



October 4, 2019
Worksession re Overview &
Highlights of Proposed Budgets

To: Anchorage Assembly Members
From: Assembly Chair Felix Rivera *FR*
Assembly Vice-Chair Suzanne LaFrance *Suzanne*
Date: October 4, 2019
RE: Anchorage Assembly Budget Priorities for 2020 Municipal Budget

Below is an update to the initial budget memo sent to the administration at the end of July and includes items which were put in the budget. If the administration is opposed to a specific measure, a rationale is provided. Otherwise, items were not included due to budget constraints.

Public Safety

- Grants for ACES Work: Child abuse and neglect can lead to significant trauma and the best solution we have to fight this trauma is to mitigate it as early as possible in a child's life. Funding organizations which work on ACES is a strategic way the Municipality can assist in this area.
 - o Not included.
- Public Perception Survey: The public has a perception of public safety and it would be advisable for the Municipality to understand this perception so we can accurately respond and educate as needed.
 - o Not included.
- Customer Service Training: Members of the Assembly have received several emails regarding customer service aspects of their interactions with APD. While the working environment is high stress and staffing levels has only increased this stress, customer service training may help mitigate this issue and help APD provide the best service possible to the public.
 - o Not included.
- Trail Safety: Anchorage is proud of its world class trails and the Municipality must do everything it can to ensure our trails are safe for the public at large. Year-round bike patrols on our trails is one possible solution.
 - o Included in the budget.

Homelessness

- PR Firm: It is important for the efforts to combat homelessness that the public at large is educated on the strategies and plans being implemented and why we are using these strategies. An education campaign can help alleviate some of the misinformation prevalent in our community.
 - o Not included.

- Park Rangers: By being proactive in our efforts to find and track camps in our public spaces, the Municipality can help mitigate the “whack-a-mole” strategy which has led to increased costs for abatement.
 - o Not included, but please see “trail safety” in the Public Safety section.
- Behavioral Health Analyst: Many Municipal departments serve as public facing departments and de-facto mental health professionals. This position could help support these departments and our efforts to best serve all members of our community.
 - o Included in the budget.
- Anchorage Safety Patrol: This program assists in reducing costs of our first responders. Year-round expansion of this program in its current form can lead to further cost reductions. Exploration of expanding this program to south of Tudor is worthwhile.
 - o Not included.
- Day Shelter: Based on current needs and gaps in care, the Municipality should consider funding a contractor to stand up a semi-permanent day shelter.
 - o Included in the budget.
- Contracting out MIT: As much as possible, the Municipality should get itself out of the business of social services and contract this work out. In this case, we could see significant cost savings from doing so.
 - o Not included.
- Continuum of Care: Again, the Municipality should remove itself from social services related to homelessness and instead contract with our social service agencies to fill these gaps. Funding gaps in our continuum of care – from transitional housing to case management – can help to alleviate some of the stresses in our system and the Municipality.
 - o Not included.
- Data Gathering: Rather than funding and maintaining multiple levels of data within the Municipality and the Anchorage Coalition to Homelessness, we should explore consolidating our data and funding one effort.
 - o Not included.
- Shift Role of Homelessness Coordinator: Once again, the Municipality should remove itself from solving homelessness and instead, move itself to the role of helping with communications between the various agencies, using our convening power to resolve issues, and building strategic partnerships to use our resources as best as possible. The coordinator role should shift its focus into these areas.
 - o Included, but not necessarily as a budget item.

Quality of Life

- No Cuts to the Library: Our library system is an important part of our community and the Municipality should do everything it can to ensure no cuts to the library.
 - o Included in the budget.

- Staffing Commissions Related to Quality of Life: There are a variety of commissions that are directly related to our quality of life issues in the Municipality. Staffing these and allowing them to collaborate effectively is important to the Municipalities efforts.
 - o Not included.

Economic Development

- Customer Service Training: The Permit Center is an integral and public facing part of the Municipality. It is important that we make sure we provide the best customer service as possible.
 - o Not included in the budget. The administration believes adoption of recommendation included in the Bendon Adams report voids the need for this as a budget item.
- DC Lobbyist: The Municipality may benefit from funding and focusing on lobbying in DC for our efforts with the Port of Alaska instead of lobbying in Juneau, which is a function that Assembly Members can fill instead.
 - o Not included in the budget. The administration does not see potential for return on investment.
- Port Consultants: The Municipality has benefitted from having Ascent and NCG provide their advice on this project. This should be continued as we move forward on the PAMP.
 - o Not included in the budget.
- Fire Hydrants: The Municipality should continue funding its efforts to study and mitigate the issues regarding fire hydrants brought forward by the Assembly.
 - o Included in the budget.
- Revamp Website: The website for the Municipality has been incrementally improved for years, but without significant investment to revamp our most public facing parts of the website, remains somewhat cumbersome. Targeting funds to revamp the most used parts of the website would help the public and businesses be more efficient in their efforts.
 - o Included in the budget.