



Finance Select Committee

Date: Thursday, April 24th, 2003
Place: Anderson Room
Richmond City Hall
Present: Councillor Kiichi Kumagai, Chair
Councillor Harold Steves, Vice-Chair
Councillor Rob Howard
Councillor Bill McNulty
Mayor Malcolm D. Brodie (4:45 p.m.)
Absent: Councillor Evelina Halsey-Brandt
Also Present: Councillor Linda Barnes
Call to Order: The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

MINUTES

1. It was moved and seconded
That the minutes of the meeting of the Finance Select Committee held on Tuesday, April 8th, 2003, be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED

COUNCILLOR BILL MCNULTY

2. **COUNCIL CONTINGENCY ACCOUNT**
(Report: April 15/03, File No.: 0925-01) (REDMS No. 995650)

The Chair advised that this item had been deleted from the agenda.

Discussion ensued however as Councillor McNulty referred to permissive tax exemptions which were granted to religious properties and suggested that Richmond's veterans should be given a similar exemption. He stated that such exemptions were granted in other areas of Canada.

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Councillor McNulty asked that the matter be referred to staff to obtain additional information, for discussion at a future meeting, however, the Chair stated that he had deleted the matter from the agenda as he felt it would be more appropriate format to discuss this matter with the staff of the Finance Department. Discussion continued, during which general opposition was voiced to the requested referral.

In concluding the discussion, the Chair advised Councillor McNulty that he could pursue the matter with the Finance Department and return it to Committee for discussion at a more appropriate time.

FINANCE & CORPORATE SERVICES DIVISION

3. RESULTS OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE 2003-2007 FIVE YEAR FINANCIAL PLAN

(Oral Report)

The General Manager, Finance & Corporate Services, Jim Bruce, accompanied by the Director, Finance, Andrew Nazareth, advised that four people attended the public meeting on the 2003-2007 Five Year Financial Plan. Mr. Bruce advised that Mr. Nazareth had given a short PowerPoint presentation to explain how the budget functioned. He stated that a majority of the discussion was with two individuals, however this discussion did not centre on whether the proposed tax rates were too high.

(Mayor Brodie entered the meeting at 4:45 p.m., during the above discussion.)

Advice was given that the two individuals expressed concern about a possible duplication of service, and felt that (i) there were too many officers for a community the size of Richmond; (ii) the salaries for fire fighters was too high; and (iii) too much money had been spent on installing the watermain to Water Mania.

It was moved and seconded

That the oral report from the General Manager, Finance & Corporate Services regarding the results of the public consultation on the 2003-2007 Five Year Financial Plan, be received for information.

CARRIED

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4. **FINANCIAL INFORMATION - CASINO BALANCES / GVRD 9-1-1 BILLING**

(Report: April 17/03, File No.: 0920-17/5130-01 (REDMS No. 996751))

Mr. Nazareth reviewed the report with the Committee.

Discussion then took place among Committee members and staff. The Chair advised that at the present time, the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) collected revenue for the 9-1-1 emergency telephone services through property taxes. He stated work was now underway to have the assessment removed from the property tax invoice and added to Telus telephone billings. Questions were raised about whether this charge would be applied to cell phone billings, however it was noted that cell phone users did not have caller identification and could not be tracked.

Questions were also raised about whether a letter should be written to Telus suggesting the proposed change, however, the Chair stated that this was a 'work in progress and that any lobbying should be with the GVRD because that was the agency which transferred the revenue to E-Comm.

A question was raised about the amount of uncommitted funds that remained in the City's Casino Revenue account, and in response advice was given that \$38,000 remained.

Discussion then ensued among Committee members and staff on the funds that had been committed to the Richmond Drug Abuse Strategy and whether the initial amount of \$230,000 had been approved and allocated by Council. Advice was given that this amount had been approved as part of the previous Mayor's Task Force on Drugs and Crime, from which the Drug Abuse Strategy had evolved. Further advice was given that the estimated cost for the first year of the program was \$150,000 with funding expected to come from the unspent funds from the former Drugs and Crime Task Force.

It was moved and seconded

That \$38,000 be transferred from the Casino Revenue Account to the Council Provision Account.

The question on the motion was not called, as discussion continued on how the allocation of the funds for the Substance Abuse Strategy had come about, and whether this amount should also be transferred to the Council Contingency Account. Also addressed was whether (i) the Substance Abuse Strategy Task Force had a prepared budget, and (ii) the funds had been allocated to the program.

Councillor Kumagai left the meeting at 5:08 p.m., and Cllr. Steves assumed the Chair.

Discussion continued on whether the earmarking of the funds for the Substance Abuse Strategy had been approved.

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Councillor Kumagai returned to the meeting at 5:10 p.m. and resumed the Chair.

During the discussion, the Manager, Communications & Public Relations, Ted Townsend, a member of the Substance Abuse Strategy Task Force advised that he no objections to the funds being transferred to the Council Contingency Account as long as there was a clear understanding that the funds had been allocated to the Task Force until such time as a final decision had been made.

The discussion concluded with it being agreed that the \$150,000 would not be transferred to the Council Contingency Account.

The question on the motion was then called, and it was **CARRIED**.

5. **REQUEST FOR FUNDING – RICHMOND THERAPEUTIC EQUESTRIAN SOCIETY**
(Oral Report)

Mr. Bruce advised that a small amount of money had been allocated to the Therapeutic Equestrian Society, however, previous advice from Ms. Frances Clark had indicated that additional funding was required to ensure the continued operation of the program. Mr. Bruce stated that \$38,000 was available if Council wished to approve additional funding.

Discussion ensued among Committee members and staff on:

- the stipulation which had been attached to the approval given for the increased grant to the Therapeutic Equestrian Society in 2002 (i.e. one time only)
- the grant process, how it functioned, and the grant policy
- the information which had been requested which evaluated the program offered by the Society; including the number of riders who participated each week ,for how many hours; and the cost of the operation
- whether the Therapeutic Equestrian Society was a priority with the Richmond Committee on Disability, or the Independent Living Resource Centre
- how additional requests for funding should be handled, once a grant had been approved for that year.

Councillor Barnes left the meeting at 5:30 p.m. and did not return.

As a result of the discussion, the following **referral** motion was introduced:

It was moved and seconded

That the request for additional funding to the Therapeutic Equestrian Society be referred to staff to evaluate the Society and to provide a single page report on specific demographics, including:

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- a) *the total number of riders participating in the program offered by the Society; their names and where they reside; and the number of hours which rider contributes to the program on a weekly basis;*
- b) *the salaries of the instructors;*
- c) *whether there are any other funds or sponsorships which provide financial assistance to the program; and*
- d) *whether the horses were rented or donated.*

The question on the motion was not called, as discussion continued on the City grant process, during which the suggestion was made that consideration should be given to the creation of a blanket policy to deal with funding requests made after the grant process had been completed.

In concluding the discussion, it was agreed that the report on the request for funding for the Therapeutic Equestrian Society would be returned to the General Purposes Committee.

The question on the motion was then called, and it was **CARRIED**.

6. 2003 PROPERTY TAX RATES

Mr. Bruce reported that as a result of the public consultation process, the 2003 property tax rate would not change from the proposed amount of 4.35%. He added that an information brochure would be prepared to be sent out with the property tax notice, on the cost of specific components of the budget.

It was moved and seconded

That the oral report from the General Manager, Finance & Corporate Services regarding the 2003 Property Tax Rates, be received for information.

CARRIED

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved and seconded

That the meeting adjourn (5:38 p.m.).

CARRIED

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Certified a true and correct copy of the Minutes of the meeting of the Finance Select Committee of the Council of the City of Richmond held on Thursday, April 24th, 2003.

Councillor Kiichi Kumagai
Chair

Fran J. Ashton
Executive Assistant, City Clerk's Office