



**BUDGET COMMITTEE
(STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE ON BUDGET)
MINUTES
November 26, 2019**

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

REGRETS: Councillors: Bill Karsten
Russell Walker

STAFF: Jane Fraser, Director of Finance & Asset Management/CFO
John Traves, Municipal Solicitor
Kevin Arjoon, Municipal Clerk
Liam MacSween, Acting Deputy Clerk
Simon Ross-Siegel, 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 9:34 a.m. and recessed at 11:55 a.m. Budget Committee reconvened at 6:00 p.m. and adjourned at 8:49 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Savage, Chair called the meeting to order at 9:34 a.m. in Council Chamber, 3rd Floor City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – NONE

3. 2020/21 Capital Budget Recommendation

i) Presentation

ii) Public Participation

iii) Debate

The following was before Budget Committee:

- A staff recommendation report dated October 31, 2019
- Correspondence from Johnathan Tyson, Jerzy and Lidia Gajewski, and Norm Collins
- A staff presentation entitled: “2021/21 Capital Plan and Budget Recommendation”

Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer, and Chrystal Nowlan, Manager of Asset Management, provided a presentation on the 2020/21 Capital Budget Recommendation and responded to questions.

The Chair reviewed the rules of procedure for public participation and invited anyone wishing to speak to come forward.

Rick Mayek, of Dartmouth, spoke in favour of HRM’s aquatic strategy and outlined the need for splashpads. The speaker stated that HRM is behind when it comes to splash pads. Splash pads help bring back play. Splash pads become an aquatic hub that are safe and ecofriendly. Splash pads bring communities together.

The Chair called three times for any other for members of the public to come forward for public participation, and there was none.

MOVED by Councillor Whitman, seconded by Councillor Nicoll

That the Budget Committee recommend Halifax Regional Council to:

- 1. Approve the capital budget for 2020/21, and approve in-principle the 2021/22 and 2022/23 capital budgets as per Attachment 1 of the staff report dated October 31, 2019;**
- 2. Approve the schedule of 2020/21 reserves withdrawals as per Attachment 2 of the staff report dated October 31, 2019;**
- 3. Approve the schedule of 2020/21 advanced tender projects as per Attachment 3 of the staff report dated October 31, 2019;**
- 4. Approve the schedule of multi-year projects as per Attachment 4 of the staff report dated October 31, 2019;**
- 5. Approve an increase in debt funding for 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 capital projects as described in the staff report dated October 31, 2019.**

Several Councillors discussed the implications of increasing taxes as opposed to taking on debt and asked if staff has performed analysis regarding debt and taxes as potential funding options for the capital budget. Jane Fraser, Director of Finance & Asset Management/CFO, replied that staff has performed rough calculations indicating the impact on average tax bill would be \$76.00. Following further discussion, several Councillors supported deferring the recommendations before the Budget Committee in order to receive further information including a table showing costs for capital projects by year, and operation costs for capital projects if they are approved. Following further discussion, Councillors supported focusing discussion on the advanced capital list with the intention of deferring the motion before Budget

Committee except for recommendation 3. Jane Fraser, Director of Finance & Asset Management/CFO, recommended this course of action on the basis that it would enable staff to keep momentum in advancing projects currently underway.

In reply to questions concerning climate change and plans to electrify Halifax Transit, Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer stated that staff is taking several steps though the capital and operational budget planning. Staff is looking into acquiring smaller vehicles, and engaging in discussions with Halifax Transit regarding setting up a project office and assessing what facilities will be needed to proceed with transit fleet electrification.

In reply to questions from Councillors, Jane Fraser, Director of Finance & Asset Management/CFO, indicated that staff would return to Budget Committee with a briefing note on municipal debt and funding reserves.

MOVED by Councillor Austin, seconded by Councillor Nicoll

THAT Budget Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Council defer consideration of the October 31, 2019 staff report with the exception of recommendation 3, approval of the 2020/21 Advanced Tender Projects.

The Committee discussed a desire to ensure the Dartmouth Infrastructure project continue to ensure preparedness for 2022.

MOVED by Councillor Austin, seconded by Councillor Nicoll

THAT Budget Committee request a supplementary staff report on the continuation the Downtown Dartmouth Infrastructure project.

MOTION TO AMEND PUT AND PASSED.

The motion as amended now reads:

THAT Budget Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Council defer consideration of the October 31, 2019 staff report with the exception of recommendation 3, approval of the 2020/21 Advanced Tender Projects, and request a supplementary staff report on the continuation the Downtown Dartmouth Infrastructure project.

Council discussed a desire to request a supplementary report on the budget implications associated with implementing Action 6 of the Integrated Mobility Plan.

MOVED by Councillor Nicoll, seconded by Councillor Hendsbee

THAT Budget Committee request a supplementary staff report on the budget implications associated with implementing Action 6 of the Integrated Mobility Plan.

Brad Anguish, Director of Transportation and Public Works, discussed the current stage of progress in staff's implementation of Action 6 including the installation of rectangular flashing beacons and pedestrian count-down beacons, as well as progress toward setting up standing offers for scale purchasing. Following discussion, Councillor Nicoll retracted the amendment to wait to receive further information following the return of the Operating Budget for 2020/21.

Deputy Mayor Tony Mancini took the Chair from Mayor Savage following the return of Budget Committee from recess at 6:00 p.m.

Several Councilors asked if staff could confirm if all listed street recapitalization projects have recent or up-to-date measures of speed and volume, screening measures used in the residential traffic calming

policy, 85th percentile speed being over 40 kilometers per hour as described in Administrative Order 2015-004-OP. Staff indicated they would return to Budget Committee with the information.

AMENDED MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Several Councillors indicated a desire to ensure that the Regatta Point Walkway Seawall project proceed to detailed design work.

MOVED by Councillor Cleary, seconded by Councillor Adams

THAT Budget Committee request a supplementary staff report requesting detailed design work on Regatta Point Sea Wall.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Several Councillors indicated a desire to obtain an update from staff on several highspeed transit projects.

MOVED by Councillor Outhit, seconded by Councillor Russell

THAT Budget Committee request a supplementary staff report requesting an update on current highspeed transit projects including fast ferries and the Bedford Highway Bus-Rapid Transit project.

Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer, stated that staff currently has plans to return to Regional Council in March with an update on higher order transit projects with the intention to take this information to the Province to pursue next phases. Staff added that staff's update will be for a transit strategy as opposed to a workplan, and future costs will be addressed on a more granular level following Council and the Province's review. Following discussion, Councillor Outhit retracted the motion to wait to receive further information from staff.

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Blackburn, seconded by Councillor Hendsbee

THAT Budget Committee request a supplemental staff report on the Lucasville greenway project with respect to funding options for 2021/22 and following years.

In response to questions from Councillors, Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer, stated that staff currently plans to proceed further with this project in 2024/25.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Several Councillors expressed their desire to explore the viability of prioritizing the construction of a recreation facility in the Musquodoboit Valley, possibly including the construction of a splash pad facility.

MOVED by Councillor Streach, seconded by Councillor Cleary

THAT the Budget Committee request a staff report regarding the allocation of \$250,000 for a recreation facility in the Musquodoboit Valley.

Councilor Austin indicated a desire to amend the motion to receive information on the funding of a general aquatic strategy, to which the Mover agreed. The motion before the Budget Committee now reads:

THAT the Budget Committee request a staff report regarding the allocation of \$250,000 for a recreation facility in the Musquodoboit Valley, and splash pads in accordance with the Aquatic Strategy, for potential consideration in the 2020/21 budget.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Several Councillors expressed their desire to request a staff report regarding the prioritization of two street recapitalization projects in the Sackville area.

MOVED by Councillor Rusell, seconded by Deputy Mayor Blackburn

THAT the Budget Committee request a supplemental staff report regarding the prioritization of street recapitalization funding for sidewalks on Old Beaverbank Road between Sackville Drive and Glendale Drive and along Stokil Drive between the end of the current existing sidewalk and École du Grand-Portage in the 20/21 budget.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

In response to a question from Budget Committee regarding upgrades for the Sheet Harbour Lions Club/Eastern Shore Lifestyles Centre and when design work can begin, staff expressed that staff will likely be able to provide an update over the winter months of 2020. In response to a question from Budget Committee regarding the construction of a ramp for the Kinap Boatclub, John MacPherson, Manager of Corporate Facility and Design Construction, stated that the project is currently budgeted. Staff also noted in response to a question regarding the installation of new generators in the Lake Echo Community Centre that staff plans to return to Council with an information report in December.

Several Councillors expressed their desire to request a staff report regarding options for funding a connector road to the McConnell subdivision in the Porter's lake area.

MOVED by Councillor Hendsbee, seconded by Councillor Russell

THAT the Budget Committee request a supplemental staff report regarding funding for consideration for the construction of 275-foot connector road between Sandy Lake Road and the McConnell subdivision.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Several Councilors asked if staff could provide a briefing note on Information and Communications Technology improvement projects with a focus on the human resource and procurement requirements to complete these projects. Jane Fraser, Director of Finance & Asset Management/CFO, indicated that staff would return to Budget Committee with the information.

Several Councillors expressed their desire to request a staff report regarding funding options to complete renovations currently underway for the Keshen Goodman library.

MOVED by Councillor Blackburn, seconded by Councillor Outhit

THAT the Budget Committee request a supplemental staff report regarding funding options to complete renovations of Keshen Goodman library.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Several Councillors expressed their desire to request a staff report regarding funding options to complete final phases of the moving forward together plan for Dartmouth Cole-Harbour.

MOVED by Councillor Austin, seconded by Councillor Cleary

THAT the Budget Committee request a supplemental staff report regarding funding options to complete the moving forward together plan for Dartmouth Cole-Harbour within the three-year capital budget as presented.

In response to questions from Budget Committee, Dave Reage, Director of Halifax Transit, stated that while year one is currently funded years two and three would require further funding for completion. Approximately fifty percent of the changes required under the moving forward together plan have been completed, however 11.8 million in capital budget spending will be required to complete the project.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Several Councillors expressed their desire to request a staff report regarding funding options to advance the Musquodoboit Harbour sidewalk to next the stage.

MOVED by Councillor Hendsbee, seconded by Councillor Streach

THAT the Budget Committee request a supplemental staff report regarding funding options to advance the Musquodoboit Harbour sidewalk to next the stage.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Several Councillors expressed their desire to prioritize the completion of capital traffic projects currently listed as waiting for traffic calming measures and sidewalk construction.

MOVED by Councillor Outhit, seconded by Councillor Cleary

THAT the Budget Committee request a supplemental staff report regarding funding options and recommendations to fast-track progress on the completion of streets listed as awaiting traffic calming measures as well as sidewalk construction.

Budget Committee discussed options for funding and prioritizing street recapitalization projects with traffic calming measures. In response to questions from Councillors, Brad Anguish, Director of Transportation and Public Works, stated that staff may be able to provide further information regarding traffic calming projects and priorities in a report for Regional Council in March of 2020.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

In reply to questions from Councilors regarding parkland acquisitions in the Lake Echo/Porter's Lake area, Denise Schofield, Director of Parks and Recreation, stated that staff has assembled a list of properties to explore though if Councillors are aware of others they may direct staff to consider adding them to the list by way of a motion from Regional Council.

Several Councillors expressed their desire to prioritize the funding of a paving project on Oakridge Drive.

MOVED by Councillor Outhit, seconded by Deputy Mayor Blackburn

THAT the Budget Committee request a supplemental staff report regarding funding options for the paving of Oakridge Drive.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

In reply to questions from Councilors regarding the transferring of ownership for LED lights from private roads, Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer, stated that staff will have an update on this item returning by way of a report from Transportation and Public Works within the next two months.

4. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:49 p.m.

Kevin Arjoon
Municipal Clerk