

Minutes of Meeting
Finance Committee, Vancouver Park Board
2099 Beach Avenue, Vancouver

DATE OF MEETING: April 10, 2006

ATTENDEES: Park Board Commissioners
Commissioner Marty Zlotnik, Committee Chair
Commissioner Ian Robertson
Commissioner Loretta Woodcock
Commissioner Allan De Genova
Commissioner Spencer Herbert
Commissioner Heather Holden
Commissioner Korina Houghton

Park Board Staff

Susan Mundick	General Manager
Anita Ho	Director, Corporate Services
Jim Lowden	Director, Stanley District
Lori MacKay	Director, Vancouver East District
Liane McKenna	Director, Queen Elizabeth District
Piet Rutgers	Director, Planning and Operations
Barbara Joughin	Committee Secretary

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm. The Agenda for the meeting was as follows:

1. Approval of March 13, 2006 Meeting Minutes
2. 2006 Operating Budget

1. Approval of March 13, 2006 Meeting Minutes:

The minutes of the March 13, 2006 meeting were approved as presented.

2. 2006 Operating Budget

Susan Mundick informed the Committee that on April 6, 2006 City Council approved a \$400,000 reduction in the Park Board's 2006 operating budget to be achieved through efficiencies. She thanked the Commissioners for their hard work during the budget process, and recommended that the Board manage the budget reduction without impacts to service or increase in fees.

Anita Ho summarized City Council's operating budget decisions and provided details about how the Park Board's budget is affected. Council approved the Park Board's preliminary budget of \$55,230,800 (not including the New and Non-Recurring Budget) along with the following reductions. The preliminary budget was adjusted by a total of \$722,000. This includes reductions of \$400,000 to be achieved through efficiencies, \$63,000 for the Board's share of a city-wide increase in turnover savings, \$13,000 from the graffiti management plan, and \$246,000 for the implementation of the Ethical Purchasing policy.

The Park Board budget (not including New and Nonrecurring budget items) increased from \$52,953,716 in 2005 to \$54,508,800 in 2006, a \$1,555,084 (2.94%) net increase to the Park

Board's 2006 base budget. The Park Board receives 37% of the City's New and Nonrecurring budget (NNR) each year, which is \$370,000 for 2006. Council reduced their 2006 total NNR budget by \$250,000, and the Park Board's NNR budget was reduced by \$92,500 from 2005.

Staff presented a proposal to implement the requested \$400,000 budget reduction through departmental efficiencies and outlined the criteria that were applied in its development. These included minimizing impacts to customer service, protecting core services, and not increasing fees and charges.

Proposed budget reduction initiatives by district include:

- Planning and Operations: reduce street tree replacement plantings, expand graffiti removal contract beyond existing areas, reprioritize maintenance of park amenities
- Stanley District: purchase saw sharpening services
- Queen Elizabeth District: reduce casual staff hours and vehicle rental budget for wildlife program, tighten scheduling for district park maintenance
- Vancouver East District: tighten scheduling for district park maintenance, reorganize Riverfront Park garden crew
- Corporate Services: reduce vacation coverage budget

In addition, staff propose to reduce administrative staff hours at community centres in all districts by 2.5% (8 hours) per week for six months in 2006.

Discussion

- A member of the Committee asked if the Park Board's implementation of the ethical purchasing policy saved money and the group discussed the relationship between the sale of fair trade products and concession revenues. Staff clarified that this item was not part of the Park Board's base budget but was designated funding from the City of Vancouver for implementing the ethical purchasing policy, and it will not be received in 2006.
- Staff explained that efficiencies in staff turnover can be realized without impacting public service because there are generally delays in the normal process of replacing staff.
- The Committee inquired about the different reduction targets between districts and departments and staff explained that reductions were allocated proportionally to their budgets and where efficiencies could best be achieved.
- A member of the Committee asked if reducing tree replacement by 200 trees included fruit trees and staff said that the reduction will apply to regular street trees.
- The Chair of the Committee thanked staff for ensuring the Board was informed during the 2006 budget process.

Recommendation

The Finance Committee recommended that at their May 1, 2006 regular meeting the Board accept the budget initiatives as proposed by staff.

3. Next Meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 pm. The next Finance Committee meeting is scheduled for May 29, 2006 at 5:30 pm.