(b) file such report with the Minister; and

(c) inform the Chief Administrative Officer of the contents of the report in advance of its submission to the Council, except when such report or such contents address issues involving the Chief Administrative Officer.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Action Plan Response to Management of Hiring Practices Audit

Action Plan Response to Management of Hiring Practices Audit

Prepared by:

Human Resources
August 2025



Summary Table

#	Status	Completion Date
1	Complete	December 2024, Policy updates approved effective April 2025
2	Complete	May 2025
3	Complete	March 2025
4	4.1 & 4.2 - Complete 4.3 - In progress	March 2025 September 2025
5	In progress	October 2025
6	Complete	March 2025
7	Complete	March 2025
8	In progress	May 2026
9	9.1, 9.2, 9.3, 9.4 - Complete 9.5 - In progress	July 2025 October 2025
10	In progress	October 2025
11	Complete	March 2025
12	Complete	August 2025
13	Complete	January 2024
14	Complete	June 2024
15	Complete	July 2025
16	Complete	July 2025
17	Complete	April 2025

Recommendation 1

HRM should review and update its hiring policies to address areas that are not consistent with fair and transparent hiring, including:

- ***Monitoring and reporting***
- ***Internal only competitions vs. internal/external competitions vs. use of appointments.***

Management Response

Human Resources will review and update hiring policies to include clear language regarding the use of internal only competitions, internal/external competitions, and appointments, as well as indicating the requirement for reporting hiring decisions not aligned with hiring policies.

Action Plan for Recommendation 1:

- 1.1 Research similar policies in other public sector organizations across Canada to inform updates to the Appointment Policy, Fair Hiring Policy, Hiring Policy to address the issues raised in the audit.
 - **Status:** Completed
Collected best practice research through outreach to other public sector organizations to inform policy updates. Purchased a corporate membership with a HR best practice research organization, like the corporate membership currently used by the IT department, to provide subject matter expertise and support. Updated the following policies and created the guidelines below that were approved by the CAO effective April 1, 2025:
 - [appointments-policy-2025.pdf](#)
 - [fair-hiring-policy-2025.pdf](#)
 - Employment Equity Guidelines
 - Hiring (Non-Union) – Rescinded and relevant information was moved to the Fair Hiring Policy.
- 1.2 Develop a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for reporting hiring decisions that do not align with hiring policies to the Executive Director, Human Resources.
 - **Status:** Completed
Talent Acquisition's competition folder standard operating procedure was updated to outline the requirement of documenting and escalating hiring decisions that do not align with policies to the appropriate HR leadership team member up to and including the ED, HR when required.

Recommendation 2

Human Resources should develop a procedure for using the appointments policy. It should clarify the documentation and rationale required to demonstrate how an appointment aligns with the policy, how individuals are assessed for a position, and how it aligns with employment equity goals.

Management Response

Human Resources will document an SOP to guide the use of the appointment policy. This process will include a requirement for hiring managers to articulate why an appointment is appropriate in this situation and how the appointee was determined to be an appropriate candidate.

Action Plan for Recommendation 2:

Dependency status: Completed - Update to the Appointment Policy.

- 2.1 Develop an SOP for use of the Appointment Policy including any templates, forms, or supporting documents.
 - **Status:** Completed
The Appointments SOP was created and is available on the intranet as an additional resource to the Appointments Policy to provide clarity for Human Resources and leadership when processing an appointment.

Recommendation 3

Human Resources should provide further guidance for hiring managers defining when internal only competitions are acceptable. This should be applied consistently and require support for the decision to be appropriately documented in the hiring file.

Management Response

Human Resources will conduct best practice research of other municipalities to determine the best approach for HRM with respect to the use of internal-only competitions and apply those best practices to the decision-making process.

Action Plan for Recommendation 3

- 3.1 Conduct best practice research of other municipalities and apply the best practices.
 - **Status:** Completed
Collected best practice research through outreach to other public sector organizations. Updated the Fair Hiring Policy, the Competition Folder SOP and added this requirement for discussion and rationale provided and documented when applicable during the recruitment plan discussion between the hiring manager and talent acquisition.

Recommendation 4

Human Resources should develop and implement a procedure to guide hiring managers in screening and assessment criteria prior to assessing applicants, and in appropriately documenting screening rationale.

Management Response

Human Resources will document a standard operating procedure to guide hiring managers in the screening process and the required documentation for screening rationale.

Action Plan for Recommendation 4

- 4.1 Incorporate steps in the Staffing Plan SOP that include a discussion on whether the hiring manager will accept equivalent/education experience applicants into selection process.
 - **Status:** Completed
The Recruitment plan template and discussion addresses the requirements for screening and confirms if and what equivalencies may be considered, and it is listed on the Lighthouse under “Recruitment planning and job posting” and sample recruitment plan.
- 4.2 Develop an SOP to determine and document equivalencies to be applied in the screening process for non-union positions.
 - **Status:** Completed
The Recruitment plan template and Screening SOP for hiring managers addresses the requirements for screening and confirms if and what equivalencies may be considered. The Screening SOP is listed on the Lighthouse under “Selection and Interviews”.
- 4.3 Develop an SOP for applicant screening, considering collective agreement language for unionized positions.
 - **Status:** In progress
Anticipated completion date: September 2025

Recommendation 5

Human Resources should develop and implement a procedure to define requirements and guide hiring managers in completing and documenting pre-employment checks, including credentials, licenses, and references.

Management Response

Human Resources will document an SOP to guide hiring managers to complete required pre-employment checks, including confirmation of credentials, required licenses, and references.

Action Plan for Recommendation 5

- 5.1 Develop an SOP for pre-employment checks for external hires and internal hires.
 - **Status:** In progress, anticipated completion date: October 2025
Reference Check SOP completed in March 2025, SOP addressing other pre-employment checks in progress.

Recommendation 6

Human Resources should develop a process to ensure preferred/designated positions are promoted to appropriate communities and/or groups.

Management Response

Human Resources will document an SOP outlining the process to share information regarding all HRM positions, with particular note to sharing those that are preferred/designated with the relevant communities.

Action Plan for Recommendation 6

- 6.1 Develop an SOP for sharing all HRM job opportunities with employment equity groups/communities and service providers supporting these groups/communities.
- 6.2 Develop an SOP for identifying, sharing, and promoting HRM job opportunities posted as preferred or designated with the associated employment equity groups/communities and service providers supporting these groups/communities.
 - **Status:** Completed
In collaboration and partnership with the Diversity & Inclusion team, a SOP was created outlining the process for both teams and a talent acquisition tracker was created for community outreach postings shared.

Recommendation 7

Human Resources should develop a process to ensure appropriate steps are taken to encourage diverse interview panels for preferred/designated competitions.

Management Response

Human Resources will document an SOP outlining the process and steps to be taken to encourage diverse interview panels for preferred/designated competitions.

Action Plan for Recommendation 7

- 7.1 Develop interview panel member training and promote this training to employees who self-identify as members of an employment equity group.
 - **Status:** Completed
Interview panel training was developed and implemented in August 2024.
- 7.2 Maintain a list of employees who have hiring panel member training, including any self-identification data provided.
 - **Status:** Completed
Completion of training survey includes the option for staff to self-identify upon completion of interview panel training and process created for talent acquisition when identifying interview panel members who chose to self-identify and indicated interest in being an interview panel member implemented in August 2024.
- 7.3 Incorporate steps in the Staffing Plan SOP that include a meaningful discussion on the value of posting a position as preferred/designated.
 - **Status:** Completed
Recruitment plan template for talent acquisition prompts discussion for hiring managers consideration prior to posting regarding preferred or designated postings.
- 7.4 Develop an SOP for creation of hiring panels that incorporate a diversity and inclusion lens in the selection process, encouraging hiring managers to seek diverse interview panels for competitions preferred/designated.
 - **Status:** Completed
The Recruitment plan template for the talent acquisition team prompts discussion for

hiring managers when selecting members of the interview panel to include at least one panel member who self identifies from a designated group/community.

Recommendation 8

Human Resources should identify necessary workforce equity data and develop a plan to collect and maintain it, analyze, and assess trends, and use this information to inform plans to address areas of under-representation in the organization.

Management Response

Human Resources will engage with the Office of Diversity & Inclusion/ANSAIO and the Information Technology business unit to develop a plan to collect the data in accordance with applicable legislation. Understanding that workforce equity data is based on self-identification information that is voluntary for employees to provide and typically collected at a high-level so as not to identify individuals, there are limitations to the use of the data.

Action Plan for Recommendation 8

- 8.1 Review Employee Central system functionality with IT for the collection of self-identification data and use of the data disclaimer with Access & Privacy. Pilot test of collection functionality being conducted Fall 2025.
- 8.2 Develop process for employees who are not connected to HRM systems (e.g., bus operators) to voluntarily submit self-identification information for entry into HRM systems.
- 8.3 Once data is collected, determine plan to maintain, analyze, assess trends, and to address areas of under-representation in the organization.
 - **Status:** In progress, dependency on IT project timelines and vendor to explore system capabilities. Anticipated completion date: May 2026

Recommendation 9

Human Resources should develop and implement a process to monitor hiring activities to ensure they are fair, consistent, and comply with relevant policies and procedures.

Management Response

A quality assurance process will be documented which includes a review of a random sampling of hiring files/hiring activities each month to ensure compliance with relevant policies and procedures.

Action Plan for Recommendation 9

- 9.1 Determine optimal fair hiring criteria and a checklist to assess hiring activities.
 - **Status:** Completed
Quality assurance processes SOP created in July 2025 outlines the purpose, procedure and owner.

- 9.2 Determine method for selecting random files - by business unit, recruiter, employee group, etc.
 - **Status:** Completed
Quality assurance processes SOP created in July 2025 outlines the purpose, procedure and owner.
- 9.3 Determine number of files to be reviewed monthly and by whom.
 - **Status:** Completed
Quality assurance processes SOP created in July 2025 outlines the purpose, procedure and owner.
- 9.4 Determine process for identifying and reporting deficiencies and to whom.
 - **Status:** Completed
Quality assurance processes SOP created in July 2025 outlines the purpose, procedure and owner.
- 9.5 Determine process for loop back to confirm issues have been corrected.
 - **Status:** In progress
Anticipated completion date: September 2025

Hiring Activity Compliance Process – To be implemented in October 2025

Competition Folder Audit Process – Completed May 2025

Hiring File Access Audit Process – Completed August 2025

BrassRing User Access and Monthly User Audit Process – Completed January 2024

Requisition for Job Changes Audit Process – Completed April 2025

Recommendation 10

Human Resources should monitor the appointment process to ensure it complies with the policy. This should include documenting an appropriate rationale for an appointment and including evidence the individual meets the minimum qualifications of the role. This information should be documented and retained in a hiring file.

Management Response

A quality assurance process will be developed which includes review of positions filled by appointment in a specific period to confirm the appointment complies with policy.

Action Plan for Recommendation 10

Dependency: Update to the Appointment Policy and SOP for use of policy is documented.

- 10.1 Consult HR Systems & Reporting to develop quarterly reporting of positions filled via appointment.
- 10.2 Determine process for identifying and reporting deficiencies and to whom.

10.3 Determine process for follow up action on any appointment that does not comply with policy.

- **Status:** In progress
Anticipated completion date: October 2025

Recommendation 11

Human Resources should create and retain hiring files for all positions filled in HRM.

Management Response

Human Resources will document an SOP outlining the process for creating a hiring file for all positions filled in HRM.

Action Plan for Recommendation 11

- 11.1 Develop an SOP that outlines the requirement to enter a staffing requisition for approval for all positions filled. Process should include how to identify extension of incumbent in term positions and how to identify positions that are filled by appointment or other than a competition process.
- **Status:** Completed
Creating a requisition in BrassRing - SOP was created in March 2025 for human resources and hiring managers under the “Recruitment planning and job posting” section of the intranet. The requisition template in BrassRing was updated and creators of a requisition are required to identify the type of posting and hiring reason for all positions.

Recommendation 12

Human Resources should create a record in the online recruitment system for all positions filed in HRM.

Management Response

A quality assurance process will be developed which includes review of all positions filled in a specific period against staffing requisition records in the Applicant Tracking System (currently BrassRing) and addressing gaps as required.

Action Plan for Recommendation 12

- 12.1 Consult HR Systems & Reporting to develop quarterly reporting of positions filled and comparison to records in the applicant tracking system to identify gaps.
- **Status:** Completed
Reports have been created and tested to capture all scenarios as of August 2025.

12.2 Determine process for reporting deficiencies and to whom.

- **Status:** Completed
Job Changes Audit Report - SOP created detailing process for reporting deficiencies in February 2025.
- 12.3 Determine process for follow up action on any hiring process that does not have a corresponding record in ATS to correct deficiencies.
- **Status:** Completed
Job Changes Audit Report - SOP created detailing the process for follow up action to correct deficiencies in February 2025.

Recommendation 13

Human Resources should implement quality control checks on hiring files to ensure all necessary documents are included.

Management Response

Human Resources will document a quality assurance process which includes review of all closed hiring files to ensure complete documentation is in the file and to address gaps in documentation as required.

Action Plan for Recommendation 13

- 13.1 Develop an SOP and a check list that outlines the required documentation in every competition file. Process should include exceptions to the required documentation for positions that are filled by appointment or other than a competition process.
- **Status:** Completed
The Competition Folder – SOP provides detailed instructions for competition folder management including exceptions such as appointments, extension of terms and duty to accommodate. The Quality Assurance SOP provides a detailed process to audit closed competitions folders ensuring compliance.

Recommendation 14

Human Resources should implement a process to ensure hiring managers have adequate training on hiring policies and processes.

Management Response

Human Resources has a current training program and offers it regularly in the corporate training calendar. The Fair Hiring Policy requires leaders to attend this training. It is the responsibility of business unit leadership to ensure they have completed their mandatory training.

A Learning Management software system (LMS) will be implemented (late 2024/25) that allows tracking of this information. Until the LMS is implemented, Talent Recruiters will confirm whether the Hiring Manager has completed the required training as part of the pre-hiring

process. If they have not, the Talent Recruiter will recommend the Hiring Manager attend the next available training date in the Training Calendar. If there is no opportunity for the Hiring Manager to attend in advance of interviews in that hiring process, the Talent Recruiter will offer a one-time, one-on-one, condensed training session. This is not intended as a substitute for Hiring Managers to attend the full training session. Interim process can be implemented based on current training records tracking. This may need to be updated when the LMS goes live and/or when there are changes to the training delivery medium.

Action Plan for Recommendation 14

- 14.1 Consult HR Systems & Reporting to develop quarterly reporting of hiring managers who have not completed Hiring Manager Certification (HMC) training to be provided by Talent Acquisition team.
- **Status:** Completed
Manual reporting in place and will be updated once new systems are online.
Anticipated completion date: Manual reporting process completed June 2024. System updates anticipated May 2026.
- 14.2 Create an SOP for regular reporting of outstanding HMC training and to whom.
- **Status:** Completed
Manual process in place – reporting to Executive Directors; will be updated once new systems come online.
Anticipated completion date: Manual reporting process completed June 2024. System update anticipated May 2026.
- 14.3 Determine process for follow up action on HMC training completed within a specified time after reporting.
- **Status:** Completed
Manual process in place, reporting to Executive Directors, will be updated once new systems come online. The recruitment plan template prompts talent acquisition to verify completion status of training for hiring managers.
Anticipated completion date: Manual reporting process completed June 2024. System update anticipated May 2026.

Recommendation 15

Human Resources should implement a process to regularly monitor access to hiring files and the online hiring system and limit it to only those who require it for their jobs.

Management Response

Human Resources will document an SOP, in consultation with IT and Corporate Security, outlining the process for notification to these groups to disable access to electronic and hard copy files, and implement a regular review process to confirm access has been removed as required. Employee Central system limitations and/or workflow consideration may be a factor, as well as responsiveness of IT. Corporate Security resources to the proposed process

changes.

Action Plan for Recommendation 15

- 15.1 Engage with HR Systems & Reporting and IT Service Desk to document current state process and identify opportunities for improvement/efficiencies.
- **Status:** Completed
Quality assurance processes SOP created in July 2025 outlines the purpose, procedure and owner.
- 15.2 Create an SOP for quarterly review of access to electronic hiring files, including verification of follow up action to disable access.
- **Status:** Completed
Quality assurance processes SOP created in July 2025 outlines the purpose, procedure and owner.
- 15.3 Engage with Corporate Security to document current state process and identify opportunities for improvement/efficiencies.
- Status:** Completed
Quality assurance processes SOP created in July 2025 outlines the purpose, procedure and owner.
- 15.4 Create an SOP for quarterly review of access to physical hiring files, including verification of follow up action to disable access.
- **Status:** Completed
Quality assurance processes SOP created in July 2025 outlines the purpose, procedure and owner.

Recommendation 16

Human Resources should review access roles in the online hiring system to determine if permissions are appropriate. If they are not appropriate, they should be updated.

Management Response

Human Resources will document an SOP, in consultation with the IT business unit, outlining the process for a regular review of hiring system access and updating role-based permissions as required.

Action Plan for Recommendation 16

- 16.1 Engage with IT to review current role-based permissions and update position access profiles as required.
- **Status:** Completed
Completed process with IT to review role-based permissions monthly and update access accordingly in March 2025.
- 16.2 Create an SOP for quarterly review of system access, including verification of follow up action to disable access.
- **Status:** Completed

Quality assurance processes SOP created in July 2025 outlines the purpose, procedure and owner.

Recommendation 17

Human Resources should ensure all hiring managers and interview panelists complete the confidentiality and conflict of interest form. These should be retained in the hiring file.

Management Response

Human Resources will document an SOP outlining the requirement for hiring managers and interview panel members to complete and sign the confidentiality and conflict of interest form each time they participate in a hiring panel, and to retain these in the hiring file.

Action Plan for Recommendation 17

- 17.1 Incorporate steps in the Staffing Plan SOP that include a discussion on the requirement for the hiring manager and each panel member to sign the confidentiality and conflict of interest form for every hiring process/competition file.
- **Status:** Complete
Incorporated language into Recruitment plan template prompting discussion regarding requirement. Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality – SOP and templates for standard and mass hire competitions created. Competition folder – SOP addresses requirements for housing conflict of interest forms.