



**WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
October 2, 2025**

PRESENT: Doreen Redmond, Chair
Michelle Benson, Vice Chair
Councillor Nancy Hartling
Councillor Virginia Hinch
Devi Ayyagari
Natalie Borden
Mairi Graham
Rhiannon Makohoniuk

REGRETS: Cheryl Copage-Gehue
Delainey McCarron
Sherrill Murphy

STAFF: Amy Brierley, Social Policy Strategist
Carla John, Advisor Diversity & Inclusion
Raine Sparling, Coordinator 2SLGBTQ+ /Gender Equity Community
Engagement and Research
Elizabeth Macdonald, Legislative Assistant

The following does not represent a verbatim record of the proceedings of this meeting.

The agenda, reports, supporting documents, and information items circulated are online at halifax.ca.

1. CALL TO ORDER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:34 p.m. and acknowledged that the meeting took place in the traditional and ancestral territory of the Mi'kmaq people, and that we are all treaty people.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – September 4, 2025

Michelle Benson asked that the minutes reflect the Committee's request for data in the 211 Nova Scotia Quarterly Impact Report under Item 7.3.1. As well, add 'and hunger' to the second bullet after homelessness under Item 9.1.1.

MOVED by Natalie Borden, seconded by Councillor Hinch

THAT the minutes of September 4, 2025 be approved as amended.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

3. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS AND APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS

Additions: None

Deletions: None

MOVED by Councillor Hartling, seconded by Michelle Benson

THAT the agenda be approved as presented.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES – NONE

5. CALL FOR DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTERESTS – NONE

6. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS – NONE

7. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS

7.1 Correspondence – None

7.2 Petitions – None

7.3 Presentation – None

8. INFORMATION ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD – NONE

9. REPORTS/DISCUSSION

9.1 STAFF

9.1.1 Halifax Transit Core Service Plan 2025-2027 and Strategic Roadmap Engagement

The following was before the Committee:

- Staff presentation dated October 2, 2025

Paul Maher, Project Manager, Halifax Transit Services gave a presentation for the purpose of receiving feedback and responded to questions of clarification from the Committee.

The Committee noted the following:

- Inconsistencies between decreased service levels on weekends despite increased ridership;

- Efforts and challenges in providing transit services to low density areas;
- The need to guarantee that buses arrive on schedule;
- Safety concerns for women and gender diverse individuals during service delays;
- The safety of women and gender diverse individuals when riding buses at night;
- Barriers to reporting incidents occurring on buses including the lack of awareness that incidents can be reported to 311;
- The possibility of adding signage indicating that issues and incidents can be reported to 311 on all buses;
- The importance of breaking down the silos and ensuring collaboration among the departments of Halifax Transit;
- Accessibility issues with bus passengers needing to squeeze behind the yellow near the driver;
- Halifax Transit remaining open to approaching challenges differently;
- Concerns with overcrowding on express routes;
- Residents moving outside of the downtown core due to housing affordability and the subsequent impacts to ridership on weekends;
- Holding future pop-up engagements on university campuses;
- Challenges faced by student populations when accessing and using transit;
- Misinformation being provided to discharged hospital patients regarding the ability to use transit services to get to future appointments;
- Methods to engage and appeal to residents within the urban service boundary who do not currently use transit;
- Increasing transit use to get cars off the road and lower traffic congestion;
- The benefits of the former Route 52 that provided service from Morris Street to Bayers Lake;
- The need to ensure safety is an integral component of the Halifax Transit Core Services Plan;
- The possibility of providing free transit services which would require support from all levels of government;
- The importance of exploring new ways to tackling longstanding issues;
- Issues with providing bus passes to high school students that live in areas where they cannot access transit; and
- The benefits of moving to a model where transit engagement is conducted more frequently.

Maier noted they would share data with the Committee regarding the rate of violence incidents occurring on Halifax Transit buses.

Reference was made to the presentation delivered at the October 1, 2025 Board of Police Commissioners meeting regarding violence occurring on Halifax Transit buses which would be provided to the Committee for information.

9.1.2 Overview of the Municipal Budget Process

The following was before the Committee:

- Staff presentation dated October 2, 2025

Tyler Higgins, Manager, Budget & Reserves gave a presentation.

Higgins and Dave Harley, Director of Financial Management and Operations responded to questions of clarification from the Committee.

9.2 COMMITTEE MEMBERS

9.2.1 Regional Council Update

Councillor Hinch spoke to the two Halifax Regional Council meetings held in September and noted the upcoming public hearing on Dartmouth Cove Water Lots at the October 7, 2025 Halifax Regional Council meeting. Hinch spoke to the 2026/27 municipal budget, 2025/26 Affordable Housing Grant Program

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(AHGP) Funding and the development of a Park Stewardship Program. Hinch responded to questions of clarification from the Committee.

10. ADDED ITEMS – NONE

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – November 6, 2025

12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:08 p.m.

Elizabeth Macdonald
Legislative Assistant