
Memorandum

To: Budget Standing Committee

From: Maggie Riopelle, Executive Research Assistant,
Commission of Corporate Services

Date: October 29, 2015

Subject: Budget Night - New Process for Consideration

Historically, Council has held a one-night public budget session where the budget is presented by staff, there is an opportunity to ask questions and often, late into the evening, significant and critical decisions are made regarding how the City will allocate resources.

While the budget is the focus of the Council meeting, concerns have been raised that this method may not provide enough time for the public/Council to fully discuss and digest the budget.

The Strategic Plan mission is: "Together with our community and guided by our strategic goals, we will provide quality municipal services that enhance our social fabric, environmental sustainability and cultural vitality; contributing to the economic prosperity of our community."

To fulfill that mission, Council must ensure adequate time is available for a full budget discussion and the focus on financial decisions are based on long-term planning and multi-year budgeting.

As such, for consideration of the Budget Standing Committee, individual Councillors have suggested changes to the format from a one-night budget session to two, back-to-back, evening budget sessions.

While the specific format has yet to be identified, staff recommends the following: The first meeting would allow for the presentation of the budget, questions on specific items, and tabling of amendments. The second meeting allows for staff to present additional information and explain the impact of the amendments, as well as further discussion on budget considerations and decisions to be made. These discussions would then occur in a manner that doesn't present the pressure of time constraints. From the public's perspective, it will also provide an opportunity for staff to enhance education of the City's budget; clearly identify challenges and opportunities; as well as provide more clarification on Council's decisions.