

Cost-Cutting Can Happen Now

Dear Editor,

As a member of both the KPPCSD's Finance and Park's Building Committee, I have a good grasp of the district's financial affairs. Unfortunately, my review suggests that a lack of financial oversight by the board and no clear financial directive to the interim GM, as required by his contract, leave us on a course that may have unsustainable financial consequences.

Although the board has created an Ad Hoc committee to look at governance options, no effort has been directed into looking at the cost/benefits of existing police services with the view of reducing police costs, although police services represent almost 90 per- cent of the district's budget. Here are examples of areas worth studying.

Do we need 7 police vehicles and 2 motorcycles when data obtained over the last six months shows one vehicle was not driven and two others were driven less than 900 total miles apiece? As for the 2 motorcycles, one was not driven and the other just 100 miles.

Do we need 9 officers (excluding the chief) when we have effectively operated with 8 officers or less over the last several years? Should replacement officers be drawn from a pool of part-time, retired, trained officers who cost less than hiring a full-time officer? Are we overstaffed with senior officers (corporal and above)? Do we need a detective, or should we contract out?

Do we need to have 2 officers on duty 24/7 or could we reduce coverage to one officer during 8 nighttime hours? Should officers be working a 12-hour shift with occasional overtime or should regular hours be reduced? How many hours a week should we devote to traffic control? Should we pay a sergeant to operate our video equipment at board meetings?

Do we need to pay a chief \$200,000/year with benefits? Do we need a chief or would a captain/lieutenant suffice? Why are we not planning for the expiration of the current chief's contract in June 1, 2016? Do we need to send our chief to a chief's conference in Tennessee when cost control should be the mantra? Why are we not getting reports on the value of these meetings as required by our policies? Why did the GM put in a request for the purchase of new handguns and bulletproof vests when independent research suggests they could be obtained for one-third the price? Why did we buy a new police vehicle for \$33,000 when we have so many vehicles? Why do improvements in Kensington park always take short shrift to police needs; like fixing the broken drinking fountain, painting the buildings, and setting aside a proper reserve for the required Community Center seismic and ADA upgrades?

Jim Watt