PBAB Meeting minutes

Nov 18, 2021, 6pm, City Hall

Attending: E. Buisch, A. Dunn, J. McCorkle, A. Spink (alt), R. Maclean

1. Reviewing October financial report

   a) Question: vehicle purchases come from a separate budget, but the upfitting is listed here as part of the PD budget. The upfitting cost is $23K, a considerable proportion of a new vehicle cost.

   What comes from where? What is part of general fund city budget, what is the PD budget?

   Note that maintenance line was merged into computers, i.e. does not apply to vehicle costs.

   Start a list of things we want the budget academy to address.

   Breakdown of all the costs to put a new vehicle on the streets: how much from the dealership, how much in additions?

   b) Can OT include a less ambiguous description of what occasions, what they're for, how many hours.

   Probably called more in because of what's happening in the school. (EB) With everything that's going on in the school, are they sending in more people, requesting more. Arroyo was at the parent meeting talking about all the schools and incidents he has to cover. (West, North, middle, high.) Drive by in the morning, three cars in the morning before the protests. Recently, because of what's been going on. Normally you only see one, Arroyo. Gotta figure if they have protests at the school—need another officer to cover. Parents: why don't we have more SROs? Answer: we're not staffed for that.

   Chief has said: for calling in sick, etc., it would be good to see a breakdown for each pay period.

   Better for CC to see how it breaks down.

   We assume Adam can pull these reports for any given month or time period. Month by month perspective vs. annual: we can ask for both, and track changes (seasonal or event-based).

   It would be good for council and us to know, are they sending more OT to the schools.

   It is important for us to know the whys and wherefores, not just the hours. (JM)

There's got to be accounting of hours, who's called in on what occasions. We assume the Chief has that info, which would benefit everybody to see. If that data is not collected now, there's no reason why it shouldn't start to be.

We ask these questions again and again, if we depend on Adam to answer them and he's not in the room, what should we do, do we need to create and vote on lists of questions when the meeting is only attended by Board members?

c) Can we ask Adam questions over email without violating open meeting laws?

My view (RM) is 1) it's probably fine to ask questions over email and, 2) before questioning authority, we should work for towards a strategic plan, since the feedback we've received hasn't been fully clarifying; we should develop our own independent understanding of the problem before us. (Recommended starting citation: Karakatsanis, "The Punishment Bureaucracy")

What else do we add to the budget academy to compile the information

Helpful to have clarity about what kind of meeting we're going to have, ahead of time. Is this the type of meeting where we can ask Adam (or CC or PD) questions? Or are we working as a Board independently? Helpful to have a clear agenda of what the meeting is meant to accomplish.

d) Other questions for monthly report:

Axon is the bodycam vendor? Why is that under firearms?

We noticed GPD pulled money from "office supplies" for other expenses—we asked is that typically done city-wide? Adjusting real vs. budgeted costs is one thing, but the report should indicate how lines were adjusted rather than just money taken out of one line and (invisibly) applied to another.

Compare Library budget (JM): We essentially have two: one reports all the actual costs month by month, and a real budget is where you plan out all the costs you expect in a detailed way. What we're seeing here is a loose version or combination of both things. We're missing the principle, values, and mission the PD wants to represent (in clear contradistinction to what is spent)

In a grant budget (AD), e.g., travel estimates have to be detailed and broken down, per person, per day, how the money is precisely going to be allocated. The PD as well needs to articulate: here's the equipment we're going to buy, here's how the costs break down etc.

Library (JM): in an emergency situation (roof cave in etc.), if the Library is to dig into its meager finances to fix the roof, the board has to convene and vote on it.

From “here are the checks we cut” to what are the policies, points, what are the principles behind this pattern of spending. The prison pipeline through policing is very clear.

Having SRos who are armed in schools, elevates violence in schools. As a budget committee, we do need to have a sense of what values are promoted. Do we want to promote violence, the more punitive side of our society. Our responsibility as a Board is a sustainable, livable Geneva.

Can’t operate completely based on what the City tells us. Agree (AS) with educating ourselves, branching out, readings, etc.

We need clarity on the “35 positions.” The language Adam provided is kind of like the spreadsheet. We don’t know how things move around. Don’t understand the mathematics he’s trying to present. What is abolished? Are the abolished positions being reconstituted? Does “35 positions” mean 35 employees, or 35 counting the positions that are to be filled. Adam talks as if CC votes up or down on how many positions there are in the GPD but that’s the first we’ve heard it described that way. During the vote in 2020 staff kept telling CC they couldn’t cut positions but only remove funding, but Adam now talks like CC decides staffing levels.

It’s frustrating that we’ve been doing this for how many months and we don’t know how many people are in the PD, how many vacancies there are. (AS)

Discussion of 2020 budget controversies.

The Board needs a physical organizational chart: name of all positions, with names of employees marked into the chart, and vacancies shown.

Who has control over the structure of that organization?

How do personnel decision making processes reflect the difference in pay between veteran officers retiring and new hires?

Dec 1 CC: response to our recommendation. We’ll meet in Dec. ON ZOOM. Dec 16.

Options for 2-hr. budget meeting: Jan. 20. Jan. 27. Feb. 3. (SEND TO ADAM & IRENE)

Approve Oct. minutes. Will review Sept. minutes and review

Clear answer: what are we allowed to send over email? Can we ask questions, can we discuss things, can we share readings or other information?

Action items for Adam: 1) Zoom in Dec, 2) January dates, 3) Questions about email rules, 4) Org. chart