

MEMORANDUM

December 05, 2016

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Sadhu Johnston, City Manager
Paul Mochrie, Deputy City Manager
Janice MacKenzie, City Clerk
Lynda Graves, Manager, Administration Services, City Manager's Office
Rena Kendall-Craden, Director, Communications
Kevin Quinlan, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Katie Robb, Director, Communications, Mayor's Office
Naveen Girn, Director of Community Relations, Mayor's Office

FROM: Patrice Impey, General Manager, Finance, Risk and Supply Chain Management

SUBJECT: Fentanyl Crisis and 2017 Budget Options - RTS 11787

Dear Mayor and Council,

This memo is in response to Council's November 29, 2016 request for staff to provide an information memo outlining possible additional budget options to provide the City with flexibility in responding to the growing fentanyl and overdose crisis. The memo is to be brought forward as part of the Budget considerations at the Special Council meeting on December 7th, and the public is to be made aware of the options which may be available to Council.

1. FENTANYL AND OVERDOSE CRISIS

To date in 2016, British Columbia has experienced a record number of overdoses with over 600 lives lost. The impact of this situation is both the loss of life as well as the impact on the city's first responders and people who are providing front line services. This is a crisis. It is unclear if it will get worse, improve or continue at this level.

Staff and first responders have been dealing with the situation for months. They have taken on new training and responsibilities to be able to respond to the risk of overdose in the community. This has also led to increased workload and stress on front line staff and first responders. As well we are seeing increased numbers of homeless and those in need of housing in shelters, parks and on the street. Public realm cleanliness has been significantly impacted with a significant increase in the number of needles in parks and sidewalks, and abandoned garbage in streets, lanes and sidewalks. While a significant increase in sanitation services was approved as part of the 2016 budget, the need is continuing to increase.

2. TARGETED INVESTMENTS IN THE 2017 BUDGET

The proposed 2017 budget includes a significant level of new investment in targeted areas which will supplement the current budgets and service levels. As noted by the City Manager at the November 29th Council meeting, many of these investments, approximately equivalent to a 1.2% property tax increase are targeted to respond to the issues of poverty, mental health and addiction, and homelessness which are having a major impact on the City putting pressure on first responders, front line staff and impacting the public. These actions include:

- **\$3.8M** for Public Realm Cleanliness across the city - building on investments in 2016, this will focus on abandoned waste, additional street cleaning micro-grants, additional litter cans and streetscape recycling.
- **\$0.7M** for additional security at public buildings, including libraries and **\$0.4M** for 5 additional park rangers to respond to safety and security concerns at public buildings and parks
- **\$0.5M** to support new operations at Strathcona Branch Library operating costs and **\$0.2M** for increasing the Library's collections, increasing the availability of safe and supportive facilities for the public, including its most vulnerable population
- **\$2.5M** for Interim Housing for those in transitional housing, and **\$2.1M** for the empty homes tax implementation to provide more available rental housing for those in need of housing.
- **\$1.8M** for the Downtown Eastside to improve the cleanliness, street order, and safety and security in the neighborhood and for social initiatives including economic and employment opportunities. This includes the DTES street market and Women's market, Lux operations, Violence Risk assessment and low barrier employment and resources at Carnegie, Gathering Place and Evelyn Saller Center. As well, continued work over the next 3-5 years with Vancouver Coastal Health and St. Paul's regarding mental health and addiction

3. POTENTIAL ADDITIONAL ACTIONS:

As it is unclear if the crisis has peaked or if it will continue to worsen, the capacity for the organization to respond is difficult to anticipate. It is clear, however, that the crisis is creating considerable stress on our staff and the community. It would, therefore, be prudent to ensure there is capacity in the organization should it be required to deal with an escalating crisis. Council has asked staff to identify potential options to consider, and potential costs, in addition to those already included in the proposed 2017 budget.

The following are a number of possible areas which could be considered to address the crisis.

- a) Support to front line staff and first responders:
 - a. Training for City of Vancouver front line staff, including parks and sanitation in areas such as cultural competency and overdose management (up to \$20,000)
 - b. Enhanced mental health support for firefighters and front-line city/parks staff (up to \$130,000)
 - c. Adding a community policing center in Strathcona (\$200k/year)

- b) Additional staff resources:
 - a. Additional staff support for overdose management at shelters and/or outreach workers (approximately \$65k per position)
 - b. Additional staff to enable less overtime and/or time off for staff (cost per staff varies; ~\$60,000 - \$90,000 per staff)
 - c. Additional VFRS Medic unit (3 person crew) supporting the DTES (~\$600,000 per shift to \$1.8 million for 24 hour fully staffed unit)
- c) Community support:
 - a. Youth education program targeted at substance abuse education and harm reduction (up to \$200,000)
 - b. Treatment on demand study and strategy to develop a policy for immediate entry into drug treatment programs (up to \$100,000)
 - c. Additional shelter space
- d) Public Realm:
 - a. Additional LED lighting in Oppenheimer Park (approx. \$25k)
 - b. Additional sweeping/flushing (approx. \$50k)
 - c. Street cleaning grant program increase and low threshold employment for streetscape maintenance - including needle pickup and needle sweeps in Strathcona (approx. \$250k)

4. BUDGET PROCESS IMPACT:

The current proposed 2017 budget includes targeted investments in areas such as the DTES to address the increased need for service - driven in part by the fentanyl and overdose crisis. As it is difficult to anticipate the future needs for 2017 as the crisis may continue, increase or moderate, it would be prudent give flexibility to staff and Council in determining opportunities as they arise and as staff has had time to fully outline an initiative. With that in mind, Council may wish to consider an increase in property tax directed to the Council Contingency. In that way, funds will be available in 2017, and the contingency can be used to address unforeseen needs. Staff would then bring back one or more reports to Council outlining recommended actions that would require funding from the Council contingency.

An additional .5% in property tax would provide an additional \$3.5 million available for programs or initiatives. That, in addition to the regular Council Contingency of \$4 million would give Council \$7.5 million that could be available to direct to initiatives noted above or new opportunities as needed to address the crisis.

Should you have any questions regarding the above information, please feel free to contact me directly.

Best Regards,



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