



**BUDGET COMMITTEE  
(STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE ON BUDGET)  
MINUTES  
November 23 and 26, 2021**

PRESENT:           Councillor     Paul Russell, Chair  
                      Mayor           Mike Savage  
                      Deputy Mayors: Tim Outhit (November 23, 2021)  
  Pam Lovelace (November 26, 2021)  
                      Councillors:   Cathy Deagle Gammon  
  David Hendsbee  
  Becky Kent  
  Trish Purdy  
  Sam Austin  
  Tony Mancini  
  Waye Mason  
  Lindell Smith  
  Shawn Cleary  
  Kathryn Morse  
  Patty Cuttell  
  Iona Stoddard  
  Lisa Blackburn

STAFF:             Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer  
                      Jerry Blackwood, Executive Director of Finance & Asset Management/Chief  
  Financial Officer  
                      John Traves, Municipal Solicitor  
                      Iain MacLean, Municipal Clerk  
                      Krista Vining, Legislative Assistant  
                      Annie Sherry, 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 10:00 a.m. and recessed at 12:09 p.m. on November 23, 2021.  
Budget Committee reconvened on November 26, 2021 at 9:04 a.m. and adjourned at 10:57 a.m.*

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Chair called the meeting to order November 23, 2021 at 10:00 a.m.

**2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – October 26, 2021**

MOVED by Councillor Purdy, seconded by Councillor Blackburn

**THAT the minutes of October 26, 2021 be approved as circulated.**

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

**3. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS AND APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS**

Additions: None

Deletions: None

MOVED by Councillor Deagle Gammon, seconded by Councillor Purdy

**THAT the agenda be approved as presented.**

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**4. CALL FOR DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTERESTS – NONE**

**5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – NONE**

**6. 2022/23 Fiscal Framework**

The following was before the Budget Committee:

- Staff recommendation report dated November 9, 2021
- Staff presentations dated November 23, 2021
- Staff presentation dated November 26, 2021
- Correspondence from Craig McCrea, Bill Campbell, Caleb Haynes, Michelle Champriss, Trish MacLean, Ann Davies, Hanah Chapman, Patricia Livingston, Marie Welton, Chris Crowell, Karen Beazley, Laura White, Lynn Murphy, Lynn Mason, Norm Collins, Sadie Quinn, Bonnie Yaren, Joanna Bull, Matthew Schnurr, Emily McDonah, Linda Scherzinger, Ella Reid, Tara Day, Sebastian Schlosser, Helen Jones, and Jesse Hitchcock

Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer, Jerry Blackwood, Executive Director of Finance & Asset Management/Chief Financial Officer, and Bruce Fisher, Director, Financial Policy and Planning presented the 2022/23 Fiscal Framework.

MOVED by Councillor Mason, seconded by Councillor Austin

**THAT the Budget Committee:**

- 1. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to develop the 2022/23 Budget according to Council's approved priorities, and preliminary fiscal direction, including setting the average property tax bill for residential and commercial properties at a 2.9 per cent increase plus an additional 3.0 per cent increase in the average property tax bill for a**

dedicated Climate Action Tax to fund Strategic Investments, for a total average increase of 5.9 per cent; and

**2. Recommend that Halifax Regional Council:**

- a) **Approve the updated Reserve Business Cases included in Attachment A of the staff report dated November 9, 2021 and the transfers in reserve balances and commitments described in the staff report dated November 9, 2021; and**
- b) **Approve the updated Debt Guidelines included in Attachment B of the staff report dated November 9, 2021 including a new debt ceiling of \$1,200 per dwelling unit and a revised formula for Capital from Operating targets.**

Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer, Jerry Blackwood, Executive Director of Finance & Asset Management/Chief Financial Officer, and Bruce Fisher, Director, Financial Policy and Planning responded to questions of clarification from Budget Committee.

MOVED by Mayor Savage, seconded by Deputy Mayor Outhit

**THAT the motion be amended to include new sections which read as follows;**

- 3. **Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to prepare a Supplemental Report with respect to options to reduce the final average property tax bill increase from 5.9% to 3.7% through adjusting:**
  - a) **Funding for capital projects, through changes in Capital from Operating, Debt, Reserves, Cost Sharing or other,**
  - b) **The timing of capital projects, and,**
  - c) **Operating costs and revenues, as appropriate.**

**It is further recommended that Budget Committee defer recommendation 2 b) approving the updated Debt Guidelines pending Budget Committee's discussion of the strategic initiatives.**

John Traves, Municipal Solicitor, clarified that Budget Committee should vote on the amendment and consider the motion to defer separately.

Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer, responded to questions of clarification from Budget Committee.

Jerry Blackwood, Executive Director of Finance & Asset Management/Chief Financial Officer, responded to questions of clarification from Budget Committee, outlined the budget process for 2022/2023, and that staff will return with a revised fiscal framework in January 2022.

Councillor Russell stepped down from the Chair at 11:59 a.m. and Councillor Deagle Gammon assumed the Chair. Councillor Russell resumed the Chair at 12:02 p.m.

As provided for in section 90 of Administrative Order One, the motion was separated for voting purposes.

MOVED by Mayor Savage, seconded by Deputy Mayor Outhit

**THAT the motion be amended to include new sections which read as follows;**

3. **Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to prepare a Supplemental Report with respect to options to reduce the final average property tax bill increase from 5.9% to 3.7% through adjusting:**
  - a) **Funding for capital projects, through changes in Capital from Operating, Debt, Reserves, Cost Sharing or other,**
  - b) **The timing of capital projects, and,**
  - c) **Operating costs and revenues, as appropriate.**

**MOTION TO AMEND PUT AND PASSED.** (14 in favour, 3 against)

In favour: Mayor Savage, Deputy Mayor Outhit, Councillors Deagle Gammon, Hendsbee, Kent, Purdy, Austin, Mancini, Cleary, Morse, Cuttall, Stoddard, Lovelace, Blackburn

Against: Budget Committee Chair Russell, Councillors Mason, Smith

The motion as amended now read:

MOVED by Councillor Mason, seconded by Councillor Austin

**THAT the Budget Committee:**

1. **Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to develop the 2022/23 Budget according to Council's approved priorities, and preliminary fiscal direction, including setting the average property tax bill for residential and commercial properties at a 2.9 per cent increase plus an additional 3.0 per cent increase in the average property tax bill for a dedicated Climate Action Tax to fund Strategic Investments, for a total average increase of 5.9 per cent; and**
2. **Recommend that Halifax Regional Council:**
  - a) **Approve the updated Reserve Business Cases included in Attachment A of the staff report dated November 9, 2021 and the transfers in reserve balances and commitments described in the staff report dated November 9, 2021; and**
  - b) **Approve the updated Debt Guidelines included in Attachment B of the staff report dated November 9, 2021 including a new debt ceiling of \$1,200 per dwelling unit and a revised formula for Capital from Operating targets.**
3. **Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to prepare a Supplemental Report with respect to options to reduce the final average property tax bill increase from 5.9% to 3.7% through adjusting:**
  - a) **Funding for capital projects, through changes in Capital from Operating, Debt, Reserves, Cost Sharing or other,**
  - b) **The timing of capital projects, and,**
  - c) **Operating costs and revenues, as appropriate.**

Bruce Fisher, Director, Financial Policy and Planning, responded to questions of clarification from Budget Committee regarding the anticipated contents of the supplemental report and the low-income grant program for tax relief.

Jerry Blackwood, Executive Director of Finance & Asset Management/Chief Financial Officer, and Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer responded to questions of clarification from Budget Committee and further outlined the Council budget process.

Councillor Russell stepped down from the Chair at 10:24 a.m. and Councillor Deagle Gammon assumed the Chair. Councillor Russell resumed the Chair at 10:28 a.m.

John Traves, Municipal Solicitor responded to questions of clarification from Budget Committee.

As provided for in section 90 of Administrative Order One, the motion was split for voting purposes.

MOVED by Councillor Mason, seconded by Councillor Austin

**THAT the Budget Committee:**

- 1. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to develop the 2022/23 Budget according to Council's approved priorities, and preliminary fiscal direction, including:**
  - a) Setting the average property tax bill for residential and commercial properties at a 2.9 per cent increase;**

**MOTION AS AMENDED PUT AND PASSED.** (12 in favour, 4 against)

In favour: Mayor Savage, Deputy Mayor Lovelace, Budget Committee Chair Russell, Councillors Austin, Mancini, Mason, Cleary, Morse, Cuttell, Stoddard, Blackburn, Outhit

Against: Councillors Deagle Gammon, Hendsbee, Kent, Purdy

Not present: Councillor Smith

MOVED by Councillor Mason, seconded by Councillor Austin

**THAT the Budget Committee:**

- 1. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to develop the 2022/23 Budget according to Council's approved priorities, and preliminary fiscal direction, including:**
  - b) An additional 3.0 per cent increase in the average property tax bill for a dedicated Climate Action Tax to fund Strategic Investments; and**

**MOTION AS AMENDED PUT AND PASSED.** (10 in favour, 6 against)

In favour: Mayor Savage, Deputy Mayor Lovelace, Councillors Austin, Mancini, Mason, Cleary, Morse, Cuttell, Stoddard, Blackburn, Outhit

Against: Budget Committee Chair Russell, Councillors Deagle Gammon, Hendsbee, Kent, Purdy, Outhit

Not present: Councillor Smith

MOVED by Councillor Mason, seconded by Councillor Austin

**THAT Halifax Regional Council:**

- 3. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to prepare a Supplemental Report with respect to options to reduce the final average property tax bill increase from 5.9% to 3.7% through adjusting:**
  - a) Funding for capital projects, through changes in Capital from Operating, Debt, Reserves, Cost Sharing or other,**
  - b) The timing of capital projects, and,**
  - c) Operating costs and revenues, as appropriate.**

**MOTION AS AMENDED PUT AND PASSED.** (12 in favour, 4 against)

In favour: Mayor Savage, Deputy Mayor Lovelace, Budget Committee Chair Russell, Councillors Deagle Gammon, Hendsbee, Mancini, Cleary, Morse, Cuttell, Stoddard, Blackburn, Outhit

Against: Councillors Kent, Purdy, Austin, Mason

Not present: Councillor Smith

MOVED by Councillor Mason, seconded by Councillor Austin

**2. Recommend that Halifax Regional Council:**

- a) Approve the updated Reserve Business Cases included in Attachment A of the staff report dated November 9, 2021 and the transfers in reserve balances and commitments described in the staff report dated November 9, 2021**

**MOTION AS AMENDED PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Not present: Mayor Savage, Councillor Smith

MOVED by Councillor Cleary, seconded by Councillor Kent

**THAT Budget Committee defer recommendation 2 b) approving the updated Debt Guidelines, pending Budget Committee's discussion of the strategic initiatives.**

**MOTION TO DEFER PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Not present: Mayor Savage, Councillor Smith

**7. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned on November 26, 2021 at 10:57 a.m.

Iain MacLean  
Municipal Clerk