

MINUTES OF THE METRO COUNCIL BUDGET WORK SESSION

Wednesday, April 14, 2004
Metro Council Chamber

Councilors Present: David Bragdon (Council President), Brian Newman, Susan McLain, Carl Hosticka, Rod Monroe, Rex Burkholder, Chief Operating Officer Michael Jordan, Chief Financial Officer, Bill Stringer.

Councilors Absent: Rod Park (excused)

Council President Bragdon convened the Metro Council Budget Work Session Meeting at 1:40 p.m.

Councilor Bragdon started with Technical Amendments

Kathy Rutkowski, Budget Coordinator for the office of Finance and Financial Planning, discussed technical amendments in brief for Parks and Greenspaces, Planning, Solid Waste and Recycling.

Councilor Burkholder asked if, during the lentil contamination, the company was fined to cover Metro's costs associated with enforcement? Solid Waste and Recycling Director, Mike Hoglund said that they had hired a consultant, at that time, to look at the impact and would get back to Councilor Burkholder regarding his question.

President Bragdon stated that the technical amendments appeared to be relatively straightforward.

Councilor McLain referred to **Solid Waste number #1.**

Councilor Newman asked that the money should come from the system fee not the fund balance and asked if Councilor McLain would amend her amendment. Councilor McLain stated that she would. Councilor Monroe asked if the amendment restored the employee? Mike Hoglund replied that it actually does not, as it includes the 2 FTE to run the bin sale. Councilor Monroe then asked about the employee who has been running the organics program and if they would be reassigned? Mr. Hoglund stated that the status is that HR is looking at the position to see if it is possible to utilize the union bumping rights.

Councilor McLain referred to her second group of amendments **SW&R #2.** Councilor McLain stated that this amendment continues Metro's important work on recycling education. This is the only program Metro has which touches many youth and is also as popular with teachers. As winning student artwork goes up on billboards throughout the region, this cut took away part of the revenue and would not give us as many billboards in previous years. Councilor McLain asked if the funds come out of the per capita 15-year program at \$28,000, stating that there would still be \$25,000 worth of per capita. President Bragdon stated that the \$28,000 is a better value coming out of the per capita, as it would not increase the fund balance if you take it out of per capita. Councilor McLain stated that there is another amendment she intends to make which has not been drafted.

Councilor McLain also talked about the possibility (**See handout #3**) of Metro hiring a person who would do sustainable procurement and that the funds for this position could come from a regional system fee. There was discussion about what the person would do that would be

different from what each department is already doing to be more sustainable. No conclusion was reached as to hiring for such a position.

Handout #4 Councilor Budget Amendments, planning department was reviewed and one correction was made by hand on the first page. That Councilor McLain is bringing the amendment for Fish and Wildlife forward, not Councilor Burkholder.

Councilor Monroe discussed his amendments, see **Handout # 5—zoo amendment**. The zoo has been deferring regular maintenance for several years and there continues to be a significant shortfall. The proposed amendment would take \$300,000 out of the tourism opportunity and competitiveness account and put it over into zoo maintenance. The anticipation is that this would be ongoing. Councilor Monroe stated that he feels quite strongly about this amendment and is concerned about the zoo getting behind to the point that patrons start to notice maintenance problems.

Councilor Monroe also discussed the proposed zoo budget and the elimination of a half time graphics employee. Councilor Monroe pointed to the fact that the zoo has “beefed up” the contracting professional services budget and would be replacing this employee with outside contractors. He stated that the zoo would be better off to keep that person than to contract out, and that this amendment would restore that position.

Zoo Director, Tony Vecchio and Councilor Monroe engaged in a conversation about where the money would come from to restore the position and whether it is prudent to contract out. Mr. Vecchio stated that he was not prepared with the proper research for this amendment. Councilor Monroe stated that he would defer this amendment until both he and Mr. Vecchio were able to review the position more closely.

President Bragdon asked about the deferred maintenance at the zoo. He asked if the Council could have a list prepared of the most important pending projects, which could be completed for \$300,000. Mr. Vecchio said Sarah Chisholm had been working on a list and would provide that to council. Ms. Chisholm also stated that she would give Council the scope of work to be done.

Mr. Jordan stated his uneasiness with this issue and with the contract services vs. staff issue at the zoo. He reiterated that zoo staff has reviewed the budget, and nauseum, to maintain fund balance and reasonable services. The management has done hours and hours of service to review how to do everything the most cost effective way possible.

President Bragdon recognized Metro Auditor Alexis Dow, who asked for time regarding the auditor’s budget

Auditor Dow discussed the auditing budget and also other local and regional auditing budgets. . She reviewed what various aspects of the auditor’s office cost to run and about how there is a lack of funds and employees to complete auditing tasks. She also mentioned that her amendments would be ready by Friday for Council to review. Ms. Dow stated that it is difficult to find auditors at this time, especially when there is a movement toward increasing audit commitment, not reducing.

Councilor Burkholder responded to her statements by saying that it is all seven councilor’s obligation to oversee this agency, not solely the responsibility of the auditor. He stated that Metro does have checks and balances beyond the function of the auditor. He also stated that Metro has been shrinking and cutting in every department and does not have the luxury of aiming

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for the best practices, that Metro must do what it can with the resources it has. It is every Councilor's job to assure Metro's money is well spent.

President Bragdon made a clarification that he did not instruct Chief Financial Officer, Bill Stringer, to reduce Auditor Dow's budget solely. President Bragdon instructed all departments across the board to make reductions.

Auditor Dow responded that the agency is shrinking, when you look at where the shrinkage has been, open spaces, convention center, completion of the zoo, Great NW exhibit, are all major expenditures have been completed. When the budget grew in response to those initiatives. I did not look at extraordinary construction. I studied the organization as it was.

There being no further business to come before the Metro Council, Council President Bragdon adjourned the meeting at 2:50p.m.

Prepared by,

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Council Staff

**ATTACHMENTS TO THE PUBLIC RECORD FOR THE MEETING OF APRIL 14,
2004**

Item	Topic	Doc Date	Document Description	Doc. Number
Amendment from Councilor McLain	Solid Waste and Recycling/Compost Bins	04/14/04	Amendment to FY 04-05 regarding Compost Bin Sale	#1
Amendment from Councilor McLain	Solid Waste and Recycling/Billboard Space for Earth Day	04/14/04	Amendment to FY 04-05 regarding Recycling Billboard Space for Earth Day	#2
Environmental action team	ENACT	04-01-02	Environmental Action Team proposed budget for FY 04-05	#3
Councilor Budget Amendments	Planning Department	04/14/04	Councilor Budget Amendments Planning Department	#4
Amendments from Councilor Monroe	Oregon Zoo	04/14/04	Amendment to FY 04-05 Budget	#5