



**HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES
January 27, 2016**

REVISED

PRESENT: Councillor Linda Mosher, Chair
Mayor Mike Savage
Deputy Mayor Matt Whitman
Councillors: Barry Dalrymple
David Hendsbee
Bill Karsten
Lorelei Nicoll
Gloria McCluskey
Waye Mason
Jennifer Watts
Russell Walker
Stephen Adams
Reg Rankin
Steve Craig
Tim Outhit

REGRETS: Councillor Brad Johns

STAFF: Ms. Amanda Whitewood, Chief Financial Officer
Ms. Karen Brown, Municipal Solicitor
Ms. Sherryll Murphy, Deputy Municipal Clerk
Mr. Andrew Reid, Legislative Assistant

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

A video recording of this meeting is available: http://archive.isiglobal.ca/vod/halifax/archive_2016-01-27_live.mp4.html

The agenda, supporting documents, and information items circulated to Council are available online: <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/160127cow-agenda.php>

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m., and recessed at 10:56 a.m. and reconvened at 11:05 a.m. Committee of the Whole recessed at 12:23 p.m. and reconvened at 12:29 p.m. Committee of the Whole adjourned at 1:24 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Councillor Mosher called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – NONE

Councillor Watts requested an update on undeveloped park land, specifically larger parks such as Blue Mountain Birch Cove Park. She questioned if this matter would be coming forward in a separate report, as she did not see it in the undeveloped park land report circulated at the previous Committee of the Whole session.

The Chair questioned if a motion would be required. The Deputy Clerk responded that the request would be fulfilled through the budget follow up process. Councillor Rankin requested this be done by February 15th, 2016.

3. Operations Support
(i) Presentation
(ii) Public Submission
(iii) Debate

The following information was before Committee of the Whole:

- A staff recommendation report dated January 18, 2016 from the director of Operations Support with attached staff presentation dated January 27, 2016

Ms. Jane Fraser, Director Operations Support gave a presentation regarding the Proposed 2016/17 Operations Support Business Unit Budget and Business Plan. She gave an overview of the Unit's support service areas, noting activities and updates such as the Cogswell Interchange Redevelopment, St. Pat's High School, and Enterprise Asset Management. Ms. Fraser noted the 2016-17 operating budget target was down 1.2% from the previous year and the Business Unit was on track to meet 2015 targets. She gave a high level description of the budget projections by service area and described 2016/17 budget cost reductions and initiatives.

The Chair thanked Ms. Fraser for her presentation and called for any members of the public to speak on the Operations Support Budget. As there were no speakers, public participation closed and the Chair opened the floor for debate.

Mayor Savage entered at 9:55 a.m.

MOVED by Councillor Rankin, seconded by Councillor Nicoll

THAT the Committee of the Whole direct staff to proceed to prepare the 2016/2017 Operations Support Business Unit Budget and Business Plan as proposed in the accompanying presentation, incorporating additional direction provided by motion of Committee of the Whole for inclusion in the proposed HRM 16/17 Budget and Business Plan documents.

Committee of the Whole discussed the 2016/17 budget as follows, with Ms. Fraser responding to questions:

- The Chair clarified a motion would be required to bring forward Information Item 1 to the next budget meeting. Councillors requested the Information Item regarding Shape your City budget results be circulated to Council sooner during budget deliberations.

- In response to Councillor Rankin's comment regarding the capital budget that was presented in December 2015, she stated the solid waste contract had not been concluded at that time so staff's capital budget was conservative. She noted staff is to return with an update of all changes that have occurred since and Council will see certain reserve requirements will not be needed for the 2016/17 capital budget. Regarding the Blue Mountain Birch Cove lands, she stated work is ongoing with an independent facilitator and a Council report is forthcoming. Regarding the acquisition of those lands, she highlighted that the direction given by Council was to look at a number of options such as cash or land swaps, which are to be included in the report.
- Mayor Savage requested that more public consultation occur regarding the Cogswell Interchange project. Ms. Fraser noted a large planning component of the Cogswell Interchange lands will begin and public consultation will occur subsequent to preliminary work on roads and layout. Councillor Watts suggested a general public presentation or open house occur to update the public.
- Regarding environmental impact of the corporate fleet, Ms. Fraser noted the corporate fleet was now measuring greenhouse gas emissions, and enforces idle free policy. Regarding rideshare, she noted the Business Unit was examining opportunities. She also highlighted the importance of Enterprise Asset Management (EAM) in understanding staff routing and destinations.
- Regarding 311 email response times, she stated that emails are non-urgent under normal circumstances but also an overall analysis regarding citizens' wants for 311 is required. Councillor Watts requested that response times be increased for emails. Ms. Fraser also responded that 311 response time standards of 24-48 hours were in place for emails. She noted that management is looking at options for delivering service for more complex calls in terms of training and coordination of the call centre with other business units.
- Quarterly real estate updates at Burnside Park will be relayed to Council as information.
- Ms. Fraser advised that staff was examining the efficiency of the parking garage at Alderney Gate in terms of the manned kiosk.
- Regarding the status of the community facility master plan, she stated that the plan was through Parks and Recreation, but was supported by Operations in terms of the cost of buildings. She stated that more detailed information of accessibility projects could be circulated as requested.
- Lease agreements are various with 200,000 sq. ft. of office space currently leased. Ms. Fraser noted that the organization was more often landowner than tenant, as it owned 500,000 sq. ft. She noted the corporate accommodations strategy examined office space requirements.
- Efficiency of the corporate fleet was being examined by staff through inventory management and determining costs of providing a service by the organization or through the private sector. She noted potential savings in this area.
- Ms. Fraser responded to inquiries regarding Alderney Gate renovations. She noted that she would follow up on public washroom access on the first floor. The citizen contact centre renovations would occur over May and June 2016. She noted that the budget for the main lobby and pedway refresh would likely be allocated for 2017/18, with the lobby being done prior to the pedway.
- Regarding the EAM project, she noted it would begin deploying with Halifax Water by the end of March 2016, with the full system up and running in eighteen months. Ms. Fraser noted pavement management was positioned to be up and running by 2017. She noted that EAM has the capability to log repairs to be made on all types of assets and that HRM personnel are encouraged to do so.
- Regarding the cost of the Kinsman Sackville splash pad, Ms. Fraser stated that unique design features were incorporated and staff was working to reduce costs.

MOVED by Councillor Watts, seconded by Councillor Craig

THAT information Item 1 be added to the February 2, 2016 Council agenda.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

- Regarding disposal of assets and the increase over the next three years, Ms. Fraser identified those assets as surplus assets in accordance with Administrative Order 50.

The question was called for on the main motion.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Committee of the Whole recessed at 10:56 a.m. and reconvened at 11:05 a.m.

4. Transportation and Public Works

- (i) Presentation**
- (ii) Public Submission**
- (iii) Debate**

The following information was before Committee of the Whole:

- A staff recommendation report dated January 27, 2016 from the director of Transportation and Public Works and presentation dated January 27, 2016
- A letter from Mr. Norm Collins dated January 26, 2016

Mr. Bruce Zvaniga, Director Transportation and Public Works, gave a presentation regarding the Proposed 2016/17 Transportation and Public Works Business Unit Budget and Business Plan. He described his department's service areas and costs in terms of road and asset-related design, operations, traffic management, and solid waste resources. He noted that reduction in residential waste did not necessarily mean reduction in cost of disposal and that this was a concern. Regarding statistics on pedestrian safety, he noted that there had been a decrease in incidents in 2015, but continued vigilance was required. Mr. Zvaniga advised of an overall increase of \$9 million to the Business Unit's budget, with \$5.6 million towards winter service contracts. He noted that the 2016/17 budget did not include improvements to green cart and blue bag service. Regarding full-time employees, he noted 28 vacancies, the majority being in Road Operations.

The Chair called for any members of the public who wished to provide a submission to come forward.

Mr. Norm Collins commented on the Pedestrian Safety Action Plan. He was concerned that initiatives detailed for crosswalk safety were repetitive on the past budget year's program. Mr. Collins stated the majority of collisions were at signalized intersections and recommended that the budget include painting zebra crosswalks at signalized intersections. He noted a crosswalk safety education brochure he had circulated to Council and requested a similar brochure be printed and distributed to employees and through schools.

Mr. Ben Wedge, on behalf of the Halifax Cycling Coalition, thanked Council for their support of the MacDonald bridge approach ramp and a number of recently implemented bike lanes. He requested Council shift 2.5% of the paving budget to bicycle lanes with 50% in the Regional Centre and 50% in other areas of the Municipality. He noted the importance of connectivity for bike lanes in terms of increasing participation and safety. He stated that 50% of bicycle lanes outside the Centre may connect suburban areas to recreational opportunities and enhance connectivity in places such as Burnside Industrial Park. Mr. Wedge noted the pay off in investing in bicycle lanes in terms of the reduction of wear and tear over the long term. He stated that bicycle lanes would further reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Chair requested Mr. Wedge email a link of his report to the Clerk's Office.

Mr. Ben Buckwold, Bicycle Nova Scotia, complimented the increased amount of investments in bicycling as per the Active Transportation Priorities Plan. He highlighted that further investment would enable people who would like to bicycle but are not able to make the choice. He stated the need for connectivity and for facilities to enable all people to bike. Mr. Buckwold stated that any increase to the budget in these respects would be of benefit.

The Chair thanked the presenters and called three times for any other members of the public to come forward. As no further speakers came forward, participation was closed.

MOVED by Councillor McCluskey, seconded by Councillor Nicoll

THAT the Committee of the Whole direct staff to proceed to prepare the 2016/2017 Transportation and Public Works Budget and Business Plan as proposed in the accompanying presentation, incorporating additional direction provided by motion of Committee of the Whole for inclusion in the proposed HRM 16/17 Budget and Business Plan documents.

Committee of the Whole discussed the proposed budget plan and Mr. Zvaniga responded to the following questions.

- Regarding maintenance activities such as pothole repairs, the EAM program will eventually provide more detail on where maintenance is being performed and repeated. He highlighted if investment in streets is carried out at the proper times, there will be less need for pothole maintenance. Regarding demand for new sidewalks, he indicated an increase has not been seen at this point.
- In respect to increasing cycling investment over the next year instead of street recapitalization as suggested by the Halifax Cycling Coalition, Mr. Zvaniga responded that the challenge was to undertake improvements at the right point in time in terms of the age of existing infrastructure. He highlighted that the pavement management system was not yet in place and if opportunities to repair streets is missed at a certain point, the cost would be greater. Although he agreed with the concept, staff would need to review the request and return in a year.
- Regarding the Macdonald Bridge active transportation approach, Mr. David Hubley, Manager Project Planning and Design, noted staff would return before the end of Spring for an update.
- Concerning the Urban Forest Master Plan, Mr. Zvaniga noted that the operating budget included \$1 million, with \$650,000 in planting trees and \$350,000 for tree pruning.

Councillor Karsten noted Slide 24 of the staff presentation regarding extension of the green cart service. He indicated that he had requested a report at the November 10, 2015 Regional Council meeting.

MOVED by Councillor Karsten, seconded by Councillor that the green cart service be extended for the month of September, which would require an additional budget allotment.

Ms. Whitewood commented that the previous direction given by Council on the budget was to return with a balanced budget that would not impact the average tax bill. She highlighted that the motion on the floor would increase the budget gap an additional \$1.7 million over the existing \$18.7 million gap.

The Committee of the Whole recessed at 12:23 p.m. and reconvened at 12:29 p.m.

The Committee of the Whole agreed to a friendly amendment to add the matter to the parking lot and hold discussion until that time. The motion now reads:

THAT Committee of the Whole add to the parking lot consideration of extension of the green cart service for the month of September, which would require an additional budget allotment.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Committee of the Whole continued discussion on the main motion.

- Regarding funds allocated to fulfill the Traffic Calming policy, Mr. Zvaniga responded that there was \$50,000 in capital. He noted that staff was also examining opportunities for enhanced safety and a position of transportation and safety engineer had recently been posted. He stated that a

safety improvement such as traffic calming was a temporary solution and the longer term solution would be to create a complete streets approach in coordination with Planning and Development.

Councillor Outhit commented that road recapitalization and maintenance should be combined to enhance design.

- Mr. Zvaniga responded regarding street lane painting delays that a pavement markings report was due back and would be distributed before the budgetary decision was made. He outlined that the report would address questions surrounding timelines and technologies. He noted staff's goal is to be prepared by March to begin pavement markings in May.
- Regarding streetlight burnouts, he responded that the situation would improve following LED implementation. He noted he would return with details on enabling staff to address streetlight outages outside of business hours.
- On concern about tree trimming, he noted that staff has received approval to fill a new role to aid in response.
- Regarding comments made during public participation about zebra markings at signalized intersections, Mr. Zvaniga stated that the safety engineer would provide assistance in this matter and staff would be returning with the pedestrian safety action plan.

Councillor Craig commented on bridge paths over the Highway 101, stating that standards were inappropriate for pedestrians. He questioned if the bridge was solely a provincial responsibility and to what extent the Municipality had involvement to improve the situation. Mr. David Hubley clarified that a new agreement was being drafted to address those types of structures. He noted the length of the process and that a draft agreement had been prepared. Regarding what assistance Council can provide to assistance with completion, Mr. Hubley responded that staff would take the matter back to see how it could be expedited.

Mayor Savage noted the majority of budget increases had been in road operations, including snow and ice, and not expenditures. He noted other allocations including road capitalization and funds for the MacDonald bridge approach.

Councillor Hendsbee requested the LED implementation schedule for District 2. He also questioned the status of the streetlights on private roads report request and the Porter's Lake active transportation plan, noting new opportunities. Councillor Hendsbee requested budget information be shared with regional trails groups.

Mr. Zvaniga responded that there were a number of issues with private road in terms of streetlights and winter maintenance. Mr. Taso Koutroulakis, Manager Traffic Management, noted an information report on private roads had been submitted to the Transportation Standing Committee. He highlighted that Nova Scotia Power was creating an inventory of streetlights on private roads and staff would be enabled once that was complete. Regarding LED implementation, staff would share the vendor's schedule with Council within the next few weeks. Mr. David Hubley responded regarding the Porter's Lake active transportation plan that staff would need to follow up with an update. He also noted that information has been shared with trails groups and it would be part of the final budget.

MOVED by Councillor Adams, seconded by Councillor Walker

THAT the Committee of the Whole add to the parking lot consideration of extension of the blue bag service, which would require an additional budget allotment.

Councillor Karsten stated it was unfair that residents were not receiving green bag collection in Eastern Passage because of the tax rate.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Councillor Adams noted that the streetlights on private roads report should have been sent to Regional Council. On a point of order, the Mayor stated that reports originating in Council should return to Council.

Councillor Watts questioned next steps for the active transportation staffing and whether the senior snow removal program should be added to the parking lot. She commented on crosswalk safety education and whether it could be facilitated through the website. She noted work to be done in maintaining waste receptacles in parks over the winter. Councillor Watts requested details on regional trails' staffing plan.

Mr. Zvaniga noted that trails and active transportation were combined.

MOVED by Councillor Watts, seconded by Councillor Mason

THAT the Committee of the Whole request an information report on staffing direction with the Active Transportation unit.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Mr. Zvaniga noted that there had been no budget increase to the senior snow removal program. He stated that direction might be given to coordinate with the Province in regards to delivery of social programs and opportunities. Regarding education of crosswalks, he stated awareness was key, but at this time he was uncertain the focus should be solely on brochures. Regarding waste receptacles, Mr. Zvaniga noted he would return with details.

MOVED by Councillor Hendsbee, seconded by Councillor Karsten

THAT the Committee of the Whole add to the parking lot \$100,000 in additional funding for the Senior Snow Removal Program.

Councillor Watts requested a friendly amendment be made to the motion so that it would read as follows. The Committee agreed to the amendment.

THAT the motion be amended to add the following: staff prepare a report, prior to the final budget, which considers options to support the Senior Snow Removal Program.

The motion now reads:

THAT the Committee of the Whole add to the parking lot \$100,000 in additional funding for the Senior Snow Removal Program and further that staff prepare a report, prior to the final budget, which considers options to support the Senior Snow Removal Program.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Councillor Mason requested a fuller report as currently service is only provided to homeowners. Mayor Savage requested the Committee of the Whole maintain a level of budget discipline. The Chair noted opportunities for volunteers to participate in snow removal. Mr. Zvaniga stated a full program analysis would not be prepared in advance of the final budget decision and six months would be required for data collection and liaison with province.

The Chair recognized that a report relative to the \$100,000 in additional funding and including options to support the Seniors Snow Removal Program would not be considered prior to approval of the budget.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:24 p.m.

Kevin Arjoon
Municipal Clerk