

CITY OF NANAIMO

BUSINESS CASE – Facility and Park Operations Department: Project Budget Accounting Clerk

CURRENT OVERVIEW

The Parks, Recreation and Culture (PRC) Division enhances the City of Nanaimo's (City) community by providing facilities and venues, parkland, trails, programs and events. It also supports and enables community organizations to deliver opportunities for recreation and cultural experiences in Nanaimo, all while preserving the natural surroundings.

Within PRC there are two departments – Recreation and Culture, and Facilities and Parks Operations (F&PO). Though they operate in distinct, specialized sections, each is involved in nurturing strong community partnerships to provide further opportunities for active public participation and engagement through a range of diverse programs, services, and events.

Through the ReImagine process, community members confirmed that they place a high priority on the facilities and outdoor spaces that people use to access recreation, culture, and wellness services. Public responses through this process indicated that there is a desire to increase access to these spaces as well as increase the investment for enhanced and new amenities to meet current and future community needs. The ability for people to access these spaces and places has a positive affect on individual and community health. F&PO directly supports these community priorities through:

- Livable Neighbourhoods
- A Thriving and Creative Downtown
- Mobility Choice
- An Affordable City of Nanaimo
- Access to Nature and Outdoor Recreation
- A Supportive City of Nanaimo
- A Waterfront Identity
- A Green Approach
- A Central Hub Identity

Overseen by the Director, Facility & Parks Operations, F&PO has 41.8 FTEs including:

- 3 Managers
- 1 Parks Clerk
- 1 Allocations Clerk
- 1 Parks Project Coordinator
- 1 Urban Forestry Coordinator
- 1 Lead Supervisor
- 7 supervisors
- 25.8 Operational Staff

** Department also manages 20 additional custodial staff that report the Manager, Recreational Facilities and Custodial Services.*

F&PO is further broken down into Parks Operations and Facilities Planning & Maintenance sections with their own set of operational responsibilities. However, both sections are responsible for the

implementation of the project plan, which includes project planning, defining project requirements, and budget planning. As a result, many staff are working in both operational (maintenance) and project spheres.

Parks Operations oversees the care and maintenance of all City-owned parkland, multi-use trail systems, and outdoor activity venues. This section also shares responsibilities for maintaining Nanaimo's Urban Forest and natural areas, as well as controlling the spread of invasive plant species.

Facility Planning & Maintenance (FP&M) oversees the overall care and maintenance of many of the City-owned Civic and Recreational Facilities including Custodial Services. This department provides project management and support by overseeing the tender process for facility projects in several City departments including; Parks, Recreation and Culture, Bylaw, Nanaimo Fire Rescue, Public Works, and Police Services. FP&M also works in conjunction with Facility Asset Planning in the Engineering Department to deliver information that feeds asset management plans, project plans and coordinates the completion condition assessments, and preventative maintenance plans.

One Permanent Full Time Parks Clerk and one Temporary Seasonal Parks Clerk perform clerical support to F&PO. The primary clerical function is to assist in the day-to-day operations of the F&PO Department, which includes, but is not limited to:

- Carrying out switchboard/receptionist duties by handling all Parks Office incoming calls, and responding to public inquiries and/or assigning to appropriate personnel.
- Creating and processing purchase requisitions, purchase orders, and invoices including coding of purchase card transactions for F&PO staff.
- Processing and maintaining work orders and service sheets for office staff and field personnel in Tempest requiring accuracy and consistency for future accessibility and retrieval.
- Acting as a recording secretary for various meetings by preparing and distributing agendas, and recording, transcribing and distributing minutes.
- Arranging meeting dates and locations including booking venues and catering as required.
- Creation and maintenance of a variety of files, manuals and inventories such as file indexes, policy/procedure manuals, and key inventory.
- Processes time cards and vacation requests including; time card compilation and entry, organization of time cards and vacation requests, data validation, and time card submission to payroll.
- Making travel arrangements and registering for conferences including related expense reconciliations for the F&PO Department staff.
- Responding to operational budgetary inquiries from staff as requested using the City's ERP system.
- Other administrative duties including processing and distributing of inter-office and postal mail, photocopying, ordering stationary and printing supplies, maintaining Parks office bulletin boards, preparing miscellaneous reports and correspondence as required.

In addition to the clerical support provided above, F&PO receives project budget accounting support from the Project Budget Accounting Clerk that reports in the Engineering Department.

BUSINESS ISSUE

Currently there is no dedicated staff member in F&PO to assist with the administration of projects. In addition, the annual volume of projects managed by the F&PO Department is increasing in volume and complexity. There is also pressures in operations from the increasing portfolio size and age of assets requiring additional support. This has resulted in an unmanageable workload for the Parks Clerk(s), and the Project Budget Accounting Clerk in Engineering does not have the capacity to provide any further project accounting support to the F&PO Department.

In addition, the lack of a dedicated Project Budget Accounting Clerk in F&PO is resulting in the City's internally developed software, City Projects, not being fully utilized. This lack of training and knowledge has resulted in an inconsistent approach to all capital projects such as maintenance of reports, financial information, close out documentation, and project records.

EXPECTED OUTCOME

The addition of a Project Budget Accounting Clerk for F&PO will provide the additional resources to effectively and efficiently manage the administration of the department's project workload and allow the Parks Clerk(s) to focus on supporting operations staff.

The addition of a Project Budget Accounting Clerk is anticipated to:

- Ensure all appropriate processes are followed and project documentation is maintained for all capital projects within the City's own capital project management software and in alignment with the City's Capital Project Management Policy that was approved by Council 2019-May-06.
- Monitor project costs and provide detailed financial reports and forecasts to staff within the department that are responsible for the annual project plan.
- Act as the department's knowledgeable financial authority on accounting and purchasing policies.
- Liaise with the Finance Department on workflow, current practices, and funding sources.
- Coordinate F&PO cost recovery accounting information such as accounts receivable and private contributions.

OPTIONS

Option #1 – Add a Project Budget Accounting Clerk position effective 2023-APR-01

Create a new full time Project Budget Accounting Clerk within the Facility and Parks Operations Department, reporting to the Manager, Civic Facilities.

Benefits:

- Provides a dedicated resource that acts as the department's knowledgeable financial authority on accounting and purchasing policies.
- Creates capacity for the operations clerical staff to focus on the expanding operational portfolio for both Facility and Park Operations.
- Ensure appropriate processes are followed and project documentation maintained in accordance with the City's Capital Project Management Policy.

Weaknesses:

- Permanent increase to operating budget of section; and
- Due to an office shortage at the Facility and Park Operations Yard, a new workspace will need to be created for this position within the existing layout of the building.

Financial Analysis:

- Position is anticipated to be at a CUPE Level 10, subject to JE.
- Estimated budget impact in 2023 for wages and benefits is \$78,900 based on an April 1st start date.
- Estimated budget impact in 2023 for additional annual costs is \$1,500 for software and network charges.
- One-time costs upon the creation of the position are projected at \$17,700 for the creation of an office space and for the purchase of office furniture and equipment.

Option #2 – Status Quo

Benefits:

- No impact to operating budget of the department.

Weaknesses:

- Without a dedicated resource that acts as the department’s knowledgeable financial authority on accounting procedures for projects, existing staff will not be able to effectively and efficiently manage the workload.
- Inability for clerical staff to effectively focus on the expanding operations portfolio.
- Ability to properly plan and implement projects will continue to be an issue as operational and capital portfolios grow.
- May result in additional processing time if administration of financials cannot be handled in a timely manner.
- Inability to proactively rectify issues, and reach goals and opportunities, as highlighted in Reimagine Nanaimo.

RECOMMENDATION

Option #1 - Add a Project Budget Accounting Clerk to the Facility and Parks Operations section in 2023.