

COGGLEVATION

MARCH 2018 | THE LIFE AND TIMES OF PF&R'S STRATEGIC PLAN | WWW.PORTLANDOREGON.GOV/FIRE/COGGLE

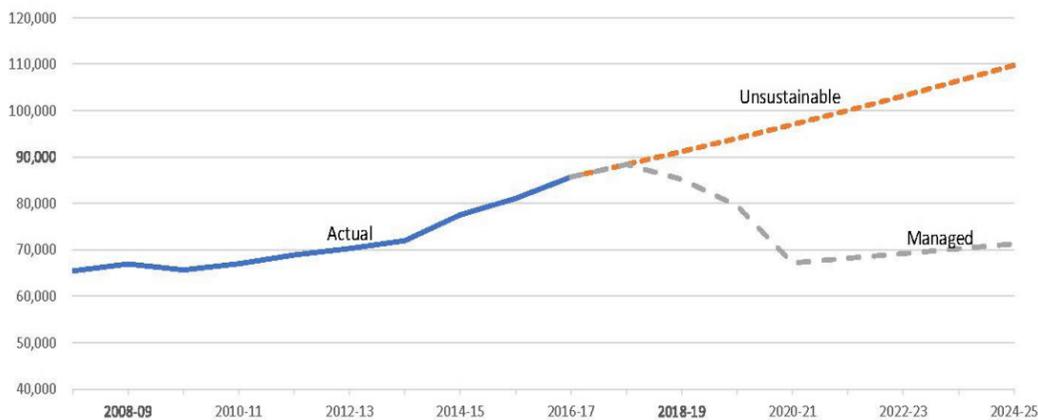
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THE 2018/19 BUDGET: WHERE ARE WE?

Chief Myers & Co make our case at a budget work session



PF&R Annual Incidents (Actual and Projected)



“If we continue to budget the way that we have been doing, it is not sustainable,” Chief Myers said, as he kicked off his FY 2018-19 budget work session presentation on March 20th at City Council. He sat at the front of a table, flanked by the commissioners, the mayor, City Budget Office (CBO) reps, and citizen advisory panel members.

A lot was on the line for this presentation. Mayor Wheeler had asked for General Fund bureaus such as PF&R to put forth 5% cuts in their proposed budgets. A 5% cut for PF&R is almost \$5.4 million. And still, we had requests in our budget that were necessary for us to move forward with our strategic plan.

Chief Myers made a potent case that if the commissioners and the mayor could take the long view, at the end of the Chief’s Coggle vision lies systemic savings that will more than pay for the short-term investments. “The stabilization of our budget is buried in the strategic plan,” he said. “If we are able to complete it with this methodology, I believe we will be able to stabilize our budget over the long term.”

While Chief Myers’s presentation was seemingly well-received, his asks are sometimes aligned and sometimes at odds with the CBO’s recommendations. The good news is that the cuts PF&R put forth (closing stations and off-lining RRVs) were not recommended by the CBO. The commissioners and the mayor take the CBO’s recommendations seriously because the CBO is the independent body that offers evaluation in a process where each bureau and its commissioners are fighting over their own

pieces of the pie. (See sidebar for the CBO’s recommendations).

Important Budget Dates

- Public Hearings on Requested Budgets (2 hearings) April 3 & April 17
- Revised General Fund financial forecast released April 30
- Mayor releases Proposed Budget decisions April 30
- Budget Committee: Approved Budget Work Session May 15
- Council action to adopt budget June 7

So, what happens between now and April 30, when the mayor releases his proposed budget?

Most of it is taking place at City Hall, says Business Operations Manager Mark Whitaker. The mayor and his staff, along with the CBO and commissioners’ offices, are working together to come up with the mayor’s proposed budgets. “The mayor will call in bureau directors for meetings if they have additional questions,” says Whitaker.

The mayor will release his proposed budget on April 30, the same day that a revised general fund financial forecast comes out. That forecast is important, says Whitaker, because if it comes back more favorably than the one released at the beginning of the budget process, then the mayor will have more money to allocate. “One area this forecast has more precision is regarding the income from business taxes, which are generally due April 15,” says Whitaker.

City Council votes to adopt the budget on June 7, 2018.

CITY BUDGET OFFICE’S RESPONSES

What the CBO said about our cuts:

Cutting RRVs: “CBO believes the current RRV program offers critical systemwide flexibility to respond to continuing increases in call volume, and as a result does not recommend these reductions at this time.”

Closing Two Stations: “Given the bureau’s need to improve its response time to meet internal and national goals, and given other budgetary requests being considered across the City, CBO does not recommend closing a fire station.”

What the CBO said about our asks:

Equity Manager: “Due to the importance of this position in ensuring achievement of City and bureau equity goals, CBO recommends adding this position with one-time General Fund resources, followed by a bureau realignment to support the position in FY 2020-21 and beyond.”

SCBA replacement: “Due to the safety risk posed to firefighters, CBO finds this to be a critical request. CBO recommends that the bureau assess available 1998 GO Bond fund balance and/or Apparatus Reserve balance as well as current year underspending that may be carried over to support this request. Due to limited available General Fund resources, CBO does not recommend new General Fund resources at this time.”

Community Healthcare Position: “Due to limited available General Fund resources, CBO does not recommend new General Fund resources for this position. However, CBO recommends the continuation of this position through internal realignments, if possible.”

Paid Parental Leave Policy: “Due to minimum staffing requirements, this policy will likely continue to contribute to increased annual costs for PF&R...due to uncertainty of need and due to limited General Fund resources, CBO does not recommend this request at this time.

PF&R Labor Agreement Longevity Pay: “These costs will be incurred by the bureau. An alternative to new funding would be for the bureau to absorb the additional costs by reducing services across the bureau. The easiest way to implement that alternative would be to accept the reduction of one Rapid Response Vehicle...CBO does not recommend reducing the number of RRVs at this time. CBO recommends this ongoing increase in funds.

Fire Inspection Software Application: “CBO recommends this request be funded with available Public Safety Project reserves.”

WiFi at Fire Stations and Mobile Data Computers: “CBO recommends the one-time request be funded with available Public Safety Project reserves, if Fire is able to absorb the ongoing General Fund costs. Due to limited available General Fund resources, CBO does not recommend additional General Fund resources towards this effort.”

Mobile Devices Replacement: “Fire is in the process of developing a comprehensive capital and equipment maintenance and replacement plan, which should include these devices. Due to limited available general fund resources, CBO does not recommend this request.”

Bureau Realignments to Create Positions: “PF&R requests to realign external materials and services funds to pay for a fulltime carpenter and electrician. The bureau has assessed that it is more cost effective to provide these services in house. CBO recommends this request.”



Do you have a story about a PF&R cogglevation that would be great for this newsletter?
Contact Caryn Brooks on the Communications Team
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