

MOTION

8. Mayor's Budget Task Force (Members' Motion B5)

At the Council meeting on April 11, 2023, Council referred the above-noted motion to the Standing Committee on City Finance and Services meeting on April 12, 2023, in order to hear from speakers, followed by debate and decision.

MOVED by Mayor Sim

WHEREAS

1. The City of Vancouver has various advisory bodies that provide recommendations, advice, and information to Council and/or staff on matters that relate to the mandate of an advisory body and/or on any matters which may be referred to the advisory body by Council or staff;
2. Advisory bodies are a form of civic engagement, but unlike other, more short-term engagement strategies, they typically allow residents the opportunity to develop their knowledge of civic systems and/or more effectively and consistently convey recommendations based on expertise and lived experience;
3. The City has five main types of Advisory Body. These are:
 - Type A (established by Council; advisory to Council and staff)
 - Type B (established by Council; advisory to staff)
 - Type C (established through by-law or other legislation, generally for statutory functions)
 - Type D (task forces for the provision of policy advice and recommendations on a specific issue or topic, with input from the City Manager as necessary)
 - Other (appointed by Council, but advisory to an external body – e.g. VPL Board, PNE Board);
4. Notable examples of Type D task force advisory Bodies include, but are not limited to:
 - The Task Force on Implementing UNDRIP in the City of Vancouver (established in 2021 to provide advice to the Mayor and Council)
 - The Opioid Emergency Task Force (established in 2018)
 - The Mayor's Task Force on Mental Health and Addictions (established in 2013 to provide recommendations to Mayor and council on priority actions to address the mental health and addictions crisis);
5. Each year, the Mayor and Council have a statutory obligation to oversee and approve a budget and budget process that balances the need to provide services, facilities, and infrastructure in ways that meet the needs of residents and businesses and with the equal desire to keep property tax and utility rate increases at a manageable level;

6. On November 29, 2022, Draft Current State Operating and Capital budgets were presented to City Council for information as a starting point for discussion and engagement to help align multi-year planning with the new Council's priorities;
7. On December 6, 2022, City Council approved the 2023 Capital Budget and deferred the 2023 Operating Budget to early 2023 for further consideration;
8. On February 28, 2023, Vancouver City Council approved an operating budget for 2023 totalling \$1.97 billion, and a property tax increase of 10.7% driven by a 1% increase for additional infrastructure renewal, 1% for reserve replenishment for financial sustainability, 3% for Vancouver Police Department (VPD) services, and 5.7% for funding across all City services, as well as risks around uncertain costs for the whole city; and
9. A 10.7% property tax increase is neither a sustainable nor a desirable financial path for the City of Vancouver.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council support Mayor Ken Sim's appointment of a Mayor's Budget Task Force (Type D advisory body) to review the current City of Vancouver budget, examine where funds are allocated on a line item basis, and report its findings in preparation for the 2024 City of Vancouver budget process to – among other things – identify opportunities to improve service levels, processes, and transparency and identify any areas of concern around deferred maintenance, unfunded liabilities, CAPEX, pensions, and equipment replacement costs in accordance with the Terms of Reference outlined in Appendix A.

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APPENDIX A: TERMS OF REFERENCE

Task Force Mandate

The Mayor's Budget Taskforce will review the current City of Vancouver Budget and examine where funds are allocated on a line item basis. The Taskforce priorities will be to find efficiencies, potential new revenue streams or opportunities, and any duplications that may exist.

The Taskforce will provide actionable recommendations to enable the Mayor and Council, as well as City and political staff, to make the best decisions surrounding City of Vancouver finances, services, and infrastructure, as well as opportunities and challenges, for consideration in the 2024 budget deliberations and beyond.

Scope of Work

To review the City of Vancouver Budget and report findings in preparation of the 2024 City of Vancouver budget process. The Taskforce will identify opportunities to improve service levels, processes, and transparency by examining the City's Operating and Capital Budgets. The Taskforce will also identify any areas of concern around deferred maintenance, unfunded liabilities, CAPEX, pensions, and equipment replacement costs.

The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation, the Vancouver Police Department (VPD), and the Vancouver Public Library will not fall within the scope of this Task Force.

Outcome and Timeline

The Task Force will produce a comprehensive report over the course of a 6 month period, nominally beginning on April 13, 2023, with a final report to be delivered to the Mayor on or before October 3, 2023, for subsequent presentation to Council and the general public, as a meeting agenda item, in advance of the October 17, 2023 regular Council meeting.

Task Force Structure and Membership

The Task Force will be comprised of a six-member working group of highly skilled and experienced individuals with CPA and CFA professional qualifications. Each member will bring a proven track record of accomplishments and years of high level experience in finance. Each member will agree to volunteer their time to bring this new, unique perspective to the City's finances and financial decision-making.

In addition to the six members of the working group, several key stakeholders will be participating as advisors and will provide valuable perspectives and feedback from their years of experience in business and government.

City staff will also provide assistance, as needed, to aid in the timely completion of the Task Force work.