

HALIFAX

P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5 Canada

Item No. 3
Budget Committee
Feb 8, 2019

TO: Chair and Members of Budget Committee
(Standing Committee of the Whole on Budget)

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed by 
Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: January 28, 2019

SUBJECT: Proposed 2019/20 Multi-year Halifax Regional Fire & Emergency Budget and Business Plan

ORIGIN

As per Administrative Order 1 and the Budget and Business Plan consultation schedule presented to Regional Council on October 16, 2018, staff is required to present the draft 2019/20 Business Unit Budget and Business Plans to the Budget Committee for review and discussion prior to consideration by Regional Council.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Charter, section 35 (1) The Chief Administrative Officer shall (b) ensure that an annual budget is prepared and submitted to the Council.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Budget Committee direct staff to prepare the Halifax Regional Fire & Emergency 2019/20 Multi-year Budget and Business Plan, as proposed in the accompanying presentation based on the 1.9% option, and to prepare Over and Under items for that Plan as directed by Regional Council.

BACKGROUND

As part of the design of the 2019/20 Budget and Business Plan development process, the Budget Committee is reviewing each Business Unit's budget and proposed plans, in advance of completing detailed HRM Budget and Business Plan preparation.

At the November 13, 2018 and December 4, 2018 Committee of the Whole meetings, Regional Council considered and confirmed their Council Priority Outcomes and on November 27, 2018 provided fiscal direction for the 2019/20 Multi-year budget, directing staff to: "direct staff to develop the 2019/20 Budget and 2020/21 Budget in Principle according to Council's approved priorities, and preliminary fiscal direction, including:

- maintaining the appropriate level of existing services with the addition of the new services previously approved by Council;
- a three-year capital budget that recapitalizes assets, funds growth related issues and is balanced to the fiscal framework
- a responsible debt position;
- appropriate reserve balances that allow for risk mitigation, future obligations, and opportunities; and,
- alignment of the current average tax bill for residential homes and commercial properties under two scenarios:
 - a) 1.9% increase for 2019/20;
 - b) 2.1% increase for 2019/20;
 - c) 2.9% increase for 2019/20.

DISCUSSION

Staff has prepared the proposed 19/20 Multi-year Budget and Business Plan consistent with the preliminary fiscal direction received from Council on November 27, 2018 and aligned with Council Priorities as approved on November 13, 2018 and December 4, 2018. The proposed Budget aligns with a 2.9% increase in the average tax bill for both residents and businesses.

Following direction from the Budget Committee, staff will proceed to complete the detailed Budget and Business Plan for inclusion in the proposed 2019/20 Multi-Year Budget and Business Plan documents to be presented to Council, as per the process and schedule approved in the October 16, 2018 staff report.

As part of the Budget process, Regional Council will be provided with a list of possible services increases and decreases that will allow them to more fully direct changes to the budget. As part of this "Over and Under" process, staff will provide budget options for Council's consideration that would achieve an alternative tax bill increase of either 2.1% or 1.9%.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The recommendations in this report will lead to the development of a proposed 2019/20 Multi-year budget. There are no immediate financial implications from these recommendations. The broader financial implications will be discussed and debated as the budget is developed in more detail.

RISK CONSIDERATION

Although there is no immediate risk related to financial decisions, there may be risks associated with individual decisions during the budget debate as they could favour short-term results over longer term strategic outcomes. Individual decisions made during budget debate will however, be considered for both short- and long-term impacts to levels of service, asset condition, and cost.

In addition, the administration seeks to reduce these risks in three ways; by providing Regional Council with several fiscal options to assist in the achievement of longer term strategic outcomes; by assessing both corporate and capital project risk and by providing the opportunity to draw Regional Council's attention to project or program related risk when reports are presented for consideration.

HRM implemented Enterprise risk management in 2015; corporate risks are evaluated annually during the business planning process and mitigating strategies are implemented to reduce the overall risk to the organization. Project related risk is evaluated during the capital planning process; project managers using the same risk assessment tools as those used to assess corporate risk, rate the relative risk of each discreet projects.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

No community engagement was sought for this report; however, the current budget consultation process seeks to solicit public comment on community priorities; members of the public are invited to provide feedback following each business unit budget and business plan presentation.

The Citizen Survey completed in September 2018 has also provided valuable information for assessing community priorities and expectations and has been incorporated into the planning work.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

None

ALTERNATIVES

The Budget Committee can choose to amend the Budget and Business Plan as proposed in the accompanying presentation through specific motion, and direct staff to proceed to prepare the Budget and Business Plan for inclusion in the proposed HRM Budget and Business Plan documents.

ATTACHMENTS

- Halifax Regional Fire & Emergency 2019/20 Multi-year Budget and Business Plan Presentation
- Halifax Regional Fire & Emergency 2019/20 Draft Proposed Multi-Year Budget and Business Plan

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

Report Prepared by: Rita Clarke, Coordinator, Halifax Regional Fire & Emergency, 902.490.5614

Financial Approval by:

Original Signed by 

Jane Fraser, CFO, Director of Finance and Asset Management & ICT, 902.490.4630

Original Signed

Report Approved by:

Ken Stuebing, Chief of Halifax Regional Fire & Emergency, 902.490.4238
