

BILL 92
Municipal Government Act (amended)
and
Halifax Regional Municipality Charter (amended)

Will fundamentally alter relationships between

- citizens and Halifax Regional Municipality
- Halifax Regional Municipality and province

—Will remove most provincial oversight

—Will provide for broad interpretation of municipal powers, rather than restrictive

—“Good government”

compare with “peace, order and good government”:

(language of federal powers, broader than provincial authority);

—Public consultation requested by Municipal Affairs

—HRM consultation

—196 responses to survey on website for four weeks (April 2017)

out of 450,000 citizens;

(registration required);

—285+ consultations with business interests

Public concerns (*pp 8 - 12*)

—transparency of procedures for grants to individuals and organizations;

—opposition to expanding HRM ability to borrow money without provincial oversight;

—opposition to Natural Person powers, or desire for unspecified restrictions

FINANCE

15 (4) will allow *ad hoc*, unbudgeted capital expenditures, up to the amount of the greatest of:

borrowing authority;

operating budget available; *or*

capital reserves available

Questions:

—How will operating requirements be funded, if the operating budget has been drained for unbudgeted capital expenditures?

—How is this request related to the “workarounds”, “convoluted” financing arrangements HRM has created where it has been denied provincial authorization?

eg Convention Centre, Airport Authority

—CFL stadium: how will this affect financing for proposed CFL Stadium, and other public-private partnerships?

—Admitted history of circumventing legislative restrictions: (*see page 20, Appendix 1*)

“In other cases, HRM has not received requisite enabling legislation for an initiative leading the municipality to find an alternate way to implement it that is less transparent:”

referencing:

—Convention Centre “**workaround of tax increment financing**”

—Airport Authority earlier versions of HIAA tax agreement “via a **convoluted** development grant agreement which involved HRM collecting the funds and then returning them to the airport”.

—What are “organizations pursuing charitable purposes whether not for profit or for profit”? (*page 7*)

TRANSPARENCY

—Minimal consultation on proposal itself, posted on specialized HRM website for four weeks, following Municipal Affairs request for public input

—Existing practices for *in camera* meetings regulated by Charter; *see page concerns:*

—increasing number of *in camera* meetings of Council;

—attendance of unrecorded parties at *in camera* meetings of Council
Cabinet under FOIPOP Act;

—No legislatively enconced proposals for expanded municipal transparency beyond requirement to adopt a policy about disclosing grant recipients

—Compare with expanded transparency requirements for provincial government
eg provincial lobbyist registry, no municipal lobbyist registration

PROVINCIAL-MUNICIPAL RELATIONS

—How will this affect possibility of future amendments to Charter and Municipal

Government Act?

—How do “good government” powers relate to provincial powers under Constitution?

— How will this relate to provincial budgeting ability?

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