



**BUDGET COMMITTEE
(STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE ON BUDGET)
MINUTES
March 1, 2024**

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

REGRETS: Councillor: Paul Russell, Budget Committee Chair

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
Catie Campbell, Legislative Assistant
Dorothy Maponga, Legislative Assistant
Olawumi Odeyinka-Apantaku, 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 9:34 a.m., and recessed at 11:56 a.m. Budget Committee reconvened in at 1:00 p.m. and recessed at 2:04 p.m. Budget Committee reconvened in at 2:13 p.m. and adjourned at 2:36 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Vice Chair called the meeting to order at 9:34 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.

1.1 Budget Adjustment List

The following was before Budget Committee:

- Handout titled "Budget Adjustment List Summary" dated March 1, 2024

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – NONE

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

Additions: None

Deletions: None

MOVED by Councillor Lovelace, seconded by Councillor Kent

THAT the agenda be approved as presented.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. CALL FOR DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTERESTS – NONE

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Brendan Meagher, Halifax on behalf of Halifax Regional Fire & Emergency spoke to fire services' capability to train 20 firefighters in a recruit training center effectively due to extreme heat in the summer and extreme cold in the winter. Meagher recommended that Budget Committee amend the proposed Halifax Regional Fire & Emergency budget to add a fall 2024 hiring to catch up with the service deficit. Meagher responded to questions of clarification from Budget Committee regarding hiring during the fall and whether it would be the best way of hiring and training firefighters.

Patrick Sullivan, Halifax on behalf of Halifax Chamber of Commerce spoke to taxes and how the Province of Nova Scotia had benefited from an increase in population and 75 percent increase in Halifax. Sullivan noted growth in Halifax, and the Province has benefited with over a billion dollars in additional unbudgeted revenue and the Municipality had not seen that income or revenue increase. Sullivan recommended that taxes needed to go up to meet inflation, and that Budget Committee investigate the pre-budget submission. Sullivan further asked for a new fiscal framework and suggested that the Municipality spend from reserves on specific projects. Sullivan responded to questions and clarification from Budget Committee regarding increase debt in the budget.

6. ITEMS CONTINUED FROM A PREVIOUS MEETING - NONE

7. REPORTS

7.1 Halifax Regional Fire & Emergency

The following was before Budget Committee:

- Staff report dated March 1, 2024, revised February 27, 2024

- Correspondence from Brendan Meagher

Chief Ken Stuebing, Halifax Regional Fire & Emergency gave a presentation and responded to questions of clarification from Budget Committee.

MOVED by Councillor Lovelace, seconded by Councillor Mancini

THAT the Budget Committee direct the Chief Administrative Officer to incorporate the Halifax Regional Fire & Emergency 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 March 1, 2024, into the Draft 2024/25 Operating Budget.

Deputy Chief Dave Meldrum, Halifax Regional Fire & Emergency, Deputy Chief Roy Hollett, Halifax Regional Fire & Emergency, Philip Dugandzic, Director, Corporate Facility Design & Construction and Deputy Chief Peter Andrews, Halifax Regional Fire & Emergency responded to questions of clarification from Budget Committee.

MOVED by Councillor Lovelace, seconded by Councillor Outhit

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

2. **Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to provide a briefing note that provides costing and operational implications to expedite the conversion of a fire station in Hammonds Plains or Upper Tantallon (Station 50 or 65) from E Platoon Composite staffing to 24/7 Career composite staffing along with a dedicated Fall 2024 cadet training for consideration on the 2024/25 Budget Adjustment List.**

MOTION TO AMEND PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Not present: Budget Committee Chair Russell, Councillors Purdy, Blackburn

MOVED by Councillor Cuttell, seconded by Councillor Lovelace

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

3. **Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to provide an information report on the staff hours, resources, and financial implications associated with Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency responding to medical assistance calls, including types of calls being responded to and impact on Effective Firefighting Force response times.**

John Traves, K.C., CD, Executive Director of Legal & Legislative Services/Municipal Solicitor/Chief Governance Officer responded to questions of clarification from Budget Committee.

MOTION TO AMEND PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Not present: Budget Committee Chair Russell, Councillors Purdy, Blackburn

The motion as amended now read:

MOVED by Councillor Lovelace, seconded by Councillor Mancini

THAT the Budget Committee:

1. **Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to incorporate the Halifax Regional Fire & Emergency 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 March 1, 2024, into the Draft 2024/25 Operating Budget;

2. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to provide a briefing note that provides costing and operational implications to expedite the conversion of a fire station in Hammonds Plains or Upper Tantallon (Station 50 or 65) from E Platoon Composite staffing to 24/7 Career composite staffing along with a dedicated Fall 2024 cadet training for consideration on the 2024/25 Budget Adjustment List; and
3. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to provide an information report on the staff hours, resources, and financial implications associated with Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency responding to medical assistance calls, including types of calls being responded to and impact on Effective Firefighting Force response times.

MOTION AS AMENDED PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Not present: Budget Committee Chair Russell, Councillor Purdy

7.2 Fiscal Services

The following was before Budget Committee:

- Staff report dated March 1, 2024, revised February 22, 2024
- Correspondence from Glen Oxner, Patrick Sullivan, Patrick MacKinnon

Tyler Higgins, Manager, Budget & Reserves gave a presentation and responded to questions of clarification from Budget Committee.

MOVED by Councillor Outhit, seconded by Deputy Mayor Deagle Gammon

THAT the Budget Committee direct the Chief Administrative Officer to incorporate the Fiscal Services proposed 2024/25 Budget and Business Plan, in the accompanying plan and supporting presentation, attached to the staff report dated March 1, 2024, into the Draft 2024/25 Operating Budget.

Cathie O'Toole, Chief Administrative Officer, Jerry Blackwood, Executive Director of Finance & Asset Management/Chief Financial Officer and Dave Harley, Director, Accounting & Financial Reporting responded to questions of clarification from Budget Committee.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Not present: Budget Committee Chair Russell, Councillors Purdy, Cleary

8. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:36 p.m.

Catie Campbell
Legislative Assistant