

Date: Dec. 13th, 1999

SUBJECT: Communication Plan - Award of Contract

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Board approve spending up to \$30,000 from the Corporate Sponsorship account to pay for the development of a Communication Plan.

POLICY

The Board's policy on the approved use of Corporate Sponsorship Funds contains the following criteria:

- a. To fund one-time expenditures to a limit of \$50,000 that will support revenue-generating activities and the money repaid into the Corporate Sponsorship account from the increased revenues within a period of three years.
- b. To fund initiatives with one-time expenditures to a limit of \$50,000 that will result in improved efficiencies.
- c. To fund one-time expenditures over and above the existing funding level in the operating budget which are beneficial to the overall Parks and Recreation system.
- d. All expenditures require Board approval.

BACKGROUND

In 1997 a general survey conducted for the Park Board concluded that the awareness of the Board's mandate and goals among the residents of Vancouver should be improved. Staff had also been concerned about internal communications amongst a staff whose numbers and work places had been changed substantially over the past several decades. It was decided by the Senior Management Team that a consultant be retained for the express purpose of developing a Communication Plan to guide the Park Board through the next three to five years.

DISCUSSION

The Process for Selection

Staff produced a request for proposals outlining the goals the Park Board wished to achieve as the result of a Communication Plan and sent it to eight Vancouver companies for their perusal in early June. As a result, six proposals were received in early July and through a criteria-based short listing

process, two firms were chosen for further presentations. Selection criteria included areas of focus such as previous experience, depth of understanding of the Park Board, creativeness, attention to detail, enthusiasm for the project and budget.

A selection committee was formed to interview the two short listed consultants who were asked to make a one hour presentation demonstrating how they would engineer the building of a new Communication Plan for the Park Board. Following the presentations, the Selection Committee decided to choose Optimum Public Relations with a contract estimated at \$26,000 plus taxes and disbursements with a completion date of March 31st, 2000.

Involvement and Timing

With the implementation of New Directions in full swing, now is an appropriate time to review and improve the ways in which we publicly position ourselves while communicating with the residents of Vancouver. This includes all of the various Park Board audiences including the general public, stakeholders and staff. At the end of this process staff will have a plan which is aimed at improved internal and external communication that will heighten awareness of the Board's activities, mandate, roles and services.

In order to carry out our goals for the Communication Plan, the consultant will involve all pertinent staff, Park Commissioners and stakeholders in an information and research audit to assess our present status while forming the foundation of the plan.

SUMMARY

It is timely for the Park Board to establish a Communication Plan in relationship with the closer delivery of service models that have been initiated by the New Directions reorganization. Funding for this project from the Corporate Sponsorship account meets the established criteria under section "c".

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