



**AUDIT AND FINANCE STANDING COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING
MINUTES
September 16, 2020**

PRESENT: Councillor Russell Walker, Chair
Councillor Lorelei Nicoll, Vice Chair
Mayor Mike Savage
Councillor Matt Whitman
Councillor Stephen Adams
Councillor Bill Karsten
Councillor Paul Russell

STAFF: John Traves, Municipal Solicitor
Jane Fraser, Chief Financial Officer
David Harley, Manager of Accounting & Financial Reporting
Evangeline Colman-Sadd, Auditor General
Paul Flinn, Audit Director
Robyn Dean, 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.

The meeting was called to order at 10:16 a.m. The meeting adjourned at 11:21 a.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 10:16 a.m.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – August 19, 2020

MOVED by Councillor Nicoll, seconded by Councillor Karsten

THAT the August 19, 2020 minutes of the Audit and Finance Standing Committee be approved as circulated.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

MOVED by Councillor Nicoll, seconded by Councillor Russell

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. MOTIONS OF RECONSIDERATION – NONE

7. MOTIONS OF RESCISSION – NONE

8. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS – NONE

9. NOTICES OF TABLED MATTERS – NONE

10. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS

10.1 Correspondence – None

10.2 Petitions – None

10.3 Presentations – None

11. INFORMATION ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD – NONE

12. REPORTS

12.1 AUDITOR GENERAL

12.1.1 Building Permits and Inspections Audit

The following was before the Standing Committee:

- A report dated September 2020
- A presentation entitled “Building Permits and Inspections Audit & Follow-up Review – 2018 Audits”

Evangeline Colman-Sadd, Auditor General, gave a brief overview of the Building Permits and Inspections Audit. Paul Flinn, Audit Director, noted the following key points:

- Overall, HRM effectively manages its building permit application and inspection processes
- Inspections were completed as expected and confirmed compliance with building code, which helps ensure public safety
- There is room for improvement when developing service targets

- Three recommendations were made, all of which were accepted by management:
 - Develop checks to confirm accurate data
 - Develop measurable service standards
 - Develop formal mentoring plan
- Staff from the Office of the Auditor General will conduct a follow up on this audit in eighteen (18) months

The Standing Committee discussed the report with staff responding to questions.

12.1.2 Follow-up Review – 2018 Reports: Procurement and Management of Development Approvals

The following was before the Standing Committee:

- A report dated September 2020
- A presentation entitled “Building Permits and Inspections Audit & Follow-up Review – 2018 Audits”

The Auditor General gave a brief presentation on the follow-up review of 2018 reports on procurement and management of development approvals. The following key points were noted:

- There were thirty-eight (38) recommendations made in 2018, 89% of which have been completed
- There has been a high rate of implementation of recommendations put forward by the Office of the Auditor General
- There are four recommendations that are outstanding:
 - Three from the procurement audit
 - Implement vendor file maintenance processes
 - Quality control the process on procurement files
 - Establish access to electronic procurement files stored on the network
 - One from the management of development approvals audit
 - Improve the quality control processes on development files
- The next follow-up reviews conducted by the Office of the Auditor General will be the audit on the Halifax Transit bus maintenance and property tax management

The Standing Committee discussed the report with staff responding to questions.

12.2 STAFF

12.2.1 Assistance for the Beirut Explosion

The following was before the Standing Committee:

- A staff recommendation report dated August 20, 2020

MOVED by Mayor Savage, seconded by Councillor Karsten

THAT the Audit and Finance Standing Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Council:

- 1. Provide a donation of \$100,000 toward Beirut explosion assistance. Funds will be provided through the Lebanese Consulate to the Canadian Red Cross, which is currently supporting humanitarian efforts in Beirut as a result of the explosion. Funds will come from the General Contingency Reserve Q421;**
- 2. Provide in-kind support by allowing registered Canadian charitable organizations currently collecting donations for Beirut, such as the Canadian Red Cross, to set up donation collection sites at HRM owned and operated facilities and use HRM social media channels to promote donation collection sites; and,**
- 3. Direct the CAO to establish a fair and transparent program to assess and evaluate future financial requests that support national and/or international disaster relief efforts. This program would outline a maximum funding limit, eligibility criteria and a detailed assessment of the**

proposal submitted, evaluation of the proposal based on linkage to municipal objectives, mandate and priorities, and an exploration of potential funding options.

The Standing Committee discussed the report with Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer, responding to questions. Some concerns were raised with this motion considering recent budget cuts and given that this contribution is outside of Halifax Regional Municipality's mandate.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

12.2.2 First Quarter 2020/21 Financial Report

The following was before the Standing Committee:

- A staff recommendation report dated August 28, 2020
- A presentation entitled "First Quarter Report"

The Standing Committee discussed the report with staff responding to questions.

MOVED by Councillor Karsten, seconded by Councillor Russell

THAT the Audit and Finance Standing Committee forward the First Quarter 2020/21 Financial Report dated August 28, 2020 to Regional Council for their information.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

12.3 GRANTS COMMITTEE – NONE

12.4 COMMITTEE MEMBERS – NONE

13. MOTIONS – NONE

14. IN CAMERA (IN PRIVATE) – NONE

15. ADDED ITEMS – NONE

16. NOTICES OF MOTION – NONE

17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – November 18, 2020

18. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:21 a.m.

Robyn Dean
Legislative Assistant