

Request for Council's Consideration		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Included on Agenda</b> (Submitted to Municipal Clerk's Office by Noon Thursday)	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Added Item</b> (Submitted to Municipal Clerk's Office by Noon Monday)	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Request from the Floor</b>
<b>Date of Council Meeting: April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025</b>		
<b>Subject: 2026-2027 Budget and Business Plan Council Direction</b>		
<b>Motion for Council to Consider:</b>		
<p>That Halifax Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to return to Council by June 2025 with a staff report that includes feasible options and considerations for the 2026/2027 budget and business planning process including the following:</p>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Hold expenditure levels flat for the 2026/2027 budget to keep the total budget at 1.35B with consideration for an increase for inflation based on CPI.</li><li>2. Identify operating efficiencies and savings that could be implemented in this current budget year.</li><li>3. Examine options for long term efficiencies and savings in both the operating and capital budget including areas of duplication, service modernization, project integration, and potential redeployment of resources,</li><li>4. Identify options for revenue diversification and funding including financing tools, user fees, private and public partnerships, and revenue sharing.</li><li>5. Consider financial sustainability and service delivery enhancement opportunities for core services to identify efficiencies, find capacity, and increase productivity,</li><li>6. Timeline for the annual business planning and budget process that would be shorter and start earlier for Council and conclude with an approved budget no later than February 28th.</li></ol>		
<b>Reason:</b>		
<p>During the 2025/2026 Budget Committee deliberations, Mayor and Council approved a flat tax rate budget following considerable discussion regarding the need to curb tax increases amid the current cost-of-living concerns for HRM residents and businesses. This short-term intervention by Council will save property owners much-needed resources; however, a longer-term view to strengthening HRM's financial sustainability and re-focusing resources for maximum impact on core mandate areas and reducing the reliance on property taxes as a main source of revenue is also needed. This Motion will launch the necessary examination that is required to initiate these future budget discussions.</p>		

**Outcome Sought:**

A framework of options and potential solutions that will provide Council with the necessary information to determine the appropriate direction for the 2026/2027 business planning and budget process.

*Mayor Andy Fillmore*