

**Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Parks and Recreation
Services & Budgets Committee Meeting
Held at the Vancouver Park Board Office on
Tuesday, April 26th, 2011**

ATTENDEES: Park Board Commissioners

Loretta Woodcock, Chair
Constance Barnes
Aaron Jasper
Ian Robertson

Park Board Staff

Meg Elliott	Acting Director, Corporate Services
Diane Murphy	Acting Director, Queen Elizabeth District
Kevin Tuerlings	Recorder

Delegations:

- Courtney Tang
- John Warrington
- Charlotte Ho

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm, with the following agenda:

1. Approval of Minutes of March 22, 2010
2. Funding of Summer Playground Programs
3. March Financial Statement

1. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Services and Budgets Committee held on Tuesday, March 22nd, 2011 were adopted as circulated.

2. Funding of Summer Playground Programs

Staff presented on the funding of summer playground programs in the past and the feasibility of reintroducing the programs in the upcoming summer months.

The program operates in the summer for seven weeks, from the first week of July to the third week of August. It is geared toward local children in community neighbourhoods as well as their families who want to participate in arts and crafts and use the wading pool.

Recently Coastal Health has raised concerns over the cleanliness and safety of wading pools, which poses a problem in maintaining wading pools in these programs. Most other

cities have phased out local programs that have wading pools and have replaced them with day camps and non-staffed water parks.

In 2010 the summer playground budget was reduced and the determining factor for which wading pool stayed open was based on need rather than demand. Park Board focused on funding 14 playground programs while 3 water parks operated without staff and 10 did not operate at all.

For this summer, the Board has asked staff to look at options for playgrounds that did not operate last year. Staff propose a mobile playground for 7 out of 10 that did not operate in 2010, with the remaining playgrounds being near community centers which have other possible programs. The proposed operating time is from July 4th to August 19th, though programs will not be a full 5 day program, but 2 – 3 days a week.

The following delegations requested to speak to the Committee:

- Courtney Tang
- John Warrington
- Charlotte Ho

The following is a summary of the foregoing delegations:

- In 2009 and before, Balaclava has been open for local residents, but since last year it was cancelled due to budget cuts and residents were not notified.
- Instead of going out and spending money during economic downtime, the local park is a good source of free recreation for the whole family.
- Neighbourhood wants a turn to enjoy the local park like the other parks that still enjoy operating playground programs.
- Not uncommon to have day camps walk to the park to use the pool. Feels the day camps gravitate to the pool rather than the day camp being a relief for lack of a pool.
- Loves the idea of volunteer mobile park workers. Possible partnership with the Vancouver lifesaving society would get a large amount of volunteers with if they receive a letter of reference at the end.
- The neighbourhood is growing, not shrinking; the wading pool and playground programs are valuable resources for the community.

Discussion:

A member of the Committee asked what the budget to fund the mobile program would be and where the money will come from. Staff answered the mobile playground program will cost approximately \$25,000, the majority of it to cover staffing, but a small amount also covering services, supplies, and communications. The recreation budget can accommodate the mobile playground program without taking away funds from other programs and services.

A member of the Committee asked how communication with communities works to determine which days the mobile playground is provided. Staff answered they would connect with supervisors of community centres, residents and neighbours to try to accommodate local preferences.

A member of the Committee suggested that staff look into setting up a program that would partner with local students looking for opportunities to work on a volunteer basis to fulfill secondary school volunteer requirements. Using a paid coordinator and volunteers who are trained in first-aid and security, the program could provide more staff support at no extra cost.

A member of the Committee asked how many people use the craft table during one day at Balaclava Park. The delegation answered children pay five dollars and sign-up for the whole summer. Those who register could use the craft supplies on the table. Usually there would be four or five children at the table at one time during the day.

A member of the Committee wanted to know how to process the approval of the program as outlined. Staff noted that the Board did not need to approve the program because there is no need for a change in budget for the 2011 proposed program. The Committee was in support of the plan presented to them and would like to act upon it as soon as possible.

3. March Financial Statement

Staff presented the March Financial Statement, noting that the City has begun conducting quarterly reports, and that the March report is the first 2011 quarterly report.

Revenue is roughly the same as last year for the same period, but expenses are up slightly. In 2010, overall expenses at this time were 21.6%, whereas this year they are 23.7%.

Revenue programs such as golf, concessions, and destination parks are continually being challenged mostly due to poor weather conditions. Despite generating net revenue, golf courses still fell short of their budgeted revenue. Areas that are showing improvement are recreation services such as rink revenue and pools (benefiting from the opening of Hillcrest pool and the rinks that were reserved for Olympic use last year).

Expenses in Other Operations, which used to cover sanitation services, have seen a big change. Sanitation now falls under the shared services of the city, so the expense does not effect the Park Board, hence a -124% in expenses for that area.

Support Services and Admin have seen a large increase due to improved timeliness of reserve transfers. With the new focus on quarterly reporting at the City overall, the pattern of expenditures has changed, with more of the expenses occurring earlier in the year than the previous year. However there is not expected to be an increase in expenditures and earnings at year end as a result of these earlier transfers. Similarly, the

year-to-date gross expense total is up 2% (\$2.2 million), but is expected to balance out in the summer months when generation of revenue is at its highest.

Other significant expense changes between 2010 & 2011 are that savings for Vancouver Shared Services are concentrated in the later part of 2011 due to timing of project implementation. This impacts supply chain, financial services & facilities.

Issues which may impact the expense budget include the fact that, per the Global Budget arrangement, savings in utilities, city equipment, fringe benefits and insurance cannot be used to offset expenditures on payroll, supplies, services or transfers.

Discussion:

A member of the Committee asked what it cost to move the animals from the Farmyard to their new homes. Staff answered that there was no net cost since a donation was able to be used to pay for the upkeep of the animals before they were moved and for moving expenses once they found a home.

A member of the Committee asked what the reduction in farmyard expense was. Staff answered that approximately \$200,000 is expected to be saved annually due to the closure.

A member of the Committee asked if the Olympics had a negative effect on parking revenues last year. Staff answered that while it may have had an impact, the largest impact on the parking revenue budget was likely due to a 31% price increase in January 2010 related to a Translink parking levy increase that occurred in early 2010.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Meg Elliott
Acting Director, Corporate Services

Commissioner Loretta Woodcock
Chair