



**BUDGET COMMITTEE
(STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE ON BUDGET)
MINUTES
MARCH 2 and 4, 2022**

PRESENT: Councillor Paul Russell, Chair
 Mayor Mike Savage
 Deputy Mayor Pam Lovelace
 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
 Tim Outhit

STAFF: Jerry Blackwood, Executive Director of Finance & Asset Management/Chief
 Financial Officer
 John Traves, Municipal Solicitor
 Iain MacLean, Municipal Clerk
 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.

The meeting was called to order at 9:36 a.m. and recessed at 12:05 p.m. Budget Committee reconvened in at 1:03 p.m. and recessed at 2:50 p.m. Budget Committee reconvened in at 3:02 p.m. and recessed at 4:01 p.m. on March 2, 2022. Budget Committee reconvened on March 4, 2022 at 9:33 a.m. and recessed at 11:20 a.m. Budget Committee reconvened in at 11:26 a.m. and adjourned at 12:11 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:36 a.m. and acknowledged that the meeting took place in the traditional and ancestral territory of the Mi'kmaq people, and that we are all treaty people.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – NONE

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 Stoddard

THAT the agenda be approved as presented.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Not present: Councillor Mason

4. CALL FOR DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTERESTS – NONE

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Patrick Sullivan, District 13, representing Halifax Chamber of Commerce spoke to concerns from members of the Chamber of Commerce regarding the proposed increase to the commercial tax rate, and asked Budget Committee to consider a reduced commercial tax rate increase of 2% to reflect ongoing economic recovery efforts due to COVID-19. Sullivan provided options for the Halifax Regional Municipality to consider in addressing housing issues and responded to questions from Budget Committee.

Brendan Meagher, representing Halifax Professional Firefighters, stated their support for the proposed Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency budget, encouraged Budget Committee to support it as well, and spoke to ongoing challenges in the sector.

Omar Bhimji, representing Quest Canada spoke to Quest Canada's support for the full implementation of HaliFACT and the long-term cost savings of taking action on climate change through HaliFACT.

6. Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency

The following was before Budget Committee:

- Staff recommendation report dated February 23, 2022
- Staff presentation dated March 2, 2022
- Budget Adjustment List Summary dated March 3, 2022
- Correspondence from Omar Bhimji

Chief Ken Stuebing, Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency, gave a presentation on the Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency 2022/2023 Budget and Business Plan and responded to questions of clarification from Budget Committee.

MOVED by Councillor Mancini, seconded by Councillor Mason

THAT the Budget Committee direct the Chief Administrative Officer to incorporate the Halifax Regional Fire & Emergency proposed 2022/23 Budget and Business Plan, as set out and discussed in the accompanying report dated February 23, 2022 and supporting presentation, into the Draft 2022/23 Operating Budget.

MOVED by Councillor Mancini, seconded by Councillor Blackburn

THAT the Budget Committee include \$75,000 in additional one-time funding costs associated with one FTE Assistant Emergency Management Coordinator within the proposed 2022/23 Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency proposed budget to the Budget Adjustment List as an operating over budget option for consideration.

Chief Ken Stuebing, Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency, responded to questions of clarification from Budget Committee.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

MOVED by Councillor Hendsbee, seconded by Deputy Mayor Lovelace

THAT the Budget Committee include \$55,000 in additional funding costs associated with the JEM Teams education and programming within the proposed 2022/23 Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency proposed budget to the Budget Adjustment List as an operating over budget option for consideration.

Chief Ken Stuebing, Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency, and Deputy Chief Dave Meldrum, Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency, responded to questions of clarification from Budget Committee regarding recruitment, onboarding, and support for volunteer firefighters.

Deputy Chief Corey Beals, Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency, responded to questions of clarification from Budget Committee.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Councillor Russell stepped down from the Chair and Councillor Deagle Gammon assumed the Chair.

MOVED by Councillor Russell, seconded by Councillor Outhit

THAT the Budget Committee include the addition of 10 FTE Firefighters beginning in February 2023 to be funded by reducing the existing Overtime Budget in 2022/23, and an offsetting reduction in the Overtime Budget in the 2023/24 budget to the Budget Adjustment List as an operating over budget option for consideration.

Chief Ken Stuebing, Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency, responded to questions of clarification from Budget Committee regarding training capacity and response time.

Jerry Blackwood, Executive Director of Finance & Asset Management/Chief Financial Officer, responded to questions of clarification from Budget Committee.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Councillor Russell resumed the Chair.

The question was called on the main motion:

MOVED by Councillor Mancini, seconded by Councillor Mason

THAT the Budget Committee direct the Chief Administrative Officer to incorporate the Halifax Regional Fire & Emergency proposed 2022/23 Budget and Business Plan, as set out and discussed in the accompanying report dated February 23, 2022 and supporting presentation, into the Draft 2022/23 Operating Budget.

Chief Ken Stuebing, Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency, and Deputy Chief Corey Beals, Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency, responded to questions of clarification from Budget Committee.

John Traves, Municipal Solicitor, responded to questions of clarification from Budget Committee regarding jurisdiction of ground search and rescue oversight.

Deputy Chief Dave Meldrum, Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency, responded to questions of clarification from Budget Committee regarding strategies for retention and engagement of volunteer firefighters.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Not present: Councillor Cleary

7. Halifax Public Libraries

The following was before Budget Committee:

- Staff recommendation report dated February 22, 2022
- Staff presentation dated March 2, 2022

Åsa Kachan, Chief Executive Officer, Halifax Public Libraries, gave a presentation on the Halifax Public Libraries 2022/2023 Budget and Business Plan and responded to questions of clarification from Budget Committee.

MOVED by Councillor Mancini, seconded by Councillor Morse

THAT the Budget Committee direct the Chief Administrative Officer to incorporate the Halifax Public Library's proposed 2022/23 Budget and Business Plan, as set out and discussed in the accompanying report dated February 22, 2022 and supporting presentation, into the Draft 2022/23 Operating Budget.

Åsa Kachan, Chief Executive Officer, Halifax Public Libraries, responded to questions of clarification from Budget Committee.

Debbie Lebel, Director of Access, Halifax Public Libraries, responded to questions of clarification from Budget Committee regarding wait times for electronic and print materials.

MOVED by Councillor Austin, seconded by Councillor Mancini

THAT the Budget Committee include \$300,000 in additional funding costs associated with electronic resources within the proposed 2022/23 Halifax Public Libraries proposed budget to the Budget Adjustment List as an operating over budget option for consideration.

Åsa Kachan, Chief Executive Officer, Halifax Public Libraries, and Debbie Lebel, Director of Access, Halifax Public Libraries, responded to questions of clarification from Budget Committee.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Not present: Councillors Smith, Outhit

MOVED by Councillor Deagle Gammon, seconded by Deputy Mayor Lovelace

THAT the Budget Committee include \$300,000 in additional funding costs associated with Reaching Rural Communities within the proposed 2022/23 Halifax Public Libraries proposed budget to the Budget Adjustment List as an operating over budget option for consideration.

Asa Kachan, Chief Executive Officer, Halifax Public Libraries, responded to questions of clarification from Budget Committee.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED. (15 in favour, 1 against)

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

Against: Councillor Purdy

Not present: Councillor Smith

MOVED by Councillor Morse, seconded by Councillor Blackburn

THAT the Budget Committee include \$250,000 in one-time additional funding costs associated with COVID-19 Recovery programming within the proposed 2022/23 Halifax Public Libraries proposed budget to the Budget Adjustment List as an operating over budget option for consideration.

Asa Kachan, Chief Executive Officer, Halifax Public Libraries, responded to questions of clarification from Budget Committee.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Not present: Mayor Savage

The question was called on the main motion:

MOVED by Councillor Mancini, seconded by Councillor Morse

THAT the Budget Committee direct the Chief Administrative Officer to incorporate the Halifax Public Library's proposed 2022/23 Budget and Business Plan, as set out and discussed in the accompanying report dated February 22, 2022 and supporting presentation, into the Draft 2022/23 Operating Budget.

Asa Kachan, Chief Executive Officer, Halifax Public Libraries, and Jacques Dubé, Chief Administration Officer, responded to questions of clarification from Budget Committee.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

8. Fiscal Services

The following was before Budget Committee:

- Staff recommendation report dated February 24, 2022
- Staff presentation dated March 2, 2022

Tyler Higgins, Financial Consultant-Budget Coordinator, and Bruce Fisher, Director of Financial Policy & Planning, gave a presentation on the Fiscal Services 2022/2023 Budget and Business Plan and responded to questions of clarification from Budget Committee.

MOVED by Mayor Savage, seconded by Councillor Kent

THAT the Budget Committee direct the Chief Administrative Officer to incorporate the Fiscal Services proposed 2022/23 Budget and Business Plan, as set out and discussed in the attachment of the report dated February 24, 2022 and supporting presentation, into the Draft 2022/23 Operating Budget.

Jerry Blackwood, Executive Director of Finance & Asset Management/Chief Financial Officer, responded to questions of clarification from Budget Committee.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Not present: Councillor Mancini

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:11 p.m. on March 4, 2022.

Iain MacLean
Municipal Clerk