

Budget Committee Minutes

Meeting No. 2

September 27, 2019, 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Council Chamber

Members	Councillor Amanda Collucci, Chair Councillor Andrew Keyes, Vice-Chair Mayor Frank Scarpitti (ex-officio) Deputy Mayor Don Hamilton	Councillor Keith Irish Councillor Reid McAlpine Councillor Karen Rea
Regrets	Councillor Khalid Usman	
Roll Call	Regional Councillor Jim Jones Trinela Cane, Commissioner, Corporate Services Arvin Prasad, Commissioner Development Services Claudia Storto, City Solicitor and Director of Human Resources Joel Lustig, Treasurer	Matthew Vetere, Manager, Budgeting Stephen Chait, Director of Economic Growth, Culture & Entrepreneurship Brian Lee, Director, Engineering Biju Karumanchery, Director of Planning and Urban Design Morgan Jones, Director, Operations

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Budget Committee convened at 9:02 AM with Councillor Collucci in the Chair.

2. DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

None.

3. BUDGET PRESENTATION

3.1 Economic Growth, Culture & Entrepreneurship 2020 Budget Presentation and Capital Budget Items

Stephen Chait, Director of Economic Growth, Culture & Entrepreneurship presented the 2020 Budget Director's Presentation.

Discussion

Staff provided the following responses to Committee inquiries:

VentureLAB

Staff advised that the budget for VentureLAB is 1.5 - 2.0 million dollars per year. Markham's contribution is \$300K. Some of Markham's funding partners include York University, Seneca College, and the National Research Council. The VentureLAB helps entrepreneurs start up their businesses and find venture capital, and it also helps promote awareness of Markham.

Budget for Business Development Missions, Programs, and Conferences

Staff advised that there is one budget for business development missions, programs, and conferences. Some of the cost of business development missions is offset by sponsorship. The budget unfavourable variance in 2018 was partially due to Rogers Home Town Hockey and the Japan Business Development Mission.

Culture Venues

Staff advised that economically sustainable communities have a vibrant culture that includes cultural venues. Many cultural facilities or events operate in a deficit or require some level of subsidy, but have a positive economic impact on the community at large. Sponsorship can help offset losses, but most large corporations are interested in sponsoring larger cultural venues.

To reduce the amount of subsidy required by the City, Markham's cultural venues now practice project based budgeting, and programs that are offered free of charge are continuously being re-evaluated to ensure they are providing the City with value.

Celebrate Markham Grant Program

Staff advised that the Celebrate Markham Grant Program is funded through another cost centre. Economic Growth, Culture and Entrepreneurship's contribution to the program is the staff time required to administer the grant program.

Amortization of Capital Assets

Staff advised that it currently presents the budget on an accrual basis based on the provincial requirements. Staff agreed to investigate the possibility of including the amortization of capital assets for all City business units in the future budgets.

Fundraising Staff

Staff advised that both the Varley Art Gallery and the Flato Markham Theatre have staff dedicated to fundraising. The employee that assists with fundraising for the Gallery is an employee of the Varley-McKay Art Foundation of Markham. The employee that assists with fundraising for the Theatre is a City employee that has a marketing position. No City staff receive commission or bonuses for raising funds, or for any other purposes. Providing commission or bonuses is against City procedure, but is permitted by provincial legislation.

Cultural Venue Pricing

Staff advised that Markham's pricing at its cultural venues is in the top 20% for the Greater Toronto Area. The cost to rent the theatre has become too expensive for some community groups.

Investment in the Theatre

Staff suggested that the City should look at the feasibility of building a new theatre prior to investing in any major enhancement to the existing theatre.

Review of Capital Budget Items

The following feedback was provided on the Capital Budget Items listed below:

20001 - Economic Strategy

Staff advised that the expertise of a consultant is required to update the City's Economic Strategy and to engage stakeholders in the process. A nine month contract for a Senior Business Development Coordinator is required to manage the project.

20002 - Public Art Master Plan

Committee agreed to approve the funds for the Public Art Master Plan in principle, but requested that the funds be withheld until Council approves the plan. The plan will be implemented in five phases. This Capital Budget request is for phase one of five. The funds have not been allocated to specific areas of Markham.

20003 - 20005 - Museum Capital Budget Items

Committee asked for a status update on the CN railcar.

20010 - Theatre Swing Gates

Staff advised that swing gates are required at the entrances to the Theatre parking lot to manage the lot when events are being held during the day. Currently, staff control access to the parking lot when events are being held at this time. The gates will eliminate the requirement for staff to manage the parking lot. Committee requested to see the plans/ design of the gates prior to them being installed.

20007 - Courtyard Replacement

Committee suggested that consideration be given to the entire Theatre outdoor landscape when redesigning the theatre courtyard.

Staff advised that the design consultant will consider this when designing the courtyard.

20014 - McKay Accessibility Consultant

Committee requested that a staff member with expertise in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 come to a future Budget Committee meeting to explain the City's responsibility in regards to making the McKay House, and other City facilities accessible. The Committee also noted the importance of providing an accessible space for the artist. However, it suggested that the space could be provided at another City facility that is accessible rather than investing in making the McKay House accessible, as it would be difficult to make the house accessible due to it being a heritage property.

Staff advised that a consultant is required to provide meaningful solutions to this matter.

Committee deferred the approval of this item to a future Budget Committee.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Don Hamilton

Seconded by Councillor Andrew Keyes

That the Budget Committee approve Capital Budget Item No. 20001 Economic Strategy.

Carried

Moved by Deputy Mayor Don Hamilton
 Seconded by Councillor Reid McAlpine

That the Budget Committee approve Capital Budget Item No. 20002 Cultural Public Art Master Plan Implementation (Phase 1 of 5) in principle.

Carried

Moved by Councillor Keith Irish
 Seconded by Councillor Karen Rea

That the Budget Committee approve the Museum Capital Budget Items.

Carried

Moved by Councillor Reid McAlpine
 Seconded by Councillor Karen Rea

The Budget Committee approve the Theatre Capital Budget Items.

Carried

Moved by Councillor Karen Rea
 Seconded by Councillor Keith Irish

That the Budget Committee approve the Art Centre Capital Budget Item 20013;
 and,

That the Budget Committee defer the approval of Capital Budget Item 20014 - McKay Accessibility Consultant.

Carried

3.2 Planning & Urban Design 2020 Budget Presentation

Biju Karumanchery, Director of Planning and Urban Design presented the 2020 Budget Presentation for the Planning & Urban Design Department.

Staff provided the following responses to Committee inquiries:

ePlans

Staff advised that the ePlan has been implemented. All new applications are now being submitted electronically.

Bill 108, the More Home, More Choice Act

Staff advised that the City has enough staff to manage development applications. Recent changes to legislation could result in more appeals if the City exceeds the timelines indicated in the legislation.

Committee of Adjustment and Heritage Applications

Staff advised that the City has enough staff to process Committee of Adjustment and Heritage Applications. Workload is managed by working together. Committee of Adjustment applications are reviewed by the Manager of Special Projects, the District Manager, and sometimes by Director of Planning and Urban Design.

Committee inquired about the following:

- Inquired if Committee of Adjustment recordings will be put online;
- Inquired why Members of Council no longer have access to Amanda.

Parks Trails

Staff advised that Engineering and Planning staff work together with the consultant on the design of park trails. There is no duplication of work between Planning and Engineering staff.

Reserve Fund

Staff advised that the City maintains a reserve fund to help cover the cost of staff salaries funded through develop fees if there ever was a serious downturn of the economy.

Development Fees

Staff advised that the City's development fees are somewhere in middle when comparing with other local municipalities.

4. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new Business.

5. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting of the Budget Committee will be held on Friday, October 4, 2019 at 9:00 AM in the Council Chambers.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Councillor Keith Irish

Seconded by Councillor Reid McAlpine

That the Budget Committee adjourn at 11:58 AM.

Carried