



**HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES  
November 27, 2018**

**PRESENT:**

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

**STAFF:**

Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer  
John Traves, Municipal Solicitor  
Kevin Arjoon, Municipal Clerk  
Sherryl Murphy, Deputy Clerk  
Phoebe Rai, Legislative Assistant  
Liam MacSween, 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 12:20 p.m. Council reconvened at 4:41 p.m. and adjourned at 5:12 p.m.*

## **1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Savage called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Council agreed to revise the Order of Business to consider item 5 prior to item 4.

Later in the meeting it was determined that item 4 would be brought forward to a future meeting.

## **2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – NONE**

## **3. CALL FOR DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTERESTS – NONE**

## **4. 2017-2020 Multi-year Priority Outcome Update (Continuation from November 13, 2018)**

The following was before Committee of the Whole:

- A staff recommendation report dated November 27, 2018

This matter was deleted from the agenda.

## **5. Fiscal Framework**

The following was before Committee of the Whole:

- A staff recommendation report dated November 20, 2018 with attached staff presentation dated November 27, 2018
- Correspondence from Adam Grant, Stephen Drage, and Ian Brown-Sweeting

Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), introduced the Fiscal Framework presentation, highlighting the administration's goal of financial stability and strategic investment in Regional Council's priority areas.

Bruce Fisher, Manager of Financial Policy and Planning, delivered the presentation, providing an overview of economic assumptions and outlining the challenges of economic growth in the region. Fisher set out the seven key areas where Council's direction is sought: taxes, existing services, new services, capital budget, capital from operating, debt, and reserves.

MOVED by Councillor Whitman, seconded by Councillor Karsten

**THAT Committee of the Whole recommend that Halifax Regional Council direct staff to develop the 2019-2020 Budget and 2020-21 Budget in Principle according to Council's approved priorities, and preliminary fiscal direction, including:**

- **maintaining the appropriate level of existing services with the addition of the new services previously approved by Council;**
- **a three-year capital budget that recapitalizes assets, funds growth related issues and is balanced to the fiscal framework;**
- **a responsible debt position;**
- **appropriate reserve balances that allow for risk mitigation, future obligations, and opportunities; and,**
- **alignment of the current average tax bill for residential homes and commercial properties under two scenarios:**
  - a) **2.1% increase for 2019-20;**
  - b) **2.9% increase for 2019-20.**

Bruce Fisher and Jerry Blackwood, Acting Director of Finance and Asset Management/Chief Financial Officer, responded to questions of clarification from members of Council, including the following:

- Revenues from Deed Transfer Tax will have been higher than average in 2018-19 due to one transaction from a Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT) that generated six million dollars;
- Salaries in 2018-19 are higher than usual due to there being an additional two working days in the fiscal year; and
- The municipality receives approximately 80% of its revenues from property taxes, which are limited by the provincial Capped Assessment Program.

The following amendment was proposed:

MOVED by Councillor Mason, seconded by Deputy Mayor Mancini

**THAT Committee of the Whole recommend that Halifax Regional Council direct staff to include an additional scenario for the alignment of the current average tax bill for residential homes and commercial properties reflecting a 1.9% increase for 2019-20.**

**MOTION TO AMEND PUT AND PASSED.**

The motion before Committee of the Whole now reads:

MOVED by Councillor Whitman, seconded by Councillor Karsten

**THAT Committee of the Whole recommend that Halifax Regional Council direct staff to develop the 2019-2020 Budget and 2020-21 Budget in Principle according to Council's approved priorities, and preliminary fiscal direction, including:**

- maintaining the appropriate level of existing services with the addition of the new services previously approved by Council;
- a three-year capital budget that recapitalizes assets, funds growth related issues and is balanced to the fiscal framework;
- a responsible debt position;
- appropriate reserve balances that allow for risk mitigation, future obligations, and opportunities; and,
- alignment of the current average tax bill for residential homes and commercial properties under three scenarios:
  - a) 2.1% increase for 2019-20;
  - b) 2.9% increase for 2019-20;
  - c) 1.9 % increase for 2019-20

**AMENDED MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

## **6. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:12 p.m.

Kevin Arjoon  
Municipal Clerk