

**Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Parks and Recreation
Services & Budgets Committee Meeting
Held at the Vancouver Park Board Office on
Tuesday, September 27th, 2011**

ATTENDEES:

Park Board Commissioners

Loretta Woodcock, Chair
Constance Barnes
Aaron Jasper
Ian Robertson

Park Board Staff

Peter Kuran	Deputy General Manager
Meg Elliott	Acting Director, Corporate Services
Ken Maguire	Supervisor, Business Services
Kevin Tuerlings	Recorder

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

1. Approval of Minutes of July 19, 2011
2. Cellular Antenna Installation
3. 2011 Operating Budget Update
4. 2012 Fees and Charges

1. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Services and Budgets Committee held on Tuesday, July 19th, 2011 were adopted as circulated.

2. Cellular Antenna Installation

Staff presented on the proposal received by Globalive to install a cellular installation on the Stanley Park causeway.

Presently there are three providers already operating on the causeway – Telus, Rogers and Bell – with each antenna operating on a lamp standard. The revenue collected from each existing pole is \$6,000, whereas the proposal received from Globalive is offering \$11,500 for each of the two proposed locations. The contract is a five-year term, with three five-year options, and at each term renewal there is a possibility to renegotiate pricing.

Since the project would take place on a roadway, Globalive has gone to the Ministry of Transportation and received approval, with the final approval needing to come from the Park Board.

Staff is coming before the Committee with the recommendation that the Park Board enter into an agreement with Globalive for an initial 5-years, at \$23,000 per year, with the option to extend the agreement in the future.

Discussion:

A member of the Committee asked how many cellular towers are already on the causeway, and when were they installed. Staff replied that there are currently six towers, and that some have been in place for over ten years.

A member of the Committee asked what Globalive would support with its tower. Staff replied that the tower would support telecommunications on behalf of the provider Wind Mobile.

A member of the Committee asked if the current communications providers on the causeway would be impacted by this proposed installation. Staff answered that there would be no impact to their services, and that the current providers do not have exclusivity to the area and therefore cannot raise any legal issues.

The Committee endorsed the recommendation with the suggestion that staff revise the report before the item returns to the Board on October 17th to clarify that no sightlines will be affected.

3. 2011 Operating Budget Update

Staff presented on the 2011 operating budget.

The Park Board conducted a review of its budget based on the last three years and has reset the revenue expectations based on the results.

July and August did not improve the budget woes that were presented in May. In 2010 the Park Board has spent 73% of its annual budget to this point, whereas last year that number was at 60% by this point in the year. Revenues have also been lower than forecasted throughout the summer due largely in part to the poor weather.

Parking has generated 77% of the expected revenue to this point in the year, although Golf and Pitch & Putt has continued to fall behind, reaching only 24% of expected revenue. Similarly, Restaurants & Leases have reached just 56%, although this can be attributed partially to the poor market experienced throughout similar businesses in the private sector.

Expenses should begin to see a slight decline from now until the end of the year because of the implementation of accounts payable shared services as part of the Vancouver Services Review and the impacts of other cost saving measures.

Payroll is up \$3.5 million over last year, though this was expected due to a cost of living pay increase to staff. Supplies and services are up marginally by \$100,000, and transfers have seen a significant increase, though the latter can be explained by loan payments, transfers and reserves being processed at the end of each quarter, rather than all at once at the end of the year.

As per the Park Board's Global Budget funding arrangement with the City of Vancouver, the Board is not held responsible for expenses outside its control, including utilities, city equipment, fringe benefits and insurance. Under this same arrangement, the Board cannot use savings in any of these areas to offset expenditures which are under its control and must return those savings to the City.

The Park Board is forecasting that revenue will be below budget by \$1.6 million at year end; alternatively, it is forecasted that expenses will be on budget thanks to mitigation strategies that saved money and did not impact services, such as early end of assignment for some temporary staff and ending contract assignments earlier.

Discussion

A member of the Committee asked what budget solutions exist in the case that Vancouver has a bad winter in terms of weather. Staff answered that there is a small contingency and that the City has money for snow removal as well. If weather were to get really poor, there are no mitigation practices that would save money in time for it to be useful.

A member of the Committee asked if the Park Board is responsible for all tree clean-ups in poor weather. Staff replied that yes, the Park Board would clean-up in these instances, though any related over expenditure would be an explainable variances in expenses.

A member of the Committee asked how staff retirement costs would be handled. Staff answered that the City has agreed to cover those costs for 2011 because they are a one-time cost and there is no ability for the Park Board to offset these costs.

Staff said that the next financial report on the 2011 Operating Budget will come before the Board in October, along with the presentation of the September Statement to the Committee.

4. 2012 Fees and Charges

Staff presented on the proposed 2012 Fees and Charges timeline, and asked the Committee for direction regarding the fees and charges.

The preliminary fees and charges will be created to be presented at the October 25th Services and Budget Committee meeting, which will then allow for a month long public survey on the proposed fees and charges, leading up to the approval of the revised fees and charges at the November 28th Board Meeting.

The public survey will take place online, and will have an outreach program through community centres, public schools and other means to let citizens know of the survey.

The Park Board has received initial direction from City to review the fees and charges where there is competition in the business market, and compare the costs of private sector services to ensure the Park Board is within competitive pricing, but still remaining affordable.

Staff suggested that the Park Board does not increase its revenue expectation, particularly for parking, golf and pitch & putt, and concessions. The areas that may see an increase in fees are marinas and recreation.

Discussion

A member of the Committee asked if it is possible for out of town residents to pay a premium for local Vancouver recreational programs and facilities, because programs and facilities are being occupied by people who do not pay taxes for the services. Staff answered that there are too many difficulties involved with trying to discern whether a patron is a resident, making it a difficult option for front line counter staff to enforce.

A member of the Committee asked if it is possible to raise fees at some community centres and not others. Staff answered that the policy has been to keep the prices the same at all rinks, pools and fitness centres run by the Park Board to avoid overcrowding at the more affordable centres, and to encourage the participation of patrons, Leisure Access Card users, and the overall service regardless of location.

Staff will create a preliminary schedule of 2012 fees and charges, conduct a public survey, and return to the Board on November 28th.

The meeting adjourned at 7:38 pm.

Meg Elliott
Acting Director, Corporate Services

Commissioner Loretta Woodcock
Chair