



**BUDGET COMMITTEE
(STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE ON BUDGET)
MINUTES
January 24, 2018**

PRESENT: Councillor Bill Karsten, Chair
Mayor Mike Savage
Deputy Mayor Wayne Mason
Councillors: Steve Streach
David Hendsbee
Lorelei Nicoll
Sam Austin
Tony Mancini
Shawn Cleary
Russell Walker
Stephen Adams
Richard Zurawski
Matt Whitman
Lisa Blackburn
Tim Outhit

REGRETS: Councillors: Lindell Smith
Steve Craig

STAFF: Jerry Blackwood, Acting Director of Finance & Asset Management/CFO
John Traves, Municipal Solicitor
Sherrill Murphy, Deputy Clerk
Krista Vining, Legislative Assistant
Sharon Chase, Legislative Assistant

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

The agenda, reports, supporting documents, information items circulated, and video (if available) are online at halifax.ca.

The meeting was called to order at 9:33 a.m., and recessed at 12:31 p.m. Budget Committee reconvened at 1:18 p.m., and recessed at 2:41 p.m. Budget Committee reconvened at 2:55 p.m. and adjourned at 4:26 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 9:33 a.m.

The following was before the Committee:

- A handout entitled Budget Adjustment List Summary dated January 24, 2018

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – NONE

3. TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC WORKS

The following was before the Committee:

- A staff recommendation report dated January 16, 2018 with attached Transportation & Public Works 2018/19 Multi-year Budget and Business Plan presentation

Bruce Zvaniga, Director of Transportation & Public Works, provided introductory remarks and presented the draft 2018/19 Multi-year Transportation & Public Works Budget and Business Plan.

Councillor Karsten called three times for members of the public to address Budget Committee on any aspect of the budget. There were no speakers present.

MOVED by Councillor Outhit, seconded by Councillor Nicoll

THAT Budget Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Council direct staff to proceed to prepare the 2018/19 Multi-year Transportation & Public Works Budget and Business Plan, as proposed in the accompanying presentation and consistent with the preliminary fiscal direction.

Staff responded to various questions raised by the Committee.

MOVED by Councillor Austin, seconded by Councillor Mancini

THAT Budget Committee direct a \$200,000 increase to the Transportation & Public Works budget for the Urban Forest Master Plan be added to the Parking Lot for future consideration in the 2018/2019 Budget.

Following a brief discussion, the **MOTION TO ADD TO THE PARKING LOT WAS PUT AND DEFEATED.**

Discussion continued on the main motion, with staff responding to questions.

The Committee requested that further information be provided by staff on the following matters:

- details respecting status of the bus stop on Main Avenue, Halifax
- a list of requests received for traffic calming; identify the locations, what has been screened out, what ones are ongoing, and what has been completed

MOVED by Councillor Cleary, seconded by Councillor Whitman

THAT Budget Committee direct that a \$4 million reduction to the Transportation & Public Works budget for streets and roads be added to the Parking Lot for future consideration in the 2018/2019 Budget.

The Committee discussed the motion regarding the \$4 million reduction to the Parking Lot. Members not in support of the motion were concerned that the reduced budget would delay street maintenance, resulting in faster deterioration, and could end up costing the Municipality more in the long run to maintain or fix the streets and roads. Members who supported the motion, also supported allocating \$4 million into a reserve.

MOTION TO ADD TO THE PARKING LOT WAS PUT AND DEFEATED.

Discussion continued on the main motion.

During the debate the following road safety issues were identified in Districts 1 and 11, with staff advising that they would follow up with the area Councillors:

- request a review to determine if a crosswalk at Fletcher Drive and Highway 1 in Fall River meets the criteria for installation; look at petitioning procedure
- it is hazardous for pedestrians walking down the Herring Cove Road from Lynnett Road; motorists are traveling in excess of 70 km/hr and there are no sidewalks

The Committee requested that status updates on the following:

- Margeson Drive connector
- second exit at Halliburton subdivision
- Westphal Planning Strategy

It was also noted that staff would work with the Planning and Development business unit, and meet with the area Councillor, to identify significant traffic concerns in District 2.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

The Committee recessed at 12:31 p.m. and re-convened at 1:18 p.m.

4. CORPORATE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES

The following was before the Committee:

- A staff recommendation report dated January 16, 2018 with attached Corporate & Customer Services 2018/19 Multi-year Budget and Business Plan presentation

Jane Fraser, Director of Corporate & Customer Services, provided introductory remarks and presented the draft 2018/19 Multi-year Corporate & Customer Services Budget and Business Plan. Fraser reviewed the composition of the newly aligned business unit which was formed in April 2017 and is presenting its first budget to the Committee.

Councillor Karsten called three times for members of the public to address Budget Committee on the Corporate & Customer Services presentation; there were none.

MOVED by Councillor Mancini, seconded by Councillor Whitman

THAT Budget Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Council direct staff to proceed to prepare the 2018/19 Multi-year Corporate and Customer Services Budget and Business Plan, as proposed in the accompanying presentation and consistent with the preliminary fiscal direction.

The Committee discussed the Corporate and Customer Services budget with staff responding to questions regarding: customer service training programs, ICT project time frames, 311 coverage during storm events, emergency preparedness, impact and cost of red tape reduction initiatives and better data collection for decision making.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

5. HALIFAX TRANSIT

The following was before the Committee:

- A staff recommendation report dated January 16, 2018 with attached Halifax Transit 2018/19 Multi-year Budget and Business Plan presentation and 2018/19 Annual Service Plan
- Additional capital sheet entitled "Sustainable Fuel Study"

Dave Reage, Director, Halifax Transit, provided introductory remarks and presented the draft 2018/19 Multi-year Halifax Transit Budget and Business Plan.

Councillor Karsten called three times for members of the public to address Budget Committee on the Halifax Transit presentation; there were none.

MOVED by Councillor Zurawski seconded by Councillor Whitman

THAT Budget Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Council direct staff to proceed to prepare the 2018/19 Multi-year Halifax Transit Budget and Business Plan, as proposed in the accompanying presentation and consistent with the preliminary fiscal direction.

The Committee discussed the Halifax Transit budget with staff responding to questions regarding: electrified transit, charging stations, autonomous vehicles, high occupancy vehicles and bus lanes, park and ride options, and access-a-bus improvements.

MOVED by Councillor Austin, seconded by Councillor Hendsbee

THAT Budget Committee direct that a \$550,000 increase for maintaining the additional hours instituted with the Big Lift on the Alderney ferry in the Halifax Transit budget be added to the Parking Lot for future consideration in the 2018/2019 Budget.

The Committee requested further information be provided on the impact of additional hours for the Alderney ferry during the Big Lift, and identify whether this was a shift in revenue or an increase.

MOTION TO ADD TO THE PARKING LOT WAS PUT AND PASSED

The Committee continued with questions for staff focusing on: initiatives to increase ridership, including a corporate communications strategy, Mumford Terminal, commuter rail, the impact of discounting fares, all door boarding, new fare box technology, on street transfers, route re-design and bus stop standards. The Committee expressed interest in seeing ridership comparisons with other Canadian cities.

MAIN MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

6. ADJUSTING LOCAL TRANSIT AND REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION RATES

The following was before the Committee:

- A staff recommendation report dated January 8, 2018

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Mason, seconded by Councillor Nicoll

THAT Budget Committee of the Whole recommend that Halifax Regional Council maintain the current approach to transit taxation and fares during the 2018-19 fiscal year.

The Committee discussed the existing process noting who is paying and what services are they receiving.

MOVED by Councillor Adams, seconded by Councillor Walker,

THAT this matter be deferred pending a staff report regarding the reduction of the regional transportation rate by 50% for areas in District 11 not receiving transit services.

The Committee discussed the transit service boundary and levels of service.

MOTION TO DEFER WAS PUT AND DEFEATED

MAIN MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

7. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:26 p.m.

Kevin Arjoon
Municipal Clerk