

HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL
COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE
OPERATING BUDGET SESSION

August 30, 1996

PRESENT:

Mayor Walter Fitzgerald
Councillors: Gordon R. Snow
David Hendsbee
Ron Cooper
Harry McInroy
Jack Greenough
Condo Sarto
Bruce Hetherington
Clint Schofield
John Cunningham
Jerry Blumenthal
Graham L. Downey
Howard Epstein
Russell Walker
Bill Stone
Ron Hanson
Stephen Adams
Barry Barnet
Bob Harvey
Peter Kelly
Reg Rankin
Jack Mitchell

ABSENT:

Councillors Bill Dooks
Larry Uteck

STAFF MEMBERS:

Mr. Ken Meech, Chief Administrative Officer
Mr. Larry Corrigan, Commissioner, Corporate Services
Mr. Wayne Anstey, Municipal Solicitor
Ms. Patti Halliday, Assistant Municipal Clerk

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1. School Board

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m.

SCHOOL BOARD

- A report entitled "Halifax Regional Municipality 1996/97 Operating Budget - Revision," prepared by Mr. Larry Corrigan, Commissioner, Corporate Services, was circulated.

Mr. Corrigan reviewed the revision to the 1996/97 Operating Budget regarding Regional School Board Funding. As directed by Council, staff prepared an option to their original recommendation. The option would reduce the optional funding to the Regional School Board by 4.6 percent instead of 10 percent. This option would provide the School Board with the same amount of money they received last year. If the proposal is adopted, the overall Operating Budget will have a shortfall of \$823,000.

For the record, Mr. Meech stated he never made any formal commitment that there would not be any adjustment to the optional funding for the School Board.

If the revised proposal is accepted and paid for by the tax rate, it will involve a 6/10 of one cent increase. If there is no tax increase, \$823,000 will have to be taken from another area of the budget. As there appears to be no areas Councillors wish to have money deducted, Mr. Meech recommended the funding be achieved through the tax rate.

MOVED by Councillor Schofield and Deputy Mayor Greenough that the 1996/97 revised proposal for funding for the School Board in the amount of \$75,013,000 be approved; and, that the \$823,000 be found in the existing budget; further, that the School Board be put on notice that their funding will be decreased ten percent next year and every year afterward in all likelihood.

In debate of this motion, Councillors made the following points:

- Councillor Kelly suggested the School Board get together with HRM staff to eliminate costs such as administration, maintenance and grounds upkeep.
- Councillor Sarto requested staff to look at revenue from the Engineering Department to determine how much can be generated to be put towards operating costs. In response to Councillor Sarto's request, Mr. Dhillon estimated the amount to be approximately \$750,000.
- Some Councillors stated they were not willing to give notice to the School Board that their funding will be reduced each year.
- Several Councillors were not willing to add to the tax rate to pay for a benefit that only residents of Halifax and Dartmouth will receive.
- The School Board was of the understanding that their funding would not be reduced this year.
- The School Board should be requested to reduce their expenditures.

- This issue cannot be looked at in isolation but rather as an HRM issue.
- 6/10 of one cent on a \$100,000 assessment would be a \$6 increase on the tax bill.
- The funding problem for the School Board is with the Province and not HRM.
- Supplementary funding should be applied across all of the HRM.
- Councillor Walker stated if the supplementary funding is cut, the residents of Halifax and Dartmouth should be entitled to a tax break as the money would not be spent for what it was collected as per the HRM Act. Mr. Anstey's interpretation of the Act was this could be accomplished with an area rate and carrying over what was left to a general rate. He noted there is a difference between no increase in the tax rate and no increase in taxes.
- Supplementary funding gives HRM access to the School Board.

With the agreement of the Mover and the Seconder, the motion on the floor was amended as follows:

MOVED by Councillor Schofield and Deputy Mayor Greenough that the 1996/97 revised proposal for funding for the School Board in the amount of \$75,013,000 be approved; and, that the \$823,000 be found in the existing budget.

In debate of the amended motion, Councillors made the following points:

- The School Board should make a presentation to Council before the next budget.
- Ten percent should be deducted from the funding next year.

Councillor Barnet requested a Recorded Vote.

RECORDED VOTE:

IN FAVOUR: Mayor Fitzgerald, Deputy Mayor Greenough, Councillors Snow, Hendsbee, Sarto, Hetherington, Schofield, Cunningham, Hanson

AGAINST: Councillors Cooper, McInroy, Blumenthal, Downey, Epstein, Walker, Stone, Adams, Barnet, Harvey, Kelly, Rankin, Mitchell

MOTION LOST.

RECESS

A ten minute recess was taken at 11:25 a.m. The meeting reconvened at 11:35 a.m.

Upon reconvening, the following motion was put.

MOVED by Councillors Kelly and Barnet that Council approve the original staff recommendation for School Board funding in the amount of \$74,058,000.

Councillor Barnet requested a Recorded Vote.

RECORDED VOTE:

IN FAVOUR: Mayor Fitzgerald, Councillors Cooper, McInroy, Barnet, Kelly, Rankin, Mitchell

AGAINST: Deputy Mayor Greenough, Councillors Snow, Hendsbee, Sarto, Hetherington, Schofield, Cunningham, Blumenthal, Downey, Epstein, Walker, Stone, Hanson, Adams, Harvey

MOTION LOST.

At this point in the meeting, it was agreed to allow Mr. Don Trider to make a five minute presentation on the School Board's point of view regarding funding.

After Mr. Trider's presentation and further debate of the issue, the following motion was put.

MOVED by Councillors Rankin and Schofield that optional funding for the School Board be set at \$16,650,000 for a total of \$74,708,000.

An amendment was proposed to this motion.

MOVED by Councillors Harvey and Cooper that the Motion on the Floor be amended to allow total funding of \$75,000,000; further, that the School Board be requested to begin the process of treating supplementary funding equally across the Region.

The vote on the amendment was then taken.

Councillor Barnet requested a Recorded Vote.

RECORDED VOTE:

IN FAVOUR: Mayor Fitzgerald, Deputy Mayor Greenough, Councillors Snow, Hendsbee, Cooper, Sarto, Hetherington, Cunningham, Adams, Barnet, Harvey, Mitchell

AGAINST: Councillors McInroy, Schofield, Blumenthal, Downey, Epstein, Walker, Stone, Hanson, Kelly, Rankin

MOTION PASSED.

The vote on the Main Motion, as amended, was then taken.

A Recorded Vote was requested.

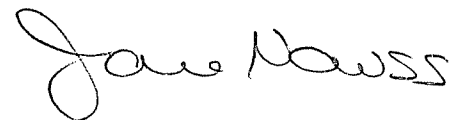
RECORDED VOTE:

IN FAVOUR: Mayor Fitzgerald, Deputy Mayor Greenough, Councillors Snow, Hendsbee, Cooper, Sarto, Hetherington, Schofield, Cunningham, Adams, Barnet, Harvey, Kelly, Rankin, Mitchell

AGAINST: Councillors McInroy, Blumenthal, Downey, Epstein, Walker, Stone, Hanson

MOTION PASSED.

MOVED by Councillors Hetherington and Epstein that the meeting adjourn at 12:45 p.m. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.



Jane Nauss
ACTING MUNICIPAL CLERK