

**BUDGET COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
140 WEST PINE STREET
MISSOULA MONTANA
April 25, 2012 1:05 pm**

Members present: Marilyn Marler, President; Caitlin Copple, Ed Childers, Alex Taft, Adam Hertz; Jason Wiener; Dick Haines; Mike O'Herron, Jon Wilkins; Bob Jaffe.

Members absent: Dave Strohmaier; Cynthia Wolken.

Others present: Donna Gaukler, Brentt Ramharter, Bruce Bender, Scott Paasch, Dee Andersen.

I. Administrative Business

A. Approve committee minutes dated: [April 18, 2012](#)-approved as submitted.

B. Public Comment on items not listed on the agenda-None

II. Regular Agenda

A. Approve the preliminary budget for Fiscal Year 2013 inclusive of the Fiscal Year 2013 capital improvement program, the TBID and BID budgets and work plans, Park District #1 and Road District #1. (memo)—Regular Agenda (Brentt Ramharter) (Referred to committee: 04/16/12)
HOLD FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

Scott Paasch, Accounting Technician, directed the committee to the appropriate budget documents on the FTP server.

Donna Gaukler, Parks and Recreation Director, said the parks and recreation budget seems complicated because the funding comes from different sources. Over the last two years, when the Council and the Administration were wrestling with the recession, the parks and road districts were formed. We are seeing increases in use of our programs as people are staying home and spending their leisure time nearby. The park district is where all the new requests have been placed except for the aquatics subsidy requests and youth scholarship request. She said of 11 original requests 5 are recommended for funding.

The sustainable park maintenance request is related to routine parks operations that has been deferred like grass seed, turf maintenance, repair and maintenance of trails and irrigation repairs. She said that most of the parks infrastructure has lived well beyond its average life cycle.

Alex Taft said it was very confusing trying to follow the discussion and view the budget forms.

The committee discussed routine parks maintenance and what it entails.

Mr. Taft requested information on urban forestry.

Mr. Paasch said it was in the Parks District 1 Budget.

Jason Wiener suggested simplifying the budget documents.

Mike O'Herron said he was having difficulty finding the files the committee was discussing.

The committee discussed different ways that the budget could be presented that would be simple and easier for them to navigate through.

Mr. Wiener suggested the Administration provide the details on the unfunded requests as well as the recommended ones.

Dick Haines said the way the Administration structures the budget generates a lot of confusion and suspicion. It may work well for the Finance Department, but is difficult for him to understand and explain to his constituents. He said there has to be an easier way.

Mr. Taft said he doesn't have mistrust; he just wants to know how the big numbers are related to the individual programs. Then he can dig deeper.

Adam Hertz said he would like to hear from fellow council members on how they would like to review the budget.

Ed Childers suggested his fellow Council member's look at the narratives in each department's budget. There are staffing summaries, a strategic plan and performance measures. Maybe it would be helpful to look into that instead of the number crunching.

Marilyn Marler said this would be a good way to start our strategic budget planning session on May 16, 2012. We could narrow down exactly how we want the budget to be presented. She said it goes from the Mayor's overall summary to wading in the weeds very quickly. We need an intermediate summary. She also suggested the next BCOW meeting can be used to pull back and do just that.

Brentt Ramharter agreed to assist in this process.

Bruce Bender said if you view the new requests, you will understand what the departments want.

Ms. Gaukler gave an overview. The Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for all infrastructure not managed by the Public Works Department; all parks, trails, trees and pedestrian bridges. That also includes undeveloped parks and 3800 acres of open space. She said their budget for maintenance is \$1.1 million. They staff 150 seasonal employees. Most of the work is in the 2004 comprehensive parks plan. They do generate fees for services and have pushed back a lot of costs on their customers. There are a few programs Council does support. They hit a low during the recession and had to defer a lot of routine maintenance.

Mr. O'Herron thanked Ms. Gaukler for switching her presentation and said that's exactly what would work for him. Now looking at a more detailed spreadsheet might help. It's that executive summary that he needs.

Mr. Taft discussed urban forestry and how he would like more funding above the \$40,000 allocated.

Ms. Marler said she is an advocate for water wise landscaping and suggested a water wise plan.

Ms. Gaukler agreed and said it was something they are working on.

Ms. Gaukler discussed the youth scholarship support request stating that they try and break even and use sponsors to reduce program costs. The requests for scholarships more than doubled last year and they were not able to generate enough revenue. They are fund raising from private donations and have \$6,000 in new money, but need a minimum of \$30,000.

The committee discussed medians and greenways.

Ms. Gaukler said the program is designed to help better maintain these areas. They calm traffic and improve air quality. It has been a struggle to maintain them.

Mr. Taft asked if there ever has been a thought for the property owners to maintain them like the boulevards.

Ms. Gaukler stated there is safety risk when working in the medians and you need to be certified to do it. We don't want citizens working out on the medians.

Mr. Wiener wanted to know what the unfunded maintenance from past years that will go unfunded this year.

Ms. Gaukler said 7 months of park attendants to handle refuse, costs for new facilities, additional operating supplies, fall zone material, routine painting and pathway repair.

Mr. Wiener requested a list of locations.

Mr. Paasch said he will create an unfunded requests folder for committee to review.

The following items were requested to be placed on the [FY13 ticker list](#):

- Conservation Research Technicians by Jason Wiener
- Urban Forestry by Alex Taft
- Neighborhood Advocate by Alex Taft

III. Held in committee

IV. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Dee Andersen,
Administrative Secretary.