CITY OF NANAIMO

BUSINESS CASE – Finance Department: Senior Accountant

CURRENT OVERVIEW

Accounting Services provides financial support to Council, the public, and City departments and is responsible for maintaining the integrity and accuracy of the City's financial information. Key responsibilities include financial reporting and analysis, account reconciliations, year-end working papers and annual audit support, internal controls, accounts payable oversight, capital and operating accounting, and compliance with applicable accounting standards and legislative requirements.

The Accounting Services section currently consists of the following positions:

- Manager
- Assistant Manager
- Accountant
- Assistant Accountants (3)
- GL Clerk
- Accounts Payable Clerks (2)
- Junior Financial Analyst (shared with Financial Planning)

BUSINESS ISSUE

In recent years, the Finance Department has experienced significant growth in workload due to City growth, increased reporting requirements, evolving technology, higher volumes of information requests, greater operational complexity, and increased demand for financial support from departments.

As a result, management staff are spending a significant amount of time supporting day-to-day operations and responding to emerging issues. With existing staff working at or near capacity, there is limited opportunity to delegate operational responsibilities and redirect management capacity toward strategic priorities, process improvements, and enhanced financial support to departments.

This has resulted in:

- Reduced management capacity to focus on strategic initiatives, longer-term priorities, and service improvements.
- Limited capacity to provide enhanced financial support and analysis to departments.
- Slower response times for operational requests and ongoing projects.
- Limited capacity to proactively identify and implement process and operational improvements.

EXPECTED OUTCOME

The addition of a Senior Accountant would provide additional technical expertise, oversight, guidance, and support within the Accounting Services section while increasing overall departmental capacity.

The additional capacity is anticipated to:

- Increase management capacity to supervise, mentor, and review staff work while allowing greater focus on strategic priorities and service improvements.
- Improve the department's ability to respond to operational demands and provide timely financial support and advice to City departments.
- Increase capacity to proactively identify and implement process and operational improvements.
- Strengthen oversight, review, and quality control of financial processes and reporting.
- Provide additional technical support for year-end financial reporting, audit preparation, account reconciliations, and financial analysis.
- Enable Accounting Services staff to focus more consistently on the core responsibilities of their positions.
- Support cross-training among employees in similar roles with different day-to-day responsibilities, improving operational continuity and helping maintain key financial processes and services during vacations, sick leave, and other absences.
- Strengthen succession planning and knowledge transfer within Accounting Services, reducing reliance on individual employees for critical financial processes.

OPTIONS

Option #1 – Add a Senior Accountant

Create a permanent full-time Senior Accountant position reporting to the Manager, Accounting Services.

Benefits

- Increased capacity within the Accounting Services section to meet current and future operational demands.
- Provides additional senior -level technical expertise, leadership, review and guidance.
- Creates capacity for management staff to focus on strategic initiatives, operational improvements, and service delivery.
- Strengthens oversight and quality control of financial processes and reporting.
- Provides additional operational coverage and continuity during management absences.
- Supports cross-training, knowledge transfer, and succession planning within the Accounting Services.

Weaknesses

- Permanent increase to the operating budget.

Financial Analysis

- The position is anticipated to be at a CUPE level 15, with wages and benefits estimated at $114,700 based on an April 1st start date. The 2028 budget impact is estimated at $167,100, which includes wages and benefits, as well as a net increase to the 2028 overtime budget.

- Additional annual costs are anticipated at $7,200 for a professional membership fee, professional development, and computer charges.
- No additional one-time costs are required for this position.
- The estimated 2027 property tax impact is 0.07%.

Option #2 – Status Quo
Continue with the current organizational structure.

Benefits

- No impact to the operating budget.

Weaknesses

- Service levels will remain at current levels with limited capacity to accommodate additional workload or service improvements.
- Capacity to proactively identify and implement process and operational improvements would remain limited.
- Management capacity for staff supervision, mentoring, review and quality control would remain constrained.
- Response times for departmental requests and financial support may continue to be longer than desired during periods of high workload.
- Existing workload and capacity pressures within Accounting Services would continue.
- Opportunities for cross-training, knowledge transfer, and succession planning would remain limited.

RECOMMENDATION
Option #1 is recommended.