STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

QUESTION PERIOD

Minute No. 638
Councillor Gerbasi inquired if there would be any change to the current budget process and asked for information that could be provided about what would happen for the current budget process.

Councillor Fielding confirmed that they were engaged in the budget process and that there was a budget working group with himself and Councillors Wyatt and Swandel. He confirmed that they were having background meetings for departments to make their presentations and public consultations would be held in November. Councillor Fielding further advised that they were working towards a combined Capital and Operating Budget.

Councillor Gerbasi asked if there could be a collaborative process where Councillors work on a budget together as a Council. Councillor Fielding advised that the current process was a process that the Provincial Government also uses and if some changes could be made to engage more of Council, he was open to that.

Councillor Mayes noted that constituents had contacted him to advise that they were notified that their assessments would be increasing because the City imputed they had finished their basements, because they had had not gained entry to their homes, and asked if the Chair would work to see if the public notice could be a little clearer and identify what would happen if the notice from Assessment and Taxation was not responded to.

Councillor Fielding advised that the current process had been used for a number of years but agreed to undertake a review to make sure the process was working and that there was an effective communication system in place.

Councillor Mayes questioned if Council would have some jurisdiction or be able to set some limits in terms of what the green fees would be at the four golf courses that formerly were directly run by the City but now appear to be run in some other fashion.

Councillor Fielding advised that they were at the start of the process for the managed competition and more information and union involvement in the process would be forthcoming.

Councillor Steen referred to cost overruns for the fire stations in the City and asked if the fire station on Kimberly Avenue, which was in the loops for renovations, would be in the 2014 budget.

Councillor Fielding replied that they had engaged in a process in the late 1990's and a comprehensive plan would identify what fire halls need expanding first and advised they would also take the advice of the Fire Chief to determine the priority.