



**BUDGET COMMITTEE
(STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE ON BUDGET)
MINUTES
January 31, 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
Lindell Smith
Shawn Cleary
Kathryn Morse
Patty Cuttell
Iona Stoddard
Pam Lovelace
Lisa Blackburn
Tim Outhit

REGRETS: Councillor Paul Russell, Budget Committee Chair – Leave of Absence

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
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 9:35 a.m., and recessed at 11:59 a.m. Budget Committee reconvened at 1:00 p.m. and adjourned at 2:37 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:35 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 – NONE

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

Additions: None

Deletions: None

MOVED by Councillor Mason, seconded by Deputy Mayor Deagle Gammon

THAT the agenda be approved as presented.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. CALL FOR DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTERESTS – NONE

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Ben MacLeod, District 9 spoke to concerns with Municipal policies and working conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic. MacLeod noted concerns with workplace health and safety, lack of remote working options, sick leave costs and staff turnover. MacLeod highlighted the Municipality's Diversity and Inclusion framework.

6. REPORTS

6.1 Corporate Services: Chief Administrative Officer, Finance & Asset Management, Human Resources, Information Technology, and Legal & Legislative Services

The following was before Budget Committee:

- Staff report dated January 24, 2024
- Correspondence from Ben MacLeod
- Staff presentation dated January 24, 2024, revised January 31, 2024

Jerry Blackwood, Executive Director of Finance & Asset Management/Chief Financial Officer spoke to the Budget Committee processes, the procedure for requesting further information and the Budget Adjustment List (BAL) procedure.

Cathie O'Toole, Chief Administrative Officer gave a presentation and responded to questions of clarification from Budget Committee.

MOVED by Councillor Cuttell, seconded by Councillor Stoddard

THAT the Budget Committee direct the Chief Administrative Officer to:

- 1. Incorporate the Chief Administrative Office proposed 2024/25 Budget and Business Plan, as set out and discussed in the accompanying plan and supporting presentation, dated January 24, 2024, into the Draft 2024/25 Operating Budget;**

2. Incorporate the Finance & Asset Management proposed 2024/25 Budget and Business Plan, as set out and discussed in the accompanying plan and supporting presentation, dated January 24, 2024, into the Draft 2024/25 Operating Budget;
3. Incorporate the Human Resources proposed 2024/25 Budget and Business Plan, as set out and discussed in the accompanying plan and supporting presentation, dated January 24, 2024, into the Draft 2024/25 Operating Budget;
4. Incorporate the Information Technology proposed 2024/25 Budget and Business Plan, as set out and discussed in the accompanying plan and supporting presentation, dated January 24, 2024, into the Draft 2024/25 Operating Budget; and
5. Incorporate the Legal & Legislative Services proposed 2024/25 Budget and Business Plan, as set out and discussed in the accompanying plan and supporting presentation, dated January 24, 2024, into the Draft 2024/25 Operating Budget.

Blackwood and Mike Pappas, Director, Corporate Planning responded to questions of clarification from Budget Committee regarding Diversity and Inclusion metrics and upcoming project streamlining that could lead to savings.

Blackwood, O'Toole, Breton Murphy, Managing Director, Corporate Communications, Britt Wilson, Executive Director of Human Resources, David Thorpe, Executive Director of Information Technology/Chief Information Officer and John Traves, K.C., CD, Executive Director of Legal & Legislative Services/Municipal Solicitor/Chief Governance Officer responded to questions of clarification from Budget Committee.

O'Toole and Murphy noted the upcoming Crisis Communications Strategy audit and communication support for rural areas.

O'Toole, Wilson, Blackwood, Thorpe and Traves identified budget items for new full-time employees (FTEs) and service enhancements with proposed FTEs. Wilson outlined the impact of not funding the proposed FTEs and Human Resources support for Business Units. Blackwood clarified which FTEs were budgeted under the Capital Budget. Thorpe highlighted that FTEs were more cost effective than external contracting work. Traves noted the election positions were funded through Elections Reserves and highlighted which positions were already filled.

Thorpe spoke to ongoing policy development on Artificial Intelligence technologies and need for cyber attack infrastructure.

MOVED by Councillor Cleary, seconded by Councillor Purdy

THAT Budget Committee defer item 6.1 pending the receipt of a briefing note/supplementary report on the impacts of freezing full time employee counts at the approved 2023/24 levels for the business units that make up Corporate Services: Chief Administrative Office; Finance & Asset Management; Human Resources; Information Technology; and Legal & Legislative Services.

O'Toole, Blackwood, Thorpe and Traves responded to questions of clarification from Budget Committee regarding importance of filling specific FTEs, money transfers and budget legal requirements.

MOTION DEFER PUT AND PASSED. (9 in favour, 5 against)

In favour: Mayor Savage, Deputy Mayor Deagle Gammon, Councillors Purdy, Mancini, Mason, Smith, Cleary, Stoddard, Blackburn

Against: Councillors Kent, Austin, Morse, Cuttall, Lovelace

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

6.2 Office of the Auditor General

The following was before Budget Committee:

- Staff report dated January 24, 2024
- Staff presentation dated January 24, 2024

Andrew Atherton, Municipal Auditor General gave a presentation and responded to questions of clarification from Budget Committee.

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Deagle Gammon, seconded by Councillor Blackburn

THAT the Budget Committee direct staff to incorporate the Office of the Auditor General's proposed 2024/25 Budget and Business Plan, as set out and discussed in the accompanying plan and supporting presentation dated January 24, 2024, into the Draft 2024/25 Operating Budget.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

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

6.3 Property, Fleet & Environment

The following was before Budget Committee:

- Staff report dated January 31, 2024
- Correspondence from Chris Benjamin
- Staff presentation dated January 31, 2024

John MacPherson, Executive Director of Property Fleet & Environment gave a presentation and responded to questions of clarification from Budget Committee.

MOVED by Councillor Mason, seconded by Councillor Austin

THAT the Budget Committee direct the Chief Administrative Officer to incorporate the Property, Fleet & Environment proposed 2024/25 Budget and Business Plan, as set out and discussed in the accompanying plan and supporting presentation, dated January 31, 2024, into the Draft 2024/25 Operating Budget.

MacPherson responded to questions of clarification from Budget Committee regarding land acquisitions for potential Integrated Mobility Plan corridors and extra duty policing in Alderney Landing.

MOVED by Councillor Austin, seconded by Councillor Purdy

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 outlining the funding over of \$100,000 for extra duty policing in the facilities budget 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. (13 in favour, 1 against)

In favour: Mayor Savage, Deputy Mayor Deagle Gammon, Councillors Kent, Purdy, Austin, Mancini, Mason, Smith, Cleary, Morse, Cuttall, Stoddard, Blackburn

Against: Councillor Lovelace

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

MacPherson, Philip Dugandzic, Director, Corporate Facility Design and Construction and Peter Stickings, Director, Corporate Real Estate responded to questions of clarification from Budget Committee regarding generator prioritization, the proposed mechanic apprenticeship program and egress off of Hammonds Plains Road.

The question was called on the main motion:

MOVED by Councillor Mason, seconded by Councillor Austin

THAT the Budget Committee:

- 1. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to incorporate the Property, Fleet & Environment proposed 2024/25 Budget and Business Plan, as set out and discussed in the accompanying plan and supporting presentation, dated January 31, 2024, into the Draft 2024/25 Operating Budget; and**
- 2. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to provide a briefing note outlining the funding over of \$100,000 for extra duty policing in the facilities budget 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 PUT AND PASSED. (13 in favour, 1 against)

In favour: Mayor Savage, Deputy Mayor Deagle Gammon, Councillors Kent, Austin, Mancini, Mason, Smith, Cleary, Morse, Cuttall, Stoddard, Lovelace, Blackburn,

Against: Councillor Purdy

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

7. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:37 p.m.

Iain MacLean
Municipal Clerk