



**BUDGET COMMITTEE
(STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE ON BUDGET)
MINUTES
February 14, 2024**

PRESENT: Councillor Paul Russell, Chair
 Mayor Mike Savage
 Deputy Mayor Cathy Deagle Gammon
 Councillors: David Hendsbee
 Becky Kent
 Trish Purdy
 Sam Austin
 Tony Mancini
 Waye Mason
 Lindell Smith
 Shawn Cleary
 Kathryn Morse
 Patty Cuttell
 Iona Stoddard
 Pam Lovelace
 Lisa Blackburn

REGRETS: Councillor Tim Outhit

STAFF: Jerry Blackwood, Executive Director of Finance & Asset Management/Chief
 Financial Officer
 John Traves, K.C., CD, Executive Director of Legal & Legislative
 Services/Municipal Solicitor/Chief Governance Officer
 Iain MacLean, Municipal Clerk
 Krista Vining, Team Lead, Legislative Assistants
 Catie Campbell, 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 10:01 a.m., and recessed at 12:01 p.m. Budget Committee reconvened at 1:01 p.m. and adjourned at 1:55 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Chair called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.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 THE MINUTES – January 31, 2024

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Deagle Gammon, seconded by Councillor Kent

THAT the minutes of January 31, 2024 be approved as circulated.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

Additions: None

Deletions: None

MOVED by Councillor Lovelace, seconded by Councillor Cuttell

THAT the agenda be approved as presented.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. CALL FOR DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTERESTS – NONE

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

David Campbell, United Diamond Football Club spoke to the membership of the United Diamond Football Club. Campbell noted the safety and maintenance of Municipal sports fields, need to invest in all-weather soccer facilities, affordability of soccer and allocation of municipal budget for refurbishment of facilities. Campbell responded to question of clarification from Budget Committee regarding condition of grass fields, maintenance measures and benefits of turf grass.

Kortney Dunsby, Ecology Action Centre spoke to the Halifax Green Network Plan, Parks and Recreation strategic initiatives and need for long-term planning. Dunsby sought clarification regarding land acquisition funding and the response to invasive species in parks.

Mayor Savage stepped down from the Chair and Deputy Mayor Deagle Gammon assumed the Chair.

Nathan Doucet, Halifax spoke to working as an outreach worker within homelessness encampments. Doucet noted concerns with de-designation of parks for encampments, shelter safety, need for collaboration with community stakeholders, response to housing shortages and requested a moratorium on homelessness evictions. Doucet highlighted Provincial and Federal measures for protecting homelessness and encouraged further government collaboration.

Mayor Savage resumed the Chair.

6. ITEMS CONTINUED FROM A PREVIOUS MEETING – NONE

7. REPORTS

7.1 Parks & Recreation

The following was before Budget Committee:

- Staff report dated February 14, 2024
- Correspondence from Wendy McDonald
- Staff presentation dated February 14, 2024

Maggie MacDonald, Executive Director of Parks & Recreation gave a presentation and responded to questions of clarification from Budget Committee.

MOVED by Councillor Mancini, seconded by Councillor Cuttell

THAT the Budget Committee direct the Chief Administrative Officer to incorporate the Parks & Recreation proposed 2024/25 Budget and Business Plan, as set out and discussed in the accompanying plan and supporting presentation, attached to the staff report dated February 14, 2024, into the Draft 2024/25 Operating Budget.

MacDonald and Nalini Naidoo, Director, Strategic Planning and Design and Angela Green, Director, Recreation Programming responded to questions of clarification from Budget Committee. MacDonald noted budget reduction options, field maintenance measures, the land acquisition process and revenue associated with the 2023 North American Indigenous Games. Naidoo highlighted strategic plans and initiatives and collaboration with Planning and Development staff. Green noted an upcoming analysis of the inclusion program.

Dave Harley, Director, Accounting and Financial Reporting responded to questions of clarification from Budget Committee regarding subsidies and funding for multi-district facilities.

Naidoo, MacDonald and Ray Walsh, Director, Parks responded to questions of clarification from Budget Committee regarding recreational programming software, engagement with rural communities and review of existing strategic priorities. Walsh noted communication strategies to address vandalism and mowing schedules. MacDonald highlighted capital projects and costs of turf fields.

MOVED by Councillor Mancini, seconded by Councillor Purdy

THAT the motion be amended to include a new section that reads as follows:

- 2. Request that the Chief Administrative Officer provide a briefing note for the Budget Adjustment List (BAL) to reduce funding on all new positions in the Parks & Recreation 24/25 budget by 50 percent. The briefing note should include both the financial and operational implications of reducing new position funding.**

Jerry Blackwood, Executive Director of Finance & Asset Management/Chief Financial Officer and MacDonald responded to questions of clarification from Budget Committee regarding full-time positions.

MOTION TO AMEND PUT AND PASSED. (12 in favour, 2 against)

In favour: Mayor Savage, Deputy Mayor Deagle Gammon, Councillors Hendsbee, Kent, Purdy, Mancini, Smith, Cleary, Cuttell, Stoddard, Lovelace, Blackburn

Against: Councillors Austin, Morse

Not present: Budget Committee Chair Russell, Councillors Mason, Outhit,

MacDonald and Walsh responded to questions of clarification from Budget Committee regarding staffing challenges.

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Deagle Gammon, seconded by Councillor Blackburn

THAT the motion be amended to include a new section that reads as follows:

- 3. Direct funding in the amount of \$205,665 to expand Ready for Rec to increase Access to Recreation Inclusion Support, as identified in the staff information report dated January 6, 2024 from the February 6, 2024 Regional Council meeting, to be added as an option over budget on the budget adjustment list (BAL) for Budget Committee to consider in the 2024/25 Budget.**

MOTION TO AMEND PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Not present: Budget Committee Chair Russell, Councillors Mason, Outhit

MacDonald responded to questions of clarification from Budget Committee regarding the Youth Works program.

The question was called on the main motion:

MOVED by Councillor Mancini seconded by Councillor Cuttell

THAT the Budget Committee:

- 1. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to incorporate the Parks & Recreation proposed 2024/25 Budget and Business Plan, as set out and discussed in the accompanying plan and supporting presentation, attached to the staff report dated February 14, 2024, into the Draft 2024/25 Operating Budget;**
- 2. Request that the Chief Administrative Officer provide a briefing note for the Budget Adjustment List (BAL) to reduce funding on all new positions in the Parks & Recreation 24/25 budget by 50 percent. The briefing note should include both the financial and operational implications of reducing new position funding; and**
- 3. Direct funding in the amount of \$205,665 to expand Ready for Rec to increase Access to Recreation Inclusion Support, as identified in the staff information report dated January 6, 2024 from the February 6, 2024 Regional Council meeting, to be added as an option over budget on the budget adjustment list (BAL) for Budget Committee to consider in the 2024/25 Budget.**

MOTION AS AMENDED PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Not present: Budget Committee Chair Russell, Councillors Mason, Outhit

7. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:55 p.m.

Iain MacLean
Municipal Clerk