



**BUDGET COMMITTEE
(STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE ON BUDGET)
MINUTES
January 7, 2020**

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

REGRETS: Councillors: Steve Streach

STAFF: Jane Fraser, Director of Finance & Asset Management/CFO
John Traves, Municipal Solicitor
Liam MacSween, Acting Deputy Clerk
Krista Vining, 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 11:45 a.m. Budget Committee reconvened at 12:51 p.m. and adjourned at 2:16 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:34 a.m.

Budget Committee agreed to address public participation for item 5. 2020/21 Fiscal Framework and Fiscal Services as its first order of business.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – NONE

3. 2020/21 Capital Budget Recommendation

The following was before Budget Committee:

- A staff recommendation report dated October 31, 2019
- A supplementary information report dated December 5, 2019
- 2020/21 Draft Capital Plan
- Handout - supplementary briefing note – Keshen Goodman Library
- Correspondence from Mike Crosby

Budget Committee continued their discussion on the 2020/21 Draft Capital Plan from the December 7, 2019 meeting.

Budget Committee discussed prioritizing the street recapitalization funding for sidewalks on Old Beaverbank Road between Sackville Drive and Glendale Drive, Stokil Drive between the end of the current existing sidewalk and École du Grand-Portage in the 2020/21 budget. Staff explained that, both streets were assessed and rated mid-range for new sidewalks. Stokil Drive was currently on the tentative 5-year paving program to be completed in year three (3) and Old Beaverbank Road in year four (4). Preliminary and conceptual designs would be done in advance of the paving upgrade to determine the feasibility and cost.

Budget Committee further considered constructing a 275-foot connector road between Sandy Lane and the O'Connell subdivision. Staff confirmed that surveying and preliminary engineering design for the project work would be undertaken in 2020/21. In response to a suggestion that clearcutting be done in the right-of-way as part of this work, staff explained that this would only be done if Halifax Regional Council made a financial commitment.

MOVED by Councillor Mason, seconded by Councillor Mancini

THAT the following amendments to the capital budget be added to the parking lot:

- a. Include \$2 million funding to complete the Keshen Goodman Library renovation in the 2020/21 Capital Budget, funded from the Strategic Projects reserve, and;**
- b. Direct staff to complete a recommendation for purchasing land to construct a Bedford library June 2021 for consideration by Regional Council, and;**
- c. Consult with the Library in the preparation of a report for consideration by Regional Council in the 2021/22 Budget discussion to complete the multiyear Halifax Public Libraries capital plan within 8 years (2028/29), funded from Strategic Projects reserve, and include projected operating cost of capital.**

Budget Committee discussed the motion with staff responding to questions on exploring partnership opportunities to reduce costs to construct a new Bedford library.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Not present: Mayor Savage and Councillor Streach

MOVED by Councillor Mason, seconded by Councillor Austin

THAT funding options to complete years 2 and 3 of the Moving Forward Together Plan within the three-year capital budget be added to the parking lot.

Budget Committee discussed the Moving Forward Together Plan with staff responding to questions. Staff spoke to replacing certain buses to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, noting that the Municipality is planning on establishing garages to support electric buses in several years.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED. (14 in favour, 1 against)

In Favour: Deputy Mayor Blackburn and Councillors Hendsbee, Karsten, Nicoll, Austin, Mancini, Mason, Smith, Cleary, Walker, Adams, Whitman, Russell and Outhit

Against: Councillor Zurawski

Not present: Mayor Savage and Councillor Streach

In response to a question raised on the status of the Musquodoboit Harbour sidewalk project, staff explained that they have started to action the items in the Integrated Mobility Plan, but that rural sidewalks were outside of the funding envelope. Staff anticipated returning to Council with a report to consider funding opportunities and cost sharing near the end of 2020.

MOVED by Councillor Hendsbee, seconded by Councillor Nicoll

THAT the Budget Committee defer funding options to advance the Musquodoboit Harbour sidewalk project to next the stage pending receipt of a supplementary report.

MOTION TO DEFER PUT AND PASSED. (13 in favour, 1 against)

In favour: Deputy Mayor Blackburn, Councillors Karsten, Nicoll, Austin, Mancini, Mason, Smith, Walker, Adams, Zurawski, Whitman, Russell and Outhit

Against: Councillor Hendsbee

Not present: Mayor Savage, Councillors Streach and Cleary

MOVED by Councillor Outhit, seconded by Councillor Whitman

THAT funding options for the paving of Oakridge Drive be added to the parking lot.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED. (13 in favour, 1 against)

In favour: Deputy Mayor Blackburn, Councillors Hendsbee, Karsten, Nicoll, Austin, Mancini, Mason, Walker, Adams, Zurawski, Whitman, Russell and Outhit

Against: Councillor Smith

Not present: Mayor Savage, Councillors Streach and Cleary

MOVED by Councillor Zurawski, seconded by Councillor Whitman

THAT the Budget Committee direct the Chief Administrative Officer and staff engage with the Province on funding sources to construct the new Beechville Lakeside Timberlea Community Centre be added to the parking lot.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Not present: Mayor Savage, Councillors Streach and Cleary

MOVED by Councillor Mason, seconded by Councillor Nicoll

THAT the Budget Committee, subject to final budget deliberations, direct staff to prepare in accordance with deliberations to date at Committee:

- 1. 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. The schedule of 2020/21 reserves withdrawals as per Attachment 2 of the staff report dated October 31, 2019;**
- 3. The schedule of multi-year projects as per Attachment 4 of the staff report dated October 31, 2019;**
- 4. 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.**

MOTION PUT AND PASSED. (10 in favour, 2 against)

In favour: Deputy Mayor Blackburn, Councillors Hendsbee, Karsten, Nicoll, Mancini, Mason, Smith, Walker, Adams and Outhit

Against: Councillors Whitman and Russell

Not present: Mayor Savage, Councillors Streach, Austin, Cleary and Zurawski

4. Integrated Mobility Plan and Infrastructure Projects

The following was before Budget Committee:

- A report submitted by the Chair of the Transportation Standing Committee dated September 27, 2019 with attached councilor request for Council consideration form from September 26, 2019 meeting of the Transportation Standing Committee

Peter Duncan, Manager, Infrastructure Planning Office presented the Integrated Mobility Plan and related infrastructure projects.

MOVED by Councillor Nicoll, seconded by Councillor Smith

THAT the Budget Committee direct the Chief Administrative Officer to prioritize Integrated Mobility Plan (IMP) related projects as part of the capital budget process considering the principles and considerations outlined in the staff reports presented to the Budget Committee in July and September 2019 and return or approval to the Budget Committee for development of the 2021-2022 budget.

Budget Committee discussed the motion with staff responding to questions on the Public Transit Infrastructure Fund, Capital Cost Contributions and Local Improvement Charges as it relates to rural transportation.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Not present: Mayor Savage, Councillors Streach and Cleary

5. 2020/21 Fiscal Framework and Fiscal Services

The following was before Budget Committee:

- A staff recommendation report dated December 3, 2019
- A staff presentation entitled: 2020/21 Fiscal Framework and Fiscal Services Budget

Jane Fraser, Director of Finance & Asset Management/CFO presented the 2020/21 fiscal framework and fiscal services budget. Highlights were as follows:

- Economic growth is strong and robust
 - Population, income and gross domestic product (GDP) are consistently rising
 - Inflation holding steady, expected to be 2.2%
- Operating Budget
 - Pressure on compensation, contracts, and goods and services
 - Debt and Fuel provided savings
 - Deed Transfer Tax rising \$12 million, offsets capital from operating
- To Balance
 - Average tax bill rises 1.5% or \$30 per home, commercial average tax bill increases \$643
- Debt Charges and Capital from Operating will now be budgeted for in Fiscal Services
 - Transportation and Public Works, Parks and Recreation, and Fire had debt charges in 2019/20
 - Transit had both Debt Charges and Capital from Operating in 2019/20
- Commercial Property Tax Revenues will now all be in Fiscal Services
 - Transit had commercial property taxes in 2019/20

The Chair called three times for members of the public to come forward for public participation; there were no speakers.

MOVED by Councillor Whitman, seconded by Deputy Mayor Blackburn

THAT the Budget Committee recommend Halifax Regional Council:

- 1. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to develop the 2020/21 Budget according to Council's approved priorities, and preliminary fiscal direction, including setting the property tax bill for residential homes and commercial properties at a 1.5% increase; and,**
- 2. Approve the preliminary Fiscal Services budget and business plan as attached to the staff report dated December 3, 2019.**

Budget Committee discussed the motion with staff responding to questions.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Not present: Mayor Savage and Councillors Streach and Outhit

6. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:16 p.m.

Kevin Arjoon
Municipal Clerk