

Attachment 4
*2025 Budget Departmental Memo -
Finance*

Memorandum

To: Lisa Spitale
Chief Administrative Officer

Date: November 25, 2024

From: Shehzad Somji
Chief Financial Officer

File:

Subject: Finance & Purchasing Dept.

2024 ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND HIGHLIGHTS

The Finance and Purchasing Department provides core corporate services that touch all areas of the City. Functions such as budgeting, treasury and investment management, financial reporting, accounts payable and receivable, revenue and collections, city-wide procurement of goods and services, warehouse management, and risk management and insurance.

Fiscal 2024 was a year of building trust and confidence of the Department's management team with a new CFO and relatively new Senior Manager and Managers. I am proud of the work the management team accomplished, not only in terms of completing the core services we are tasked with, but more so by strengthening the team culture. The team is more engaged, are taking pride in the role they perform for the residents, and are working on gaining process efficiencies.

Some of the highlights for 2024 are:

- Fully staffed department by filling two vacant Financial Analyst positions and two auxiliary Finance Clerk positions.
- The 2024 service enhancement request of a Manager of Financial Services was filled by an internal candidate.
- Processed approximately \$2.8M BC Electricity Affordability Credit to electrical utility accounts.
- Implemented the Asset Retirement Obligation accounting standard and received a clean audit opinion on the City's 2023 financial statements.
- Submitted all legislative required financial reports by the required dates.
- Developing more and stronger relationships with bankers and investment firms for a more robust treasury management portfolio.
- Maintained investment revenue in a decreasing interest rate environment with an active treasury management strategy.



NEW WESTMINSTER

- The Revenue and Collection team was successful in collecting all outstanding property tax accounts so as to have no tax sale in 2024.
- The Billing team were heavily involved with the Advanced Metering Infrastructure user acceptance testing for the “100 Meter Pilot” and eventual mass deployment of meters.
- Completed Budget 2025 public survey via Ipsos.

For the Purchasing team, a majority of the services they provide are to ensure the procurement of goods and services follow Council’s Procurement Policy while staying in line with industry standards for public sector procurement.

Some highlights for Purchasing in 2024 are:

- Updating the authority limits for procurement
- Beta testing a new Bids and Tenders evaluation tool
- Establishing a pre-qualified list of vendors
- Consolidating inventory for all departments

2025 CORPORATE PRIORITIES

The Department has three major priorities that will be the focus for 2025.

Firstly, we will look to further streamline the annual budget and 5-year financial plan process. Approving a budget prior to the start of the year is good financial practice and allows departments to begin work on their annual projects earlier in the year.

Secondly, the business continuity plan needs to be reviewed and updated. The pandemic forced all organizations into quasi-business continuity mode and it was determined that the plans needed updating.

Lastly, the need for long-term financial planning, stability, and resilience needs a significant amount of planning to ensure the City is poised for the infrastructure projects that will come with population and housing growth. Effort will be required from all City departments as each one will be impacted based on the services they provide.

Although there are other priorities that the Department will focus on during the year, these ones have the highest impact, urgency and interdepartmental dependencies.