



**BUDGET COMMITTEE
(STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE ON BUDGET)
MINUTES
April 16, 2019**

PRESENT:

Mayor Mike Savage
Deputy Mayor Tony Mancini
Councillors: Steve Streach
David Hendsbee
Lorelei Nicoll
Sam Austin
Waye Mason
Lindell Smith
Shawn Cleary
Russell Walker
Stephen Adams
Matt Whitman
Lisa Blackburn
Steve Craig
Tim Outhit

REGRETS:

Councillor Bill Karsten, Chair
Councillor Richard Zurawski

STAFF:

Jane Fraser, CFO, Director of Finance, Asset Management & ICT
John Traves, Municipal Solicitor
Kevin Arjoon, Municipal Clerk
Sherryl Murphy, Deputy Clerk
Phoebe Rai, 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 10:00 a.m. and adjourned at 11:08 a.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Mike Savage called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. in Council Chamber, 3rd Floor City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax.

The Mayor noted that April is poetry month and introduced Halifax Regional Municipality Poet Laureate Dr. Afua Cooper to address Council.

Dr. Cooper spoke to the history of Black Loyalists in Nova Scotia, and performed a poem describing the 15 Black Loyalist ships that left Halifax departing for Sierra Leone in 1792 because they felt they did not belong.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – February 28, 2019 and March 22, 2019

MOVED by Councillor Nicoll, seconded by Councillor Mason

THAT the minutes of February 28, 2019 and March 22, 2019 be approved as presented.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

3. Proposed 2019-2020 Budget and Business Plan

i) Public Participation

ii) Debate

The following was before Budget Committee of the Whole:

- A staff recommendation report dated March 29, 2019
- 2019-2020 Proposed Budget and Business Plans Book
- 2019-2020 Proposed Capital Plan Book
- 2019-2020 Budget Overview Brochure

Mayor called for public participation, and there was none.

Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) introduced the 2019-20 budget noting that HRM is challenged by growth pressures for both infrastructure and services to residents. Dubé indicated that the proposed 2019-20 budget encompassed business plans for all business units and capital budgets. The proposed budget meets many of Council's priorities and represents an increase of 2.3% on tax bills.

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Mancini, seconded by Councillor Mason

THAT Halifax Regional Council:

- 1. Adopt the Resolution for Approval of Operating and Capital Budgets and Tax Rates for Fiscal 2019/20 as set out in Schedule 1 of the staff report dated March 29, 2019; and**
- 2. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to develop the budget and business plan for 2020-21, consistent with the 2017-21 Multi-Year Budget Process along with a four-year outlook that balances Regional Council priorities with economic indicators and establish financial policy consistent with forecasted economic conditions.**

Councillor Whitman expressed concern with several of the multi-million-dollar budget items, particularly in the Capital budget. Whitman advised he was unable to support the budget as presented.

MOVED by Councillor Cleary, seconded by Councillor Whitman

That \$350,000 be removed from CE18003 for purchase of armoured vehicle found on page C7 of the 2019-2020 Capital Plan.

Councillor Austin clarified that the cost of the armoured vehicle was stated as \$500,000 and suggested a friendly amendment to the motion for clarity. The mover and Council accepted the amendment as friendly.

The motion now reads:

That \$500,000 be removed from CE18003 for purchase of armoured vehicle found on page C7 of the 2019-2020 Capital Plan.

John Traves, Municipal Solicitor indicated, in response to a question, that this proposed purchase is a capital budget item in fleet and transportation, not the police budget, and as such is a valid amendment.

Council debated the amendment with concern being expressed about the militarization of the police fleet. The rationale for purchase of the vehicle was for an active shooter rescue situation. Although the RCMP has such a vehicle, it is used across the province and may not be available when needed.

Responding to questions from Council, Superintendent Perrin noted that unfortunately tragic incidents occur which require police to have certain capabilities. This type of vehicle is common in police agencies and are intended to help keep police officers and citizens safe.

Following a further brief discussion and questioning of staff the **MOTION TO AMEND WAS PUT AND DEFEATED.**

Discussion ensued with Councillor Nicoll referring to page 2 of the staff report noted that although the residential tax bill will increase by 2.3%, the tax rate will in fact fall. The Councillor commented that there is a need for clear communications in this regard. The CAO indicated that a robust communications plan was in place and would clarify the impact on the tax rate.

The question on the motion was called.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 11:08 a.m.

Kevin Arjoon
Municipal Clerk