



**BUDGET COMMITTEE  
(STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE ON BUDGET)  
MINUTES  
February 5, 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  
Tim Outhit

STAFF: Jane Fraser, Director of Finance & Asset Management/CFO  
John Traves, Municipal Solicitor  
Liam MacSween, A/Municipal Clerk  
Robyn Dean, 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](http://halifax.ca).*

*The meeting was called to order at 9:31 a.m., and recessed at 12:00 p.m. Council reconvened in at 1:00 p.m. and recessed at 1:51 p.m. Council reconvened in at 2:00 p.m. and adjourned at 4:13 p.m.*

## 1. CALL TO ORDER

The following was before Budget Committee:

- A staff handout outlining the current over/under list

Councillor Walker, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:31 a.m.

## 2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – NONE

## 3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The following was before Budget Committee:

- Correspondence from Colin May

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

**Harry Critchley, East Coast Prison Justice Society**, spoke briefly on sobering centres and outlined several successful centres across North America. Critchley noted that sobering centres are generally employed by healthcare providers and that these establishments function as a safe place for intoxicated individuals. Furthermore, Critchley noted that sobering centres have been successful in decreasing the number of police detentions of intoxicated persons in Western Australia from 1991-2005 (declined 84% from 12,346 to 1,972). Critchley called on the Budget Committee to request a feasibility study regarding the implementation of a sobering centre and/or a managed alcohol program, including consultation with communities disproportionately affected by alcoholism.

In response to questions about funding, Critchley noted that sobering centres are typically run by non-profit organizations with municipal funding. It was also noted that some sobering centres in British Columbia are partly funded by the provincial health authority. In response to questions about the staffing model at sobering centres, Critchley stated that larger cities employ a greater number of health care professionals, however they also employ individuals from social services (i.e., social workers).

**EI Jones, Decade for People of African Descent (DPAD)**, spoke briefly on the issues associated with increased police budgets and that they are increasing across Canada. According to Jones, increased police budgets allow police to expand and shift the grounds of racial profiling. Furthermore, Jones noted that African Nova Scotians are still experiencing police brutality and racial profiling and that they have concerns with policing and the oversight that is in place. Jones called on the Budget Committee to freeze the police budget, stating that an increase at this time would be immoral.

**Brendan Marr, President of Halifax Professional Firefighters**, spoke about the proposed 2020/21 budget for Halifax Regional Fire & Emergency. Marr noted that Halifax Regional Fire & Emergency has seen significant increases in performance indicators (9% increase in compliance with response time for the adopted standard) under Chief Stuebing's direction. Marr also noted that the business unit is underfunded and urged the Budget Committee to support the proposed budgetary increases to allow for the continuation of enhanced service.

**Sakura Saunders**, spoke briefly about their experiences dealing with the Halifax Regional Police (HRP). Saunders commented that when HRP officers are faced with confrontation, they often use reactive policing and choose to escalate the situation. According to Saunders, HRP has engaged in unacceptable and racist behaviour since the official apology to Nova Scotia's black community. Saunders stated that increasing the police budget at this time would simply endorse an escalation of police tactics and racial profiling.

#### 4. Halifax Regional Police and Royal Canadian Mounted Police

The following was before Budget Committee:

- A staff recommendation report dated January 29, 2020
- Correspondence from Harry Critchley

Carole McDougall, Acting Chair of the Board of Police Commissioners, gave a presentation on the Halifax Board of Police Commissioners including a short introduction on the proposed 2020/21 Halifax Regional Police budget. McDougall noted that the budget increase recommended to Regional Council includes provisions for new positions in the Criminal Investigation Division (CID), Professional Standards Division (PSB), and the Prisoner Care Facility (PCF).

Chief Dan Kinsella, Halifax Regional Police, came forward and gave a presentation on the 2020/21 budget proposal for the Halifax Regional Police. Chief Kinsella noted that HRP is proposing an increase/revenue decrease of the budget by \$669,300. This proposal includes the addition of two (2) Staff Sergeants (\$182,400) and six (6) Sergeants (\$486,900). Chief Kinsella further noted that without these additional eight (8) positions, HRP is \$157,500 under HRM's 2020/21 target budget.

The Budget Committee expressed concerns with increasing HRP's operating budget. Specifically, the Committee questioned if HRP's budget has seen significant growth within the past few years. Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), noted that although the dollar figure of the budget has risen in the past few years, the percentage of the total budget allotted to HRP has remained relatively stable.

The majority of the Budget Committee's questions revolved around HRP's request for eight (8) additional staff members. Specifically, the Committee referenced HRP's ongoing Workload Review and questioned why additional positions were being requested before the study's completion. Chief Kinsella noted that the Workload Review was triggered by the Policing Resources Review and is primarily related to front-line staff/officers as opposed to supervisory roles like those that are being requested. It was further noted that HRP's proposal is to help deal with the lack of supervisory capacity with which HRP is currently faced. The Budget Committee asked if past incidents could have been mitigated if HRP had had additional supervision. Chief Kinsella noted that although it is difficult to speculate, probability states that increased supervision leads to increased mitigation potential. In response to questions about the timeline of the Workload Review, Chief Kinsella also noted that HRP's goal is to have the study completed by the end of the calendar year. The Budget Committee agreed that they would like to receive more information on the Workload Review before supporting HRP's request for additional staff.

In response to questions on the feasibility of Sobering Centres within HRM, Chief Kinsella noted their support of projects that contribute to harm reduction. However, it was also noted that Sobering Centres would be beneficial as an addition to the Prisoner Care Facility. The Chief further noted that if Sobering Centres were implemented within HRM, it would not reduce or affect HRP's request for the additional Staff Sergeants.

Several concerns were raised about the aging of HRP's headquarters, specifically within the Prisoner Care Facility. Chief Kinsella noted that the proposal for the new building is capital budget request which is currently scheduled for fiscal year 2023/2024. It was also noted that in the interim, risk mitigation practices are in place.

The Budget Committee was also concerned about the comments made during the public's participation and noted that the budget should be connected with the administration of equitable policing. Chief Kinsella reiterated the need for the eight (8) positions that were requested as part of HRP's 2020/21 budget proposal and stated their support for social justice and harm reduction initiatives. Furthermore, Chief Kinsella stated that the request for the eight (8) positions was made to address gaps in supervision and workload and subsequently deliver efficient and effective policing. The Budget Committee asked Chief Kinsella if there was an alternative plan in place to allocate funding for these positions should HRP's budget request be rejected. Chief Kinsella stated that supervision is the foundation of risk

mitigation and that these positions are therefore critical to the organization. It was further noted that the department would be forced to redistribute their priorities if the request is rejected.

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Blackburn, seconded by Councillor Whitman

**THAT the Budget Committee direct the Chief Administrative Officer to prepare the Halifax Regional Police 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 that Plan as directed by Regional Council's Committee of the Whole on Budget.**

MOVED by Mayor Savage, seconded by Councillor Mancini

**THAT the Budget Committee add -\$157,500 as an operating under budget option to the parking lot for consideration.**

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Not present: Councillor Karsten

MOVED by Councillor Outhit, seconded by Councillor Streach

**THAT the Budget Committee add six (6) Sergeant Positions (\$486,900) as an operating over budget to the parking lot for consideration.**

**MOTION PUT AND DEFEATED. (6 in favour, 8 against)**

In favour: Councillors Streach, Hendsbee, Mancini, Adams, Zurawski, and Outhit

Against: Deputy Mayor Blackburn, Councillors Nicoll, Austin, Mason, Smith, Cleary, Whitman, and Russell

Not present: Mayor Savage, Councillors Karsten and Walker

The Budget Committee noted that HRP has received substantial investments from HRM in the past years and therefore did not support going over the 2020/21 target budget.

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

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED. (11 in favour, 3 against)**

In favour: Deputy Mayor Blackburn, Councillors Streach, Hendsbee, Nicoll, Austin, Mancini, Mason, Smith, Zurawski, Russell and Outhit

Against: Councillors Cleary, Adams, and Whitman

Not present: Mayor Savage, Councillors Karsten and Walker

Chief Superintendent Janis Gray, Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) provided a brief presentation on the proposed RCMP budget for 2020/21 including the request for one (1) additional Inspector position to assist with administrative and managerial duties.

The Budget Committee discussed the possibility of approving a motion to add this request to the parking lot as an over budget item for consideration. Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), noted that there is a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the federal, provincial, and municipal government that outlines the process meant to be followed in requesting additional resources for the RCMP. The CAO also added that this MOU specifies that the process would have needed to be

completed before December 1, 2019. It was further clarified that the RCMP's request would not be accepted for the 2020/21 fiscal year but could come forward as a request for fiscal year 2021/22.

## **5. Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency**

The following was before Budget Committee:

- A staff recommendation report dated January 29, 2020

Ken Stuebing, Chief of Halifax Regional Fire & Emergency provided a presentation on the proposed 2020/21 budget, including their request for the following:

- An increase in training materials (\$290,000);
- An increase in uniforms and clothing (\$270,000);
- An increase in logistic pressures (\$230,000);
- An increase in professional services (\$60,000); and,
- An increase in incident command system and management training (\$40,000).

The Budget Committee expressed support for these requests, however some were concerned that the proposed allocation of funds does not address the business unit's biggest challenge which is a lack of service to the Eastern shore. Chief Stuebing noted that there is work that needs to be done to identify a strategy for service on the Eastern shore and that structural deficits only exacerbate the issue. Chief Stuebing further noted that Halifax Regional Fire & Emergency begins each fiscal year with a deficit of almost one (1) million dollars and further explained that if this deficit were resolved, the business unit could begin looking at staffing solutions. The Budget Committee asked Chief Stuebing if there was an alternative plan in place should the budget request be rejected. Chief Stuebing noted that the organization would be forced to further redistribute cost centres and funds based on their priorities.

Several Committee members expressed concern that many of the items included in the over budget requests should be built into the target budget. Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), noted that although Halifax Regional Fire & Emergency is fundamentally underfunded, the additional requests simply would not fit within the budgetary envelope for the organization.

MOVED by Councillor Whitman, seconded by Councillor Mancini

**THAT the Budget Committee direct the Chief Administrative Officer to prepare the Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency 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 that Plan as directed by Regional Council's Committee of the Whole on Budget.**

MOVED by Councillor Whitman, seconded by Councillor Hendsbee

**THAT the Budget Committee add increased training materials (\$290,000) as an operating over budget to the parking lot for consideration.**

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

In favour: Councillors Streach, Hendsbee, Nicoll, Austin, Mancini, Mason, Cleary, Adams, Zurawski, Whitman, Russell and Outhit

Against: Deputy Mayor Blackburn

Not present: Mayor Savage, Councillors Karsten, Smith, and Walker

MOVED by Councillor Whitman, seconded by Councillor Hendsbee

**THAT the Budget Committee add increased uniforms and clothing (\$270,000) as an operating over budget to the parking lot for consideration.**

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Not present: Mayor Savage, Councillors Karsten, Smith, and Walker

MOVED by Councillor Whitman, seconded by Councillor Hendsbee

**THAT the Budget Committee add increased logistic pressures (\$230,000) as an operating over budget to the parking lot for consideration.**

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED.** (10 in favour, 3 against)

In favour: Councillors Hendsbee, Nicoll, Austin, Mancini, Mason, Cleary, Adams, Zurawski, Whitman, and Russell

Against: Deputy Mayor Blackburn, Councillors Streach and Outhit

Not present: Mayor Savage, Councillors Karsten, Smith, and Walker

MOVED by Councillor Whitman, seconded by Councillor Hendsbee

**THAT the Budget Committee add increased professional services (\$60,000) as an operating over budget to the parking lot for consideration.**

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED.** (11 in favour, 2 against)

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

Against: Councillors Streach and Nicoll

Not present: Mayor Savage, Councillors Karsten, Smith, and Walker

MOVED by Councillor Whitman, seconded by Councillor Hendsbee

**THAT the Budget Committee add incident command system and management training (\$40,000) as an operating over budget to the parking lot for consideration.**

**MOTION PUT AND DEFEATED.** (2 in favour, 11 against)

In favour: Councillors Hendsbee and Russell

Against: Deputy Mayor Blackburn, Councillors Streach, Nicoll, Austin, Mancini, Mason, Cleary, Adams, Zurawski, Whitman, and Outhit

Not present: Mayor Savage, Councillors Karsten, Smith, and Walker

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

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Not present: Mayor Savage, Councillors Karsten, Smith, Walker, and Outhit

**5. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:13 p.m.

Sherryl Murphy  
A/Municipal Clerk