



**AUDIT AND FINANCE STANDING COMMITTEE  
MINUTES  
February 23, 2023**

PRESENT: Councillor Paul Russell, Chair  
Councillor Cathy Deagle Gammon, Vice Chair  
Councillor David Hendsbee  
Councillor Shawn Cleary  
Councillor Iona Stoddard  
Councillor Pam Lovelace  
Mayor Mike Savage, Ex Officio

OTHERS PRESENT: Deputy Mayor Sam Austin

STAFF: Cathie O'Toole, Chief Administrative Officer  
Jerry Blackwood, Executive Director of Finance and Asset Management/  
Chief Financial Officer  
John Traves, K.C., CD, Executive Director of Legal & Legislative  
Services/Municipal Solicitor  
Annie Sherry, 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](http://halifax.ca).*

*The meeting was called to order at 1:02 p.m. and adjourned at 2:50 p.m.*

**1. CALL TO ORDER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.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 MINUTES – January 19, 2023**

MOVED by Councillor Deagle Gammon, seconded by Councillor Lovelace

**THAT the minutes of January 19, 2023 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

As provided for in section 37 (1) of Administrative Order One, *Respecting the Procedures of the Council*, Councillor Deagle Gammon requested that Item 17 – Public Participation be considered immediately following Item 11 - Information Items Brought Forward.

As provided for in section 37 (1) of Administrative Order One, *Respecting the Procedures of the Council*, Councillor Deagle Gammon requested that Item 12.1.1 – Follow-up Review of 2020-2021 Audits be considered immediately following Item 12.2.4 - 2022/2023 Write Off of Uncollectible Accounts.

MOVED by Councillor Deagle Gammon, seconded by Mayor Savage

**THAT the agenda be approved as amended.**

**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 Presentation – None**

**11. INFORMATION ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD – NONE**

**12. REPORTS**

**12.1 AUDITOR GENERAL**

**12.1.1 Follow-up Review of 2020-2021 Audits**

The following was before the Standing Committee:

- Auditor General report dated February 13, 2023
- Presentation dated February 23, 2023

Evangeline Colman-Sadd, Auditor General gave a presentation and responded to questions of clarification from the Standing Committee.

Cathie O'Toole, Chief Administrative Officer responded to questions of clarification from the Standing Committee and noted their office would be reinstating the process of tracking all recommendations from Auditor General reports for action and follow up from staff.

MOVED by Councillor Deagle Gammon, seconded by Councillor Cleary

**THAT the Audit and Finance Standing Committee forward the Follow-up Review of 2020-2021 Audits reports to Regional Council as an information item.**

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

## **12.2 STAFF**

### **12.2.1 Banook Canoe Club - Funding Request**

The following was before the Standing Committee:

- Staff report dated February 7, 2023

MOVED by Mayor Savage, seconded by Councillor Stoddard

**THAT the Audit and Finance Standing Committee recommend that Regional Council refer the Banook Canoe Club to established municipal grant programs for consideration in fiscal 2023/24.**

Jerry Blackwood, Executive Director of Finance and Asset Management/Chief Financial Officer responded to questions of clarification from the Standing Committee and noted that the options reserve could be a potential funding source for this request, with the caveat that funding the projected annual deficit would still need to be addressed through either a tax increase or from the options reserve.

PJ Temple, Team Lead, Grants, Tax & Special Projects responded to questions of clarification from the Standing Committee regarding the scope of lease, license, and contribution agreements.

**MOTION PUT AND DEFEATED.**

MOVED by Mayor Savage, seconded by Councillor Lovelace

**THAT the Audit and Finance Standing Committee recommend that Regional Council award a grant to the Banook Canoe Club in the amount of up to \$267,500 to be funded from the Option Reserve Q421, conditional on a signed Contribution Agreement and the conditions as set out in the alternatives section of the staff report dated February 7, 2023.**

John Traves, K.C., CD, Executive Director of Legal & Legislative Services/Municipal Solicitor and Blackwood responded to questions of clarification from the Standing Committee.

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

### **12.2.2 Increase to Contract – RFQ-21-002**

The following was before the Standing Committee:

- Staff report dated February 14, 2023

MOVED by Mayor Savage, seconded by Councillor Hendsbee

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

- 1. Approve a budget increase to Project Account No. CW200003 – Rural Depots in the amount of \$26,121 (net HST included) to accommodate increases in the US exchange rate; and**
- 2. Approve an unbudgeted reserve withdrawal of \$26,121 (net HST included) from Q556, Solid Waste Facilities Reserve to fund this increase.**

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

### **12.2.3 Third Quarter 2022-2023 Financial Report**

The following was before the Standing Committee:

- Staff report dated February 15, 2023
- Staff presentation dated February 23, 2023

Dave Harley, Director of Accounting & Financial Reporting gave a presentation and responded to questions of clarification from the Standing Committee.

MOVED by Councillor Hendsbee, seconded by Councillor Deagle Gammon

**THAT the Audit and Finance Standing Committee:**

- 1. Forward the Third Quarter 2022/23 Financial Report to Regional Council for their information; and**
- 2. Approve the appointment of KPMG to be the External Auditors for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2023.**

Harley outlined the process for reimbursement of funds from other levels of government for Hurricane Fiona, noting that staff would provide further information on a breakdown of fuel costs by Business Unit, and that staff would review the business case for usage of the elections reserve.

Crystal Nowlan, Director, Asset Management, Jerry Blackwood, Executive Director of Finance and Asset Management/Chief Financial Officer, and Renée Towns, Director of Revenue, Treasurer responded to questions of clarification from the Standing Committee.

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

### **12.2.4 2022/2023 Write Off of Uncollectible Accounts**

The following was before the Standing Committee:

- Staff report dated February 16, 2023

MOVED by Councillor Hendsbee, seconded by Councillor Stoddard

**THAT the Audit and Finance Standing Committee:**

- 1. Forward the staff recommendation report dated February 16, 2023 to HRM Regional Council for approval;**
- 2. Recommend that Regional Council approve:**

- a. **The real property tax accounts in the amount of \$67,583.81 comprised of \$50,871.38 and \$16,712.43 interest as summarized in Schedule 1 be formally written out of the books of account;**
- b. **The general revenue accounts in the amount of \$39,036.76 comprised of \$38,863.45 principal and \$173.31 interest as summarized in Schedule 1 be formally written out of the books of account;**
- c. **The recreation accounts in the amount of \$7,466.89 comprised of \$7,466.89 principal and \$0.00 interest as summarized in Schedule 1 be formally written out of the books of account**

Renée Towns, Director of Revenue, Treasurer responded to questions of clarification from the Standing Committee and outlined the process for identifying and writing off legacy accounts.

Jerry Blackwood, Executive Director of Finance and Asset Management/Chief Financial Officer responded to questions of clarification from the Standing Committee and noted that the amount of outstanding and write off accounts were small in scope, with respect to the overall budget line.

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

**12.3 GRANTS COMMITTEE - NONE**

**12.4 MEMBERS OF STANDING COMMITTEE - NONE**

**13. MOTIONS - NONE**

**14. IN CAMERA (IN PRIVATE)**

**14.1 PERSONNEL MATTER – Private and Confidential Report**

The following was before the Standing Committee:

- Private and confidential report dated February 13, 2023

**15. ADDED ITEMS – NONE**

**16. NOTICES OF MOTION – NONE**

**17. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The Chair reviewed the rules of procedure for public participation. The Chair noted there were no registered speakers and called three times for any other members of the public wishing to speak on the matter.

**Geoff Bennett, Banook Canoe Club**, spoke to their concerns with the staff recommendation report for Item 12.2.1 and expressed the Banook Canoe Club's disappointment with staff's recommendation advising that the Club seek funding through established municipal grant programs. Bennett noted that the renovation project would not be eligible for many of the established grant programs due to their scope, funding limits, and timeframes, that other levels of government were contributing to the project, and encouraged the Standing Committee to support the requested grant allocation of \$250,000 plus an estimated \$15,000 in the waiving of permit fees.

**Colin May, Dartmouth**, spoke to their concerns with the housing crisis in the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM), suggesting that Regional Council should consider spending money only on what was essential for the budget year and ask other levels of government to do the same. May further noted that their review of fuel budgets for the past several years allowed them to conclude that the Government of Nova Scotia should explore fuel hedging rather than the HRM.

**18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – March 23, 2023**

**19. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 2:50 p.m.

Annie Sherry  
Legislative Assistant