



**BUDGET COMMITTEE
(STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE ON BUDGET)
MINUTES
January 22, 2020**

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

REGRETS: Councillor: Tim Outhit

STAFF: Jane Fraser, Director of Finance & Asset Management/CFO
John Traves, Municipal Solicitor
Liam MacSween, A/Municipal 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 9:33 a.m., and recessed at 11:07 a.m. and reconvened at 11:11 a.m.
Budget Committee recessed again at 12:07 p.m. and reconvened at 1:03 p.m.
Budget Committee adjourned at 3:03 p.m.*

1. CALL TO ORDER

The following was before Budget Committee:

- A staff handout outlining the current over/under list

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:33 a.m.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – NONE

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chair called for members of the public to come forward.

Jamie Stewart with Four Points Business Consulting working with MusGo Rider Cooperative Ltd, spoke to Musgo Rider's proposal to connect the Halifax Transit's Porters Lake Park and Ride with the Portland Hills Terminal through Highway 207, and provide service to Westphal, East Preston, Lake Echo, Head of Chezzetcook, Grand Desert and Seaforth. They explained that under Halifax Transit's Moving Forward Together Plan, a portion of the service at the Porters Lake Park and Ride in the Seaforth/Back Road area was being cancelled. MusGo Rider is proposing a fixed route community-based transportation service, using two (2) heavy duty mini buses with a seating capacity of 24 passengers to operate weekdays during peak travel times (5:30 a.m. to 9:15 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. to 6:45 p.m.), and one (1) bus during off-peak times. Stewart highlighted that the service has 9,060 people within a 2.5-kilometre radius of the route and would take 1 hour and 15 minutes one-way to service, making multiple connections with the Porters Lake Metro X Terminal. Stewart and MusGo Rider presented their feasibility study to the Transportation Standing Committee at the March 28, 2019 meeting, highlighting that the service does not conflict with existing Halifax Transit services and would not start until the Route 401 service was completed. Further, MusGo Rider and Halifax Transit have identified parking spaces within both parking lots to accommodate the minibuses, they were not however able to reach an agreement on fare sharing because of HRM By-Law U-100 Respecting User Charges. Stewart pointed out that riders do not want to pay two (2) separate fares, suggesting that 90 to 95 percent of MusGo Rider users would transfer to a Halifax Transit service to get to their destination. Stewart concluded that MusGo Rider was seeking \$94,095 from the Rural Transit Funding Program (\$0.50 per kilometre based on projected 188,190 kilometres for fiscal 2021/22), and an additional \$180,000 (Capital Grant) to purchase three (3) new minibuses through a 50/50 cost sharing agreement with the Province.

The Chair called three times for any further speaks, there were none.

4. Halifax Transit

The following was before Budget Committee:

- A staff recommendation report dated December 17, 2019 with attached 2020/21 Annual Service Plan Halifax Transit
- A Handout from Councillor Hendsbee re: proposed change to route 401 map

Dave Reage, Director Halifax Transit presented the proposal 2020/21 budget and business plan for Halifax Transit.

MOVED by Councillor Whitman, seconded by Councillor Nicoll

THAT the Budget Committee direct the Chief Administrative Officer to prepare the Halifax Transit 2020/21 Budget and Business Plan, incorporating Regional Council's fiscal direction as per the January 7, 2020 Budget Committee meeting and as proposed in the accompanying presentation,

and with transit service modifications as proposed in the accompanying Annual Service Plan, and furthermore to prepare Over and Under items for the Plan as directed by Regional Council's Committee of the Whole on Budget.

Budget Committee discussed the motion with staff responding to questions.

Councillor Hendsbee circulated a map – Proposed Change to Halifax Transit Route 401 for the record. Hendsbee explained that with service adjustments to Route 401, District 2 residents would lose 20 kilometres of service through West Chezzetcook, Grant Dessert and Seaforth. Councillor Hendsbee proposed HRM substitute this with a 7-kilometre loop into Mineville, noting that an express service to Exit 18 was still outstanding, and suggested a stop at the Mineville Medical Clinic located at 4 Peter Court.

MOVED by Councillor Hendsbee, seconded by Councillor Streach

THAT the Budget Committee request a supplementary report substituting Map Grouping D in the Service Plan for the map circulated at the Budget Committee January 22, 2020 meeting – Proposed Change to Halifax Transit Route 401.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Not present: Mayor Savage and Councillor Outhit

During the discussion staff advised that they would work with the area Councillor to address the funding shortage to service Sambro Loop. As well, staff would confirm if there are bus shelters on Windmill Road near Wright Avenue.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Not present: Councillors Streach, Karsten and Outhit

4.1 INFORMATION ITEM BROUGHT FORWARD – January 14, 2020 Regional Council – Councillor Hendsbee – Proposed Community Operated Transit Route Porters Lake to Cole Harbour

The following was before Budget Committee:

- A staff information report dated December 18, 2019

MOVED by Councillor Hendsbee, seconded by Councillor Russell

THAT the Budget Committee request a supplementary report with respect to funding the Proposed Community Operated Transit Route - Porters Lake to Cole Harbour (\$100,000 Operating; \$200,000 Capital) and be added to the parking lot as an operating over budget option for consideration.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Not present: Councillor Streach, Karsten, Adams and Outhit

5. Corporate & Customer Services

The following was before Budget Committee:

- A revised staff recommendation report dated January 8, 2020

Jerry Blackwood, Director of Corporate and Customer Services presented the 2020/21 budget and business plan for Corporate and Customer Services.

MOVED by Councillor Nicoll, seconded by Councillor Russell

THAT the Budget Committee direct the Chief Administrative Officer to prepare the Corporate and Customer Services 2020/21 Budget and Business Plan, incorporating Regional Council's fiscal direction as per the January 7, 2020 Budget Committee meeting and as proposed in the accompanying revised presentation, and furthermore to prepare Over and Under items for the Plans as directed by Regional Council's Committee of the Whole on Budget.

Budget Committee discussed the motion with staff responding to questions. Members were concerned that free menstrual products (supplies and equipment) in municipally managed HRM community centres and partner facilities were not included as part of Corporate and Customer Service's 2020/21 budget and business plan. Members suggested using baskets to hold menstrual products rather than installing dispensers, similar to the Halifax Public Libraries program. Additional information was sought on Corporate Communications full time employees, including job titles and position descriptions.

MOVED by Cleary, seconded by Councillor Whitman

THAT the Budget Committee:

- 1. Include a reduction of \$267,600 to the proposed 2020/2021 budget for Corporate Communications to the parking lot as an operating under budget item for consideration; and**
- 2. Request a supplementary staff report detailing the 22 full time employees in Corporate Communications including job titles and position descriptions for the past four years (2015-2019).**

MOTION PUT AND PASSED. (11 in favour and 1 against)

In favour: Mayor Savage, Councillors Hendsbee, Nicoll, Austin, Mancini, Mason, Cleary, Walker, Zurawski, Whitman and Russell

Against: Deputy Mayor Blackburn

Not present: Councillors Streach, Karsten, Smith, Adams and Outhit

MOVED by Councillor Nicoll, seconded by Deputy Mayor Blackburn

THAT the Budget Committee add:

- 1. one-time funding for the provision of free access to menstrual products in municipally managed HRM community centres (\$230,790);**
- 2. one-time funding for menstrual product equipment installs in partner facilities (\$9,960); and**
- 3. ongoing funding for menstrual product supplies in partner facilities (\$129,070), for a total increase of \$369,820 to the parking lot as operating over budget options for consideration.**

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Not present: Councillors Streach, Karsten, Smith and Outhit

Budget Committee concluded their discussion and a vote was taken on the main motion.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED. (12 in favour, 1 against)

In favour: Deputy Mayor Blackburn, Councillors Hendsbee, Nicoll, Austin, Mancini, Mason, Smith, Cleary, Walker, Adams, Zurawski and Russell

Against: Councilor Whitman

Not present: Mayor Savage, Councillors Streach, Karsten and Outhit

6. Halifax Public Libraries

The following was before Budget Committee:

- A staff recommendation report dated January 15, 2020
- Correspondence from the Nova Scotia Health Authority

Asa Kachan, Chief Librarian & CEO, Halifax Public Libraries presented the 2020/21 budget and business plan for Halifax Public Libraries.

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Blackburn, seconded by Councillor Mancini

THAT the Budget Committee direct the Chief Administrative Officer to prepare the Halifax Public Libraries 2020/21 Budget and Business Plan, incorporating Regional Council's fiscal direction as per the January 7, 2020 Budget Committee meeting and as proposed in the accompanying presentation, and furthermore to prepare Over and Under items for the Plans as directed by Regional Council's Committee of the Whole on Budget.

Budget Committee discussed Halifax Libraries budget and business plan for 2020/21 with staff responding to questions on Halifax Public Libraries' holdings per capita which was below the MBNCanada Median.

MOVED by Councillor Austin, seconded by Councillor Mancini

THAT the Budget Committee request a supplementary report identifying options to bring the Halifax Public Libraries' holdings per capita to the MBNCanada Median.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED. (11 in favour, 1 against)

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

Against: Councillor Walker

Not present: Councillors Streach, Karsten, Smith, Cleary and Outhit

The discussion ensued with staff providing addition information on Halifax Public Libraries' hours of operation and developing a new staffing model.

MOVED by Councillor Mancini, seconded by Councillor Blackburn

THAT the Budget Committee add on-going program funding directed at reducing isolation within the community (\$50,000) to the parking lot as an operating over budget option for consideration.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED. (11 in favour, 1 against)

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

Against: Councillor Nicoll

Not present: Councillors Streach, Karsten, Smith, Cleary and Outhit

Budget Committee concluded their discussion and a vote was taken on the main motion.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Not present: Councillors Streach, Karsten, Smith, Cleary and Outhit

7. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:03 p.m.

Liam MacSween
A/Municipal Clerk