

**VANCOUVER POLICE BOARD  
FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**Meeting Minutes**

**November 12, 2020 - 4:00pm to 5:26pm**

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**Present:**

**Committee members:** Frank Chong (Chair), Barj Dhahan, Merrilee Robson, Rachel Roy

**VPD:** DCC Rai, Sr. Dir. Nancy Eng, Melissa Lee, Kimberly Jang

**Board Office:** Stephanie Johanssen, Executive Director

**Minutes By:** Ali Huculak

**1. Adoption of Agenda for November 12, 2020**

The Committee adopted the agenda for November 12, 2020.

**2. Minutes**

The Committee approved the Minutes of October 20, 2020.

**3. 2021 VPD Operating Budget**

DCC Rai briefed the Committee on the three budget scenarios put forward by the VPD with respect to the 2021 Operating Budget.

Senior Director Nancy Eng clarified for the Committee that the VPD is consistently over budget for training, but the VPD is currently able to manage this within the overall budget. Sr.Dir Eng stated the VPD recognizes that the City is in a difficult position with respect to this budget year and does not feel it's in their best interest to ask for more than the current \$750,000 allotment for training within the budget.

The VPD Finance team stated they will provide the Finance committee with categories within line items on a summarized level to show more detail, to ensure transparency to the Board for its decision on the 2021 Budget.



DCC Rai and Sr. Director Eng clarified for the Committee how reserve funds are used and outlined the restrictions in place, specifically the reserve funds that were allocated to the Granville Entertainment District.

There was discussion around additional funding for social issues, as well as the budget process with respect to communication between City Staff and the VPD Finance team.

It was determined that the Finance Committee will wait until after the November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020 meeting with Council, with respect to coming up with a recommendation to the Board on the budget. The Finance Committee will touch base with the VPD Executive and Finance team as to which scenario they will be recommending to the Board at the November 30<sup>th</sup> Police Board meeting.

The report was received.

**4. 2021 VPD Capital Budget**

DCC Rai spoke to the report noting the VPD's 2021 capital funding request will be submitted through the respective city departments and has not changed from the previous report submitted to the Board on October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

Motion to recommend the Capital Budget to the Board.

MOVED/SECONDED

CARRIED

**5. Budget meeting with Council**

DCC Rai spoke to the report stating that Council will be briefed on crime statistics, KPI metrics, the public crime perception survey, the motion from Council regarding decriminalizing poverty, and the overall budget.

DCC Rai and Barj Dahan provided a brief overview to the new Board members with respect to previous budget meetings with Council, stating they are a good opportunity to see different peoples' perceptions on public safety through questions and open discussion.

The Executive Director Ms. Johanssen will provide the Committee with information on the budget situation in other municipal police departments from major cities across Canada, to ensure the Board has a better understanding from a national perspective, before the meeting with Council.

**6. 2021 Vancouver Police Board Office Budget**

There was discussion with respect to the Board Office budget, and whether it should remain the same for 2020 and 2021, or be increased in 2021 to reflect actual and proposed expenditures such as external legal counsel and seeking advice from a communications expert.

Senior Director Eng stated if the VPD adjusts the Police Board Office budget, they would be reallocating from elsewhere within the VPD's overall operating budget. The VPD does recognize and understand that the Board office budget has not evolved in over a decade. The VPD would ensure there is a provision in the budget to cover the cost of the Police Board budget, even if it goes over budget.

Committee members discussed the importance of the Board being transparent with their budget with respect to the Board being an appropriate independent oversight body.

The VPD Finance team suggested that the Board would report out on actuals, but would have an internal working budget to be able to hold the Board Office accountable. This would allow for the Board Office to remain transparent on their expenditures.

*VPD Staff left the meeting at 4:45pm*

## **7. Other Business**

The Committee discussed the request from Vancouver City Council to the Board, to cut its existing operating budget by 1%. The Board did not accept this request for a variety of reasons, which had been presented to Council, however there was internal discussion about what kinds of savings could be had within the department versus a blanket 1% cut.

Mr. Dhahan stated that based on his conversations with Councillor's, he felt they did appreciate where the Board was coming from and gained more of an understanding of how the VPD differs from other City departments. Mr. Dhahan noted the previous Council did approve the funding plan recommended in the 2017 Operational Review and he wanted to remind Councillor's that have a responsibility to listen to the entire community, not simply look at certain demographic groups and make their decisions on that.

The ED added that there was already a \$900,000 cut to last years' budget request, and the VPD accepted that. The ED clarified for the committee that the VPD was willing to make cuts to their budget, however they were not willing to accept a 1% blanket cut to their budget as it would have been detrimental to their operations. The ED stated the VPD has increased costs due to the pandemic, however they are also saving money in certain areas, and the VPD said they would do everything they can to ensure that they are on budget/under budget by year end.

The Vice Chair noted that two of the Board's main priorities are mental health and a healthy workforce, and stated the VPD cannot have a healthy workforce if they don't have adequate budget resources to hire the number of officers and civilians needed to provide the highest level of public safety.

The committee recognizes that there needs to be a long term plan in applying funds to alternative services, however but the Board and VPD cannot accomplish this on their own.

The Board and VPD are very open to the idea of resources being allocated to mental health initiatives, but they need the Province to do its part to ensure the health resources are in place, otherwise it will fall back on the police to respond. This needs to be looked at from a broader perspective and a reality of the social needs of the City.

The annual budget may not be the right vehicle for this conversation to occur and the Committee recognized that there needs to be a long term strategy in place.

***The meeting continued November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at 12pm, after the November 16<sup>th</sup> budget meeting with Vancouver City Council.***

*Chair Mr. Frank Chong, Vice-Chair Barj Dhahan, Patricia Barnes, Rachel Roy, Merrilee Robson, and Faye Wightman were present*

There was discussion with respect to how the Board felt the meeting with City Council went and members expressed their thoughts on which budget scenario they were in favor of. The Committee decided to propose scenario 2 to City Council, with an additional ask for \$350,000 for Community Policing Centre's across the City.

There was discussion regarding how the Department could provide more information to councillors with respect to policing costs in relation to homelessness and social issues. The committee also discussed the need to show Council in detail where the VPD did make cost saving efforts, and what extra costs were absorbed by their budget with respect to COVID. Committee members feel it is important to clearly lay out in detail what scenario 1 will look like for the VPD if that is all the City is willing to offer, and specifically highlight which programs will be lost.

Motion to propose scenario 2 to City Council with the request for an additional \$350,000 for Community Policing Centres.

MOVED/SECONDED

CARRIED

*The meeting was adjourned at 12:55pm*