



5 April 2007

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

The City Clerk's Office in Regina has been asked to make substantial cuts to its budget for 2007. The civic budget – which will be considered at City Council on April 17 – shows a reduction in the Clerk's regular budget of \$60,000.

This cut cannot be made without a consequent reduction in services to the public. The City Clerk's Office acts not only as the Secretary to City Council and its committees, it administers Freedom of Information legislation for the City, oversees the city's records management program, and makes the City's historical records available through the City Archives. Any reduction to these services will reduce the ability of the public to access information in a timely and effective fashion.

The Saskatchewan Council for Archives and Archivists (SCAA) is very concerned about the effects of this budget cut, particularly the potential effects on access to civic records both now and into the future. We would like to encourage all of you to contact Regina City Council and urge them to see that the continuing free and unfettered access to information in Regina is protected.

The SCAA has created an information package (including an analysis of 2007 City of Regina budget figures), available for download from its website at:

<http://www.scaa.sk.ca>

Regina City Council will be meeting to discuss the 2007 budget on April 17. Submissions to Council (which can be in the form of letters only and do not need to be made in person) must be received by 1:00 pm on Thursday, April 12. For more information about making submissions to Council, please see the City of Regina website, here:

http://www.regina.ca/content/city_hall/council_meetings/index.shtml

Sincerely,

The Saskatchewan Council for Archives and Archivists

City of Regina – 2007 Budget Information Package

**Saskatchewan Council for
Archives and Archivists**

5 April 2007

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1. Overview:

Civic departments in Regina have been asked to make total cuts of 1.2 million dollars in the 2007 operating budget. Examining the figures, it appears that the City Clerk's office is taking on a disproportionate share of those cuts, to the point where services provided to the public – specifically, timely and effective access to current and historical information – are in jeopardy. It is imperative that those of us who feel strongly about the duty of municipal governments to provide information to the public act now to press Regina's City Council to protect the City Clerk's Office from budget cuts, and in fact to provide increased funding to enhance the vital public services it provides.

City Council will be considering its budget at a meeting on April 17, 2007. Anyone wishing to address Council or submit a brief or letter *must do so by 1:00 pm, April 12.*

2. Functions of the City Clerk's Office

The City Clerk is the record keeper of City Council. The Clerk's office acts as secretary to City Council and civic committees, maintains bylaws and archival records and provides a link between the general public, the City Administration and City Council. The City Clerk's Office is also responsible for coordinating the corporate records management program, operating the city archives, and responds to requests made under the *Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (LAFPI). As such, the City Clerk plays a vital role in providing public access to the records of the day to day business and activities of the civic government both now and in the past. The City Clerk also acts as Returning Officer for municipal elections.

3. 2007 budget analysis

The civic departments in Regina have been asked to cut a total of 1.2 million dollars from their operating budgets in 2007. According to budget information posted on the City of Regina website, the City Clerk's office has been told to cut \$366,100 from its operating budget for this year – 30.5% of the overall cut.

This is not clear from the 2007 budget submission, but based on the 2006 budget, it appears that \$306,600 of the cut may come from the deletion of a special increase approved last year to pay for the running of school board elections. But even in that case, the Clerk's Office is still cutting its budget for 2007 by almost \$60,000.

However, while the City Clerk's Office is being forced to cut, other departments are apparently having a very good 2007. The City Manager's Office will see its budget increased by 93.7% - nearly a million dollars – largely, it would appear, to fund the following new positions:

- Manager of Quality and Innovation
- Manager of Strategic Planning and Performance Management
- Manager of Government Relations
- Director of City Manager's office

as well as two “Quality and Innovation Consultant” positions to be filled via secondment.

At the same time, the Mayor’s Office is getting an additional \$68,100 for a new “Communications Consultant” position as well as an additional \$87,500 for the “Shaping Regina” project. The Communications Office (like the Clerk’s Office, part of the Corporate Services department) will receive an additional \$260,000 in 2007 for a communications exercise called “Branding Regina”.

Of the five divisions that make up Regina’s Corporate Services Department (Administration, City Clerk, Communications, Facilities and Energy Management, and Information Systems), only the City Clerk’s budget is actually being reduced, by almost 5 per cent. The others are all getting increases (this takes into account only the regular funding, not the one-time-only “specials” such as noted above). Indeed, the average budget increase for all civic departments is about 5%.

Any cut to the City Clerk’s Office will entail a loss of staff and a reduction in public service.

4. Implications regarding reductions in service

The City Clerk’s Office in Regina has been forced into the nearly impossible position of having to maintain services while cutting its real-dollar budget by at least \$60,000 from last year. This is on top of years of being asked to hold the line on expenditures at a time when operating costs – everything from postage to paper – have been steadily rising. It is impossible for such budget reductions to occur without a corresponding reduction in public service.

The City Clerk’s Office plays a vital role in the democratic process. The decisions of municipal governments have a huge impact on the day to day lives of ordinary people. By providing timely access to authentic and accurate information (through its position as secretary to City Council, its records management, *LAF* and its archival functions) the City Clerk helps ensure that the public is in a position to oversee and provide input into the decisions and activities of their municipal governments. Anything which impairs the ability of the City Clerk to act effectively in this role reduces our ability to exercise our rights as citizens

In the 2006 budget (available on the City of Regina website) it says:

“...departments will be required to manage an additional \$1.2 million in reductions over the course of 2007 in order to achieve the budget targets. Departments have been directed to manage this reduction through further efficiencies. The reductions are not intended to result in reduced services as approved by City Council. *In the event that service levels were contemplated for reduction during 2007, City Council approval would be sought and the appropriate public input processes would be carried out*” (emphasis added).

We cannot imagine that there are sufficient “efficiencies” left to the City Clerk’s Office to account for \$60,000 in cuts. Thus any such exercise will almost certainly result in an actual reduction in services. Although it is impossible to say exactly what that will entail, managing the corporate records, from creation through to archival access, is an essential function in a

democratic and accountable society. It is up to the public to find out from Council how those cuts will be managed. The services provided by the City Clerk's Office in Regina are too important to face any reduction; if anything, they should be increased.

5. Who is affected

Cuts to services provided by the City Clerk's Office can be expected to affect anyone who has a legitimate reason to request information from the City of Regina. The civic corporation itself, as well as students, teachers, historical researchers, genealogists, journalists, social and political activists, property owners, local historians and any one else who ever wanted to know why things are the way they are have a vested interest in timely and effective access to the current and historical records of City Hall.

6. Copy of SCAA brief

The Saskatchewan Council for Archives and Archivists represents dozens of public archives, libraries and museums across the province. We believe in the power of our documentary heritage to safeguard our rights in a democratic society and to provide us with evidence of our own historical context. To answer the question: "who are we and how did we get here?" The SCAA is concerned that the ability of the City of Regina to maintain and provide timely and unfettered access to its own current and historical records is being seriously eroded by the cuts contemplated in this budget. We will be presenting a brief to the Regina City Council meeting on April 17, 2007.

7. Copy of Budget documents:

The City of Regina 2007 budget is available on its website at www.regina.ca. Appended to this document is a spreadsheet containing our analysis of the 2006 and 2007 budget figures.

8. Contact addresses for Regina's Mayor and City Council:

Mayor Pat Fiacco

By postal mail:

Mayor's Office
City of Regina
Box 1790, 2476 Victoria Avenue
15th Floor City Hall
Regina, SK. S4P 3C8

By email / telephone:

Phone: 777-7339
Fax: 777-6824
E-mail: cityhelp@regina.ca

Regina City Council:

By postal mail:

Councillor [Name]
City of Regina
Box 1790, 2476 Victoria Avenue
Regina, SK. S4P 3C8

By email / telephone:

Louis Browne
Email: lbrowne@regina.ca
Phone: 531-5151

Wade Murray
Email: wmurray@regina.ca
Phone: 596-1035

Jocelyn Hutchinson
Email: jhutchin@regina.ca
Phone: 584-1739

Sharron Bryce
Email: sbryce@regina.ca
Phone: 949-5025

Fred Clipsham
Email: fclipsha@regina.ca
Phone: 757- 8212

Mike O'Donnell
Email: modonnel@regina.ca
Phone: 545-7300

Michael Fougere
Email: mfougere@regina.ca
Phone: 789-5586

Terry Hincks
Email: thincks@regina.ca
Phone: 949-9690

Bill Gray
Email: bgray@regina.ca
Phone: 761-0919

Jerry Flegel
Email: jflegel@regina.ca
Phone: 777-6689

Analysis of City of Regina Budget 2007

All departments:	Budget excluding "specials" (\$1,000s)			
	2006	2007	change	% change
City Council and Committees	1,117.80	1,230.90	113.10	10.12%
Community Investments	4,630.00	4,705.00	75.00	1.62%
Capital Funding	16,415.40	18,518.00	2,102.60	12.81%
City Manager's Department	1,033.50	2,002.10	968.60	93.72%
Human Resources Department	2,179.10	2,436.20	257.10	11.80%
Legal Department	2,446.80	2,492.40	45.60	1.86%
Finance Department	11,261.90	11,355.10	93.20	0.83%
Corporate Services Department	11,976.90	12,111.30	134.40	1.12%
Fire Department	26,494.80	25,866.00	(628.80)	-2.37%
Community Services Department	33,437.90	35,113.00	1,675.10	5.01%
Transit Department	20,051.10	20,851.90	800.80	3.99%
Engineering and Works Department	<u>30,903.80</u>	<u>33,460.00</u>	<u>2,556.20</u>	<u>8.27%</u>
	161,949.00	170,141.90	8,192.90	5.06%

Corporate Services Department - Divisions	Budget excluding "specials" (\$1,000s)			
	2006	2007	change	% change
Administration	218.30	223.80	5.50	2.52%
City Clerk's Office	1,275.20	1,215.70	(59.50)	-4.67%
Communications	1,298.00	1,329.20	31.20	2.40%
Facilities and Energy Management	3,366.40	3,471.60	105.20	3.12%
Information Systems	<u>5,819.00</u>	<u>5,871.00</u>	<u>52.00</u>	<u>0.89%</u>
	11,976.90	12,111.30	134.40	1.12%

Note: The budget documents vary in the detail provided about "specials", i.e. amounts approved for special projects or other limited-term expenditures. This analysis is based on the following assumption about the breakdown of "specials" from the 2006 budget:

Municipal School Board Elections	306.6	City Clerk's Office
Aerial photos	50	Facilities Management
Completion of eGovernment initiative	40	Information Systems
Completion of Web Writing initiative	15	Communications
Additional costs re SPL Maintenance Management	88	Information Systems
Wireless Project Manager	<u>75</u>	Information Systems
	574.6	

However, note that even if the eGovernment initiative were part of the City Clerk's budget, the City Clerk's Office would still sustain a cut (and be the only division to do so).

Key messages:

- the budget of the City Clerk's Office is being cut by about \$60,000 in 2007. This represents a cut far beyond what will be achievable through "efficiencies" and will surely result in a reduction in services
- the average budget *increase*, across City departments, is 5%, while the corresponding *cut* to the City Clerk's Office is about 5%
- the City Clerk's Office plays a vital role in the democratic process. Through its records management, freedom of information and archival functions, it provides timely access to authentic and accurate information, both current and historical.
- Anything which impairs the ability of the City Clerk to act effectively in this role reduces our ability to exercise our rights as citizens
- while a cut to the City Clerk's Office budget is putting services at risk, other departments will see substantial increases, including special funding for communications exercise called "Branding Regina", and the new positions of a Mayor's communications consultant, Director of City Manager's Office, Manager of Government Relations, Manager of Strategic Planning and Performance Management, and Manager of Quality and Innovation.