



City of Prince George Regular Council Budget Meeting January 26, 2022

Handout List

Regarding the 2022 – 2026 Operational Financial and Capital Expenditure Plans

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Subject: Submission for Jan 24 Council Meeting - Budget Review

From: Amelia Merrick <*REDACTED* >
Sent: Monday, January 24, 2022 5:25 PM
To: cityclerk <cityclerk@princegeorge.ca>; mayorandcouncil <mayorandcouncil@princegeorge.ca>
Subject: Re: Submission for Jan 24 Council Meeting - Budget Review

Dear City Clerk, Mayor and Council,

I wish to add one further comment to my council meeting submission.

We agree that 2021 was an important year for Canada as we can come to better understand the harmful and traumatic history of residential schools. We honored the 215 children who were rediscovered in Kamloops and we also acknowledged the inter-generational trauma caused from Lejac Residential School.

With this in mind, I believe that as a responsive city government it is important to make explicit how our budget contributes towards reconciliation. I would recommend that a portion of existing budgets from every service – whether that be sidewalks, RCMP or bylaw – be allocated to address reconciliation. Furthermore, I would recommend that reconciliations plans and reports be reviewed by members of Lheidli T'enneh. If it is not already our practice, I would like to hear an annual presentation of how the city of Prince George is enacting our commitment towards reconciliation. This presentation should include a financial analysis.

With respect,
Amelia Merrick

Amelia Merrick

REDACTED
PhD Candidate

In pursuit of powerful collective knowledge. Together, thinking new ideas, thinking the unthinkable!

From: Amelia Merrick <*REDACTED* >
Date: Monday, January 24, 2022 at 3:29 PM
To: cityclerk@princegeorge.ca <cityclerk@princegeorge.ca>, mayorandcouncil@princegeorge.ca <mayorandcouncil@princegeorge.ca>
Subject: Submission for Jan 24 Council Meeting - Budget Review

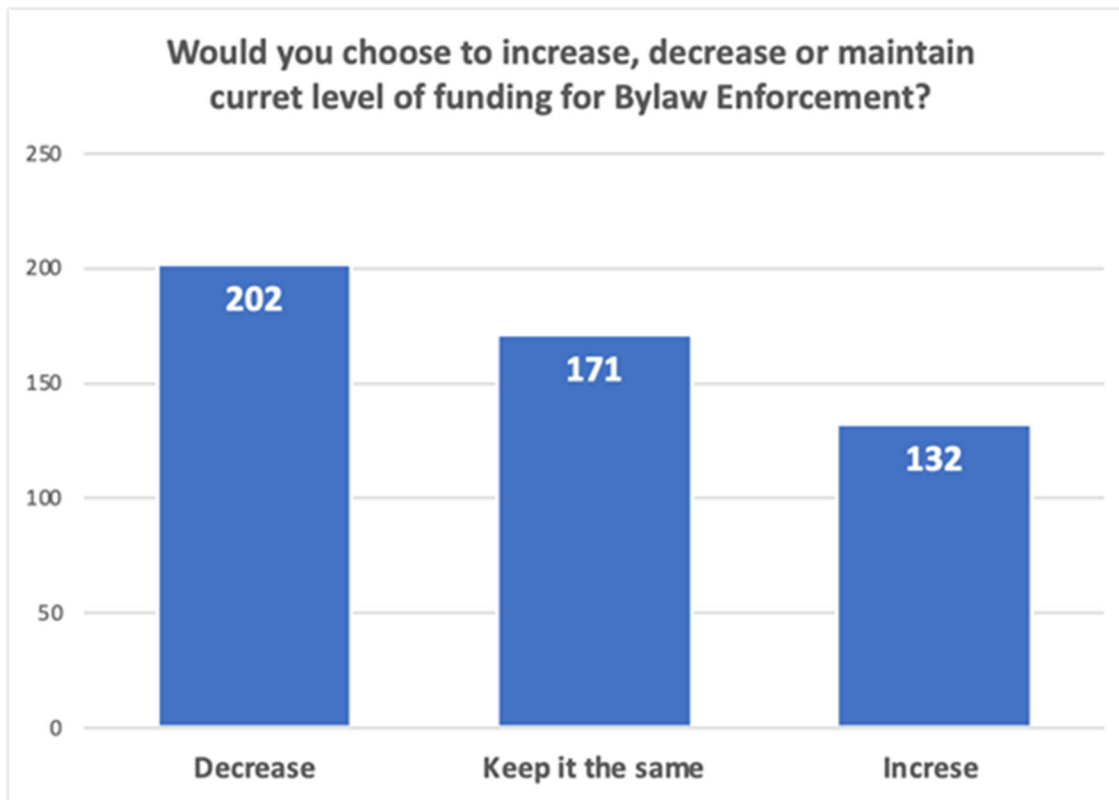
Dear City Clerk, Mayor and Council,

As a citizen of Prince George I would like to submit my formal response to the 2022 budget proposal. Please include my response in the minutes for the January 24, 2022 council meeting.

First, I would like to congratulate the City of Prince George for engaging in a rigorous process of public consultation. The Prince George Citizen Budget 2022 conducted by Ethelo provides a picture into the concerns and aspirations of more than 500 engaged citizens. Great job!

The report explicitly stated that of the citizens who participated in the online survey are willing to increase funding to roads & sidewalk (46% agreed) and police services (41%), while they would like to see a reduction to corporate services (75%). The report also indicated that 40% of citizens approve a decrease to bylaw services. (This is based on slide 11 of the report found here:

<https://www.princegeorge.ca/Things%20to%20Do/Documents/Prince%20George%202022%20Report%20Citizen%20Budget%20final.pdf> I have reformatted the graph in a slightly simpler way.) Interestingly, the report also included 7 statements made by citizens regarding our homeless crisis.



Based on the citizen's report I would like to express my concern that the 2022 budget proposed by the City of Prince George does not reflect the recommendations and concerns of its engaged citizens. In fact, it does the exact opposite of what citizen's recommended. The 2022 budget proposes to reduce funding to RCMP by \$1M while increasing funding to Bylaw Enforcement by \$800K. Furthermore, the 2022 budget does not offer confidence that the concerns regarding Prince George's de-housing crisis have been heard. From this account, it appears that the citizen engagement process was ignored.

On multiple occasions over the past year I have indicated my concern with the increased presence of bylaw services in our community. I fear that the proposed increase of funding to bylaw will further exacerbate harassment and harm in our community. Bylaw may do a very good job to make sure the public pick up "poopsicles" but they are not adequately trained or prepared to handle the complex social crisis we face downtown.

I oppose the proposed \$805,565 increase to bylaw services and ask that you carefully reconsider the moral and financial cost of increased bylaw presence in our community. There is no evidence to suggest that bylaw has improved safety, reduced crime or solved the issues that our de-housed community face. Instead, there is plenty of evidence to suggest that it has intensified a complaint-driven culture and driven us to higher levels of **Redacted**

Thank you,
Amelia Merrick
Citizen of Prince George

Amelia Merrick

REDACTED

PhD Candidate

From: cityclerk
Subject: Downtown Safety Unit/Budget '22

From: Erin MacDermott <*REDACTED* >
Sent: Tuesday, January 25, 2022 2:31 PM
To: cityclerk <cityclerk@princegeorge.ca>
Subject: Downtown Safety Unit/Budget '22

Dear Mayor and Council,

I am the owner of Dandy Lines which has been a part of downtown Prince George since 1981. I began working at Dandy Lines in 1988, became one of the owners of it in 1993 and have had it own my own since 2015. You can imagine that I am very familiar with the ongoing and escalating social issues that happen regularly in our downtown.

I cannot tell you how hard I have worked and continue to do so to provide our community with an upscale shopping experience that would rival any larger city's boutique retail. My shop and storefront contribute greatly to the aesthetic of 4th Ave and the downtown area all with the hope of helping to have a thriving, vibrant and attractive downtown. The success of my business has nothing to do with downtown, it is in spite of it.

So many customers, staff and community members have expressed concerns with feeling unsafe while visiting the downtown. My staff and I spend a lot of time when chatting with customers/visitors deflecting derogatory comments, statements and questions about the state of our downtown. How are businesses to remain afloat if people won't visit.

Yes we need condos, yes we need recreation, yes we need arts facilities, yes we need services and many other missing pieces to build an attractive and vibrant downtown; however these are not things that are going to happen soon enough to benefit a lot of business owners, people who work downtown, downtown patrons and our most vulnerable residents. First we all need to feel safe and The Downtown Safety Unit has an important part to play in helping to address some of these concerns. Please keep them in our budget. Truthfully we could probably use more of them.

Thank you for taking the time to hear my concerns.

Sincerely,

Erin MacDermott
Owner
Dandy Lines
1275 4th Ave
Prince George, BC V2L 3J5
REDACTED

From: cityclerk
Subject: Downtown Safety Unit

-----Original Message-----

From: *REDACTED*
Sent: Monday, January 24, 2022 1:39 PM
To: cityclerk <cityclerk@princegeorge.ca>
Subject: Downtown Safety Unit

I was dismayed to read the downtown safety unit may be cut from the City's operating budget this year. Its budget should be increased together with funding for Bylaw services. I have worked downtown for many years. In my experience, in those periods when there has been a greater police presence downtown- it has been a safer place for all. I ask councilors to keep the Downtown Safety Unit and provide it with more funding to even allow more services to be provided downtown.

Deanna Randall
1533 8th Avenue

Sent from my iPhone

From: cityclerk
Subject: Budget Deliberation

From: Vash Ebbadi-Cook *REDACTED*
Sent: Monday, January 24, 2022 4:20 PM
To: cityclerk <cityclerk@princegeorge.ca>
Subject: Budget Deliberation

Hello,

My name is Vash Ebbadi-Cook and I've lived in Prince George for the last five years. I'm appreciative of the survey process that the City has in place for citizen engagement. My concern is the representation of the sample of respondents to the survey to info priorities for the city. The survey is conducted in English, which excluded those who do not speak English as a first language. Additionally, the promotion of the survey leaves those who experience vulnerabilities, including those who are under housed, have a limited to no internet and phone access, which further disenfranchises those who are already disenfranchised.

How will the City aim to improve this process and also collect and report out of demographics data to provide transparency of who is represented in the data?

Thank you,

Vash
116 Douglas Street

From: cityclerk
Subject: Letter from Together We Stand re: Budget

From: Julian Legere *REDACTED*

Sent: Monday, January 24, 2022 5:37 PM

To: cityclerk <cityclerk@princegeorge.ca>; mayorandcouncil <mayorandcouncil@princegeorge.ca>

Subject: Letter from Together We Stand re: Budget

Please include this formal response in the January 24, 2022 PG City Council Meeting Minutes.

January 24, 2022

Dear Mayor and Council,

We are writing on behalf of Together We Stand, a grassroots movement of 1296 members who represent housed, de-housed and precarious housed citizens in Prince George. We are writing to express our profound concern about the substantial reallocation of funding to Bylaw enforcement in the recently released municipal budget proposal. We have great concern that this change could result in harm for members of our community.

Though the RCMP has been the target of debate in Canada, particularly with reference to systemic racism and sexism, the RCMP are provincially mandated and federally regulated, and therefore subject to a more robust system of judicial oversight. Bylaw enforcement on the other hand, does not have the same federally-regulated standards for professional conduct and is more vulnerable to the misuse of power and discrimination on the basis of race, social class and economic status. Additionally, there is little evidence that bylaw staff are adequately trained or equipped to handle complex crisis, for example, training in First Nations cultural safety or in trauma-informed response.

In Prince George there has been an established history of [Redacted] towards citizens, in particular to those who are de-housed. One recent example is the enforcement actions that took place in November 2021 at the Lower Patricia Boulevard encampment, also known as Moccasin Flats.

[Redacted]
[Redacted] This [Redacted] brings us concern.

Many Prince George citizens had their homes and livelihoods destroyed as a result of [Redacted]. Many lost important items like Identification, tools and equipment, as well as irreplaceable sentimental objects. To date, the City of Prince George nor bylaw services have rectified this or compensated citizens for destroyed property. It is our belief that [Redacted]

[Redacted] This deserves urgent attention and should be resolved in order to restore the public's faith and ensure the safety of all Prince George citizens.

It is against this background that we are deeply troubled about the proposal to reallocate public funding towards bylaw services. The proposed budget indicates an increase of more than \$800K. This is unacceptable in a time when the City of Prince George has publicly and repeatedly committed to justice, equity, and reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples (who are overrepresented in the city's unhoused population).

Finally, we ask that the city be explicit in it's budget about how the City of Prince George is taking steps towards reconciliation. We recommend that there be a specific budget line to address reconciliation.

Sincerely,

Together We Stand
Prince George, BC

From: cityclerk
Subject: FW: City Council Budget Meetings

-----Original Message-----

From: Fred Speckeen <*REDACTED*>
Sent: Wednesday, January 26, 2022 9:44 AM
To: cityclerk <cityclerk@princegeorge.ca>
Subject: City Council Budget Meetings

Dear City Clerk:

I write with comments re the Budget Meetings of City Council and respectfully request that this letter be sent to Council members.

1. Additional funds should be provided to add police officers to our RCMP detachment. Reducing the police budget and/or reducing the police complement should not be agreed upon given the increasing demands on the police force. Furthermore, no thought should be given to employing our own police force. Look at the situation in Surrey due to such a decision. We need more and well paid first responders, not fewer. I think most taxpayers would agree with me.

2. Plans should be made and money provided to move more quickly to meet the needs of homeless persons.

3. City Council should be responsible for city budgets and their oversight, not the Administration.

Thank you for considering my letter and best wishes in your deliberations.

Sincerely,

Dr. Fred Speckeen, Ph.D
2700 Hammond Ave. Prince George, BC. V2M1A5

REDACTED

From: cityclerk
Subject: 2022 Budget

From: Jude U <*REDACTED*>
Sent: Wednesday, January 26, 2022 10:53 AM
To: cityclerk <cityclerk@princegeorge.ca>
Subject: 2022 Budget

Hello Dear,

I would like to first appreciate the work the City and the council are doing. I would also like to ask two questions with respect to the budget proposals:

- 1.) Why is the City considering an increase to property tax without first presenting to the public an analysis of how much the City is expecting to earn in additional revenue in taxes from the 18%-20% increase on the value of properties based on the 2021 property assessment?
- 2.) The justification for the increase to the RCMP budget is still vague. Could the council provide a clear and convincing justification for the increase? Should the City not start looking at leveraging more on technologies than on the number of police personnels?

Thank you once again for all the work you are doing.

Jude Udengwu