
Subject: FW: Form submission from: Write a Letter to Council
Attachments: presentation_to_council.pdf

From: Web NoReply <web-noreply@Saskatoon.ca>
Sent: Monday, August 30, 2021 10:23 PM
To: City Council <City.Council@Saskatoon.ca>
Subject: Form submission from: Write a Letter to Council

--- Replies to this email will go to [REDACTED] ---

Submitted on Monday, August 30, 2021 - 22:23

Submitted by user: Anonymous

Submitted values are:

Date Monday, August 30, 2021

To His Worship the Mayor and Members of City Council

First Name Sherry

Last Name Tarasoff

Phone Number

Email [REDACTED]

Address [REDACTED] Peterson Cres

City Saskatoon

Province Saskatchewan

Postal Code [REDACTED]

Name of the organization or agency you are representing (if applicable)

Subject RE: 2022 and 2023 Indicative Budget

Meeting (if known) SPC-FINANCE Special Meeting - August 31, 2021

Comments

Please accept the attached document as my input as part of the review of the proposed indicative rates.

Attachments

[REDACTED]

Will you be submitting a video to be vetted prior to council meeting? No

The results of this submission may be viewed at:

[REDACTED]

STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Tuesday, August 31, 2021

Good afternoon Madam Chair, Your Worship and City Councillors,

My name is Sherry Tarasoff. Thank you for this opportunity to provide input on the 2022/2023 Indicative Budget. In summary, this is my input. Further details are provided below.

- Identify revenue not collected, such as unpaid parking tickets
- Transfer funds from the Property Realized Reserve to the Reserve for Capital Expenditures
- Reduce the Mayor's Communications and Constituency Relations allowance
- Review and define essential and non-essential services, and determine reasonable service levels
- Reduce contract labour and redistribute work to the permanent workforce
- Consider permanent work-from-home employment opportunities
- Reduce the proposed organics pickups from bi-weekly to every other month during the winter season
- Make budget choices with the lens of our community's most vulnerable
- Stop taking on debt

It was stated at the June GPC meeting that "the options to balance the budgets are either increase property taxes and/or reductions to expenditures in which we're having to consider both options without affecting service levels."

Another option needs to be considered: identify revenue not collected. This spring, I learned about \$8.5 million in unpaid parking tickets through Councillor Donauer's motion to have Administration look at options to collect these. I have not been able to locate the document that reported this amount. I would be interested in learning if there may be other uncollected revenue that could also be pursued.

According to the 2020 Financial Statements, the balance in the Property Realized Reserve was \$43,293,000 at December 31, 2020. Bylaw No. 6774, *The Capital Reserve Bylaw*, indicates that a transfer of funds from the Property Realized Reserve to the Reserve for Capital Expenditures (RCE) may happen when the funds in this Reserve exceed an unencumbered cash value of \$24,000,000.00 immediately prior to the current annual budget process. This may be the time to look at transferring funds to the RCE to help lower the indicative tax rate by reducing required reserve contributions in the budget and/or funding capital projects with the RCE.

Are the Mayor's Office and City Councillors' Office budgets reviewed at the same time as the multi-year budget? If so, I propose that the Mayor's Communications and Constituency Relations allowance be reviewed. As indicated in the recent quarterly update, the payroll and payroll costs for a Policy & Communications Advisor for the Mayor is \$6,945.56 per month. Each City Councillor's budget is \$10,000 for the entire year. While the Mayor is on track to spend less than the budgeted \$132,300 for 2021, I believe that if we are looking to reduce expenditures without affecting service levels, this is one place to do that.

It is time for the City to review and define essential and non-essential services, and determine reasonable service levels for each. One thing to consider is to reduce contract labour and redistribute work to the permanent workforce. I noticed that within the last few months, there have been 4 procurement requests for tree maintenance. While important, these projects may likely be considered non-essential and either be delayed or redistributed to permanent employees.

While there are City workers that have been on the job as usual during the pandemic, I would be interested to know what kind of savings may be had if some City employees continued to work from home. The City continued to operate during the lockdown, albeit in a modified capacity. Processes were changed to allow this to happen. If employees are able to continue to work from home, that frees up physical space that is currently being paid for and maintained.

The proposed organics collection program is for bi-weekly collection year-round, starting in 2023. The current subscription program for organics does not have any pickups during the winter. Instead of going from zero to bi-weekly pickups, start with pickups every other month throughout the winter and review after one season.

The City website says “Our 2022-2023 Multi-Year Business Plan and Budget remains inspired by the core idea of *investing in what matters.*” Without seeing the latest Strategic Plan for 2022-2025, what matters to me may not necessarily matter to the City. What should matter to the City, in light of the pandemic, is supporting the most vulnerable in our community. I may not have the answers but there are people with lived experience that can guide the City. At the very least, a City bus should be available during a Cold Weather Alert to protect those that have no place to stay warm. The City is quick to use the TBL (Triple Bottom Line) Decision-Making Tools to apply a sustainability lens to their initiative, project, or program. I propose to apply a lens to our community’s most vulnerable. Prioritize expenditures that may improve their lives. That does not include a Permanent Downtown Festival Site capital project or tearing out trees and recent infrastructure to make room for cars and bike lanes.

Whatever you do in this next multi-year budget, STOP TAKING ON DEBT! The 2020 Financial Statement indicated significant debt servicing costs, while the total interest paid by the City for debt in 2020 was over \$13 million. There is a time and place for debt – this is not it!

The 2022-2023 Multi-Year Business Plan and Budget process is an opportunity to pause on the grand ideas and proceed to make decisions that can take our entire community forward. “A community where no one is left behind.”

Thank you,
Sherry Tarasoff