

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

**DATE OF MEETING:** November 20, 2006

**ATTENDEES: Park Board Commissioners**

Commissioner Marty Zlotnik, Committee Chair  
Commissioner Loretta Woodcock  
Commissioner Allan De Genova  
Commissioner Spencer Herbert  
Commissioner Korina Houghton

**Park Board Staff**

Susan Mundick	General Manager
Anita Ho	Director, Corporate Services
Diane Murphy	District Recreation Manager, Queen Elizabeth District
Barbara Joughin	Committee Secretary

**Delegations**

Donalda Greenwell-Baker	CUPE 15 Secretary Treasurer
Peter Storey	CUPE 15, Chair of Bargaining Committee
Keith Graham	CUPE 15, Staff Representative
Bennet Sproule	Nustadia Recreation Inc., President
Garfield Ganong	Nustadia Recreation Inc., Vice President
Marg Coulson	Deputy City Clerk, City of Vancouver

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm. The Agenda for the meeting was as follows:

1. Approval of October 23, 2006 Meeting Minutes
2. Nustadia Presentation: Ice Rinks
3. Project 311
4. Leisure Access Card Program
5. Position Changes

**1. Approval of October 23, 2006 Meeting Minutes:**

The minutes of the October 23, 2006 meeting were amended to include that the sponsorship arrangement with Coca-Cola allows one alternate brand of soft drink (up to four flavours) to be available in the concessions. The minutes were approved as amended.

**2. Nustadia Presentation: Ice Rinks**

Donalda Greenwell-Baker, Secretary Treasurer of CUPE 15, presented to the Committee that under Clause 11.7 in the Collective Agreement, the employer agrees that any reports or recommendations made to the employer dealing with matters covered by this agreement, including recommendations for changes in methods of operation that may affect wage rates, work loads or reductions of employment, will be communicated to the union at such interval

before they are dealt with. She informed the Committee that the union was not notified about and has not received any information about the Nustadia presentation on tonight's Finance Committee agenda. The union is very concerned about private partnerships and their potential effect on their members, and is formally objecting to the fact that the Committee is discussing this item without proper notice to the union. She asked the Finance Committee to reconsider the agenda, and requested that the presentation not be heard.

Commissioner De Genova arrived at this time.

The Committee discussed the history and process of the item coming to the Finance Committee and the members of the Finance Committee voted on whether to proceed with the presentation or not. The vote was a tie and was defeated.

The Chair of the Committee invited the Nustadia delegation to come forward with their presentation.

#### Delegations

- Peter Storey, Chair of the CUPE 15 Bargaining Committee, told the Committee that the union was concerned enough upon hearing about this violation of the collective agreement that they suspended a meeting with City negotiators. He told the Committee that the union takes this issue very seriously, and that it has a direct impact on the bargaining process.

The Chair of the Committee again invited the Nustadia delegation to come forward.

Bennet Sproule, President of Nustadia Recreation, presented the Committee with an overview of Nustadia and their services. Nustadia provides operating management of both union and non-union ice rinks, as well as turnkey developments of recreation facilities. He told the Committee that they were asked to address the \$1.7 million net operating deficit of Vancouver's seven ice rinks (a \$245,000 subsidy per rink per year), and presented a six-point program to address this issue.

He summarized low and high estimates of annual savings that could be realized by focusing on the following six points.

1. Revenues – User Fees: \$145,000-290,000 (\$10-20/hr increase in ice rental fees)
2. Revenues – Sponsorship & Advertising: \$150,000-225,000
3. Revenues – Program/Schedule: \$34,000-68,000 (1½-3 hours additional ice time per pad per week, for the winter prime time season only)
4. Revenues – Subsidies: no change
5. Expenses – Overhead: \$80,000-160,000
6. Expenses – Utilities: \$112,000-336,000 (10% of utilities, high 30%)

Using these projections, a low/high range of annual savings of \$521,000 - \$1,079,000 would result in an annual subsidy of \$170,000 - \$91,000 per rink.

## Discussion

- A member of the Committee asked for more information about the ice facilities in Moncton and the delegate described the redevelopment of facilities to their current status. He explained that unionized city employees work in every ice rink in Moncton and provide Nustadia with all facility and equipment maintenance on a service contract basis. Employees maintain all their rights under a collective agreement between CUPE and the City of Moncton.
- A Commissioner asked about possibilities for partnering with BCHydro to reduce utility costs and the delegate noted that most savings would likely come from facility design and conservation initiatives. The Committee discussed the advantages of different utility options and long term purchasing policies.
- A Commissioner requested clarification on the amount of savings for single and double ice pads and the delegate explained that the estimates that were provided are for single pads.
- A member of the Committee asked if the proponent would be interested in further discussion about Vancouver's ice rinks with the understanding that any resulting changes would be put to tender.

The Chair of the Committee invited members of the public to speak on the item.

Keith Graham, Chief Negotiator for CUPE 15 told the Committee that because one of the major issues for members of CUPE 15 is job security, the union left the bargaining table in order to prepare for tonight's presentation by Nustadia. He said the recent privatization of green fee collections at Langara Golf Course has created concerns about their members' job security, and that Nustadia's presentation to the Park Board's Finance Committee would have an impact on their bargaining strategy.

## Summary

The Finance Committee received a presentation from Nustadia Recreation on reducing the operating deficit of Vancouver's ice rinks.

### **3. Project 311**

Marg Coulson, Deputy City Clerk for the City of Vancouver, presented the Finance Committee with information about the proposed 311 Access Vancouver project. If implemented, this 311 model will provide the public with a single point of access to consolidated, non-emergency municipal services, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It will replace over 400 citizen service contact points that are currently delivered through more than 50 locations. The 311 call centre will answer calls in Vancouver's major languages, and provide third-party interpretation services in over 150 languages. The 311 call centre will be housed in an existing city building.

In August 2006, the City completed a feasibility study, including a review of Vancouver's existing citizen information services and a survey of Vancouver citizens' expectations and level of satisfaction with these services. A business proposal and an implementation plan have been completed and will be recommended to City Council on November 30, 2006. A basic level of service, including general telephone inquiries and requests for transfer, will be completed by spring 2008. During this implementation phase, city departments and Boards will be consulted to

determine which services could be transferred to the 311 system, and the appropriate scheduling. From 2009-13, an enhancement phase would implement the transfer of additional services. Funding plans will be developed with each General Manager to determine the value of transferring existing in-house service delivery to the 311 service.

The proposed budget for the 311 Access Vancouver project includes a one time implementation cost of \$10.5 million, as well as a \$1.83 million enhancement fund to support departments while staff and business issues are resolved. Annual operating costs of the 311 system are projected to be \$5.7 million once the system is fully operational. 50% of the operating costs will be funded by an increase in property taxes and 50% from Board/City department budget transfers.

Benefits of the proposed 311 system to the public include one easy-to-remember phone number for all requests; 24/7 multi-language service; and increased quality and accountability of service. Benefits to the city include efficiencies resulting from the consolidation of services; cost savings; ease of maintaining internet and other background information services; the ability to collect, analyze and report data; and improved response to critical situations.

#### Discussion

- The Committee discussed the service and financial implications of the proposed call centre for the Park Board. If an estimated \$1.5 million of Park Board staff time could be saved by transferring services to 311, the Park Board would be expected to transfer 50% of \$1.5 million from its budget. Staff told the Committee that customer services will be carefully analyzed to determine how to provide the best public service, and noted the enhancement fund will provide for staff training. A member of the Committee expressed concern about operating costs exceeding projections.
- A member of the Committee asked if cell phones work with a 311 number, and staff said that some cell phone service providers require a back-up number.
- A member of the Committee suggested that providing information through the internet was simpler, cheaper and more effective and questioned the value of providing this more-expensive method. Staff responded that a survey of Vancouver citizens' expectations benchmarked with citizen survey data from other Canadian cities showed that Vancouver residents are not getting their expectations met and are not satisfied. Close to 38% of Canadians indicate their preferred method of accessing information is by telephone.

#### Summary

The Finance Committee was briefed on the proposed 311 Access Vancouver service and its costs and benefits.

#### **4. Leisure Access Card Program**

Diane Murphy presented the Committee with information about the Board's Leisure Access Card (LAC) Program, implemented in 1993 as one of the main features of the Board's Economic Access Policy. She described the history of the program, outlined its eligibility criteria, low income qualifications, and application process, and identified the free and discounted benefits provided to cardholders. Statistics from 2005 indicate that the value of 50% discounts was \$210,996 (not including Britannia), and of total visits, LAC use represented 13% of public swims, 10.9% of public skating visits, 3.3% of outdoor pool swims, and 1% of pitch and putt visits. She provided information about subsidy programs provided by Vancouver community centre associations and other municipalities, identified some program challenges and strengths, and noted that program trends include a stable demand for cards, and stable age and gender distribution.

Future considerations for this program could include the following.

- establish a low income base level and options for low income application benefits
- review administration for low income applications
- review yearly renewals
- review agency card use and qualifications

#### Discussion

- The Committee discussed the benefits of providing longer terms and determining an easier application process for seniors and people with disabilities.
- A member of the Committee suggested that because the cost of living in Vancouver is very high, it might be appropriate to use a different scale than the National Council of Welfare's Low Income Cut-off. Staff noted that this scale is adjusted for the cost of living in Vancouver.
- A Commissioner requested information on how the Leisure Access Program is advertised (at community centres, in leisure guides, on website), and suggested that information about it be added to program price lists and that access to other languages be provided on the Park Board website.
- The Committee asked how many people apply and are refused, and staff will research and provide this information.
- A Commissioner suggested that sworn statements from homeless shelters be used as proof of residency for homeless people.

#### Summary

The Finance Committee received information about the Leisure Access Card Program.

## **5. Position Changes**

Anita Ho reported to the Committee that Park Board operations are occasionally reviewed to ensure staffing is consistent with the Board's priorities, and recommended four changes, subject to classification review by the city's Human Resources General Manager.

1. Planning and Operations – creation of Trades Foreman and elimination of Trades III-Welder, to standardize the structure of the Fabrication shop with the other seven maintenance shops, provide a higher level of supervision, and better reflect the requirements of the position.
2. VanDusen – Supervisor of Revenue and Visitor Service, to convert a temporary full-time position established in 1997 to a permanent full-time position, reflecting the ongoing nature of the work being performed.
3. Roundhouse Community Centre – RPT Community Youth Worker, to create a 27 hour/week, regular part-time position to replace auxiliary coverage.
4. Corporate Services – one Marketing position, to provide marketing expertise to recreational marketing for ice rinks, pools, and fitness centres.

### Discussion

- A member of the Committee requested clarification on the need for a marketing position when the golf marketing plan is not complete, and staff explained that one permanent marketing position in recreation is proposed at this time. The Committee member would like to provide input to the Golf Marketing position when the Golf Marketing Plan is completed.
- A Commissioner commented that equity across the system is important and asked why the youth worker position will serve the Roundhouse rather than Marpole. Staff noted that at this time, there is no permanent youth worker at the Roundhouse and there are permanent youth workers in other community centres.

### Summary

The Finance Committee received information about the proposed staff changes and supported the four positions as presented.

## **6. Next Meeting**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 pm. The next Finance Committee meeting is scheduled for January 22, 2007 at 7:00 pm.