

Attachment 6

*Budget 2025 Departmental Memo -
Human Resources and Information Technology*



Memorandum

To: Lisa Spitale
Chief Administrative Officer

Date: November 25, 2024

From: Richard Fong
Director, HR and IT

File:

Paul Taylor
Chief Information Officer

Subject: Human Resources and Information Technology Department –
2024 Accomplishments/Highlights and 2025 Corporate
Priorities

2024 ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND HIGHLIGHTS

Human Resources

In 2024, the HR department continued to experience staff resourcing challenges which impacted the ability to effectively advance certain initiatives around recruitment and retention; learning and development; diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism (DEIAR); and employee health and wellness. Nonetheless, the HR department achieved a number of important accomplishments during the year.

Recruitment

- After three years of high attrition (including two years at 1.5 times and one year at almost 2 times pre-COVID levels), attrition is trending back down to pre-COVID levels. Recruitment activity continues to trend upwards with a 34% increase in the number of postings from 2023 and a 60% increase in the number of positions filled (excluding Police and Library).
- Commenced and/or filled a number of senior level management positions due to vacancies.
- Supported the recruitment of the Crises Response Team and the new Housing Division.
- Supported the recruitment for all the 2024 departmental service enhancement positions.



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- Supported the establishment of the Energy and Climate Action Department and the Community Services Department.

DEIAR

- Initiated pilot training on the foundational concepts of diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism for senior management and union executives. The purpose of the pilot sessions was to evaluate and provide feedback in advance of the training being offered to all City staff.
- Implementation of DEIAR training to City staff will commence in 2025.
- Participated in community outreach and educational/career fairs to promote the City's commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Learning and Development

- Continued to provide important Respectful Workplace training and De-escalation of Crisis training to City staff.
- Provided leadership training for management.

Employee Health and Well-being

- Supported the Crises Response Operations Support Team by implementing the Standardized Training Suite for frontline workers dealing with the three crises of unhoused, substance use, and mental health.
- Provided Workplace Violence Prevention, Heart Attack, and Portable Fire Extinguisher training to City staff.
- Provided annual flu-shots to City staff.

Labour Relations

- Implemented provisions of the newly ratified collective agreements for all four City Unions.
- After the conclusion of the last round of CUPE collective bargaining in 2023, four joint union-management committees were formed to discuss workplace issues and provide recommendations on enhancing organizational effectiveness.

Information Technology

Background

The IT department is comprised of four separate functional areas:

- The Helpdesk team – front line customer technical support and escalation
- Geographical Information Systems (GIS)
- IT Applications – Business Systems Analysts, Application support



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- Network/Infrastructure team – supports the City’s network and systems infrastructure and Cyber Security program and provides tier 2 support to the Helpdesk

The Network/Infrastructure team has been chronically under-resourced over the years and the adequate bench strength has not been developed to ensure that critical underlying systems are properly maintained. This has resulted in compounding technical debt, which exposes the City to risks, lost productivity/expensive downtime and a culture of overwork and staff burnout.

Further, the City has undertaken a significant enterprise initiative with the Advanced Metering Infrastructure project but the reliance upon the IT department was underestimated, particularly as we enter the operational phase of the project.

High Level Accomplishments

Despite the resourcing challenges, the Network/Infrastructure team was able to initiate the City’s cyber security program and make significant progress in bolstering the defenses against the evolving threat landscape. Two key components of this are the introduction of Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) which provides an important mechanism to safeguard employee network accounts against data breaches, identity theft and more. The second component is the initiation of 24/7 network security monitoring for the City’s network and systems. Partnering with a top tier professional services firm to perform this monitoring and alerting to us in conjunction with leading-edge defensive tools has significantly improved the City’s security posture.

Within the Applications team, significant time and effort has been spent on the AMI project. As the true complexity of this program unfolded, the team needed to shift priorities in order to support the efforts to design, validate and test the multiple layers of connectivity and data integrity verification steps required. This work has been largely completed and the project is now in the deployment phase.

2025 CORPORATE PRIORITIES

Human Resources

The Human Resources Department has identified the following two key corporate priorities for 2025 that have high importance, impact, urgency, and interdependency throughout the organization:



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- 1) Development and implementation of an HR Strategic Plan and a subsequent HR People Strategy
- 2) Collective bargaining with the four City Unions (CUPE, IAFF, IBEW, Police) to renew their respective collective agreements

1) HR Strategic Plan and HR People Strategy

HR will develop an HR Strategic Plan that outlines specific departmental goals, key initiatives, and priorities, aligning them with the corporate strategic priorities and objectives. It will also include defining the HR department's vision, mission, and values, as well as metrics for measuring progress and results to ensure that the overall objectives of the strategic plan are successfully achieved.

The HR Strategic Plan will serve as a guide for developing an operational HR People Strategy while ensuring that it contributes to ongoing organizational effectiveness. The People Strategy will take the strategic plan and outline HR's approach to recruiting, retaining, and engaging our workforce in order to support corporate, Council, and departmental goals and priorities. This includes talent attraction and retention; learning and development; strong and resilient leadership; diverse, inclusive, and safe work culture; employee engagement and feedback; succession planning and career growth; and employee health, safety, and wellness.

2) Collective Bargaining

All four collective agreements in the City will have expired by 2025:

- International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) – expired December 31, 2022
- Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) – expires December 31, 2024
- New Westminister Police Officers Association (NWPOA) – expires December 31, 2024
- International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) – expires March 31, 2025

HR will be engaged with the other City departments in negotiations with the various Unions to renew their respective collective agreements, while ensuring that they are fair, reasonable, and fiscally responsible and sustainable. Furthermore, CUPE and the City have been working collaboratively on a number of joint committees to discuss workplace initiatives and propose recommendations to enhance organizational effectiveness.



Information Technology

Among the many technical projects facing the IT department in 2025, two have been identified as corporate high priorities, which will require resources and effort from multiple departments within the City.

1) JD Edwards upgrade

JD Edwards is the City's ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) software, which encompasses payroll, Accounts Payable/Receivable, vendor management and more. It is overdue for an upgrade so that it remains supportable and enables the modernization of dependent platforms such as Windows 11 and Microsoft Office. This project will require significant inter-departmental participation for testing and acceptance.

2) Windows 11 upgrade

The City uses Windows 10 as the operating system for all desktops and laptop computers, however Microsoft will be formally ending support for it by October 14, 2025. This means there will no longer be any security patches or bug fixes available from Microsoft. This across the board upgrade to Windows 11 will require significant effort as there are numerous software application dependencies that will also require upgrades and testing to ensure compatibility with Windows 11. The enhancement request for temporary staff augmentation is to enable the IT department to obtain help with this time intensive work.