

Time to Listen, Analyze, and Act: NSBA Calls for Urgent Measures to Address Funding Gap

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Saskatoon, SK – July 20, 2023 – The NSBA – Saskatoon's Business Association, in its recent letter to the City Council, strongly recommends action in response to the significant funding gap identified in the recent indicative budget report. With a shortfall of \$52.4 million in 2024 and \$23.2 million in 2025, addressing this financial challenge is essential.

In the letter Keith Moen, Executive Director, emphasized that "It is important to note that there is not a single silver bullet solution, therefore, a number of difficult decisions must be made across the board to bridge the funding gap and secure the city's future."

NSBA, with the help of its Tax Committee, comprised of business leaders including accountants, lawyers, human resource professionals, government relations consultants and other professionals, carefully reviewed the budget report and put forth a set of recommendations. The seven recommendations aim to guide City Council as they deliberate approaches to reduce the financial strain. The recommendations include:

1. Reduce staffing levels in specific departments.
2. Implement a more stringent efficiency and productivity agenda.
3. Anticipate reduced revenues due to inflation and changes in spending patterns.
4. Discontinue programs that higher levels of government should fund.
5. Postpone capital and operational expenses for green initiatives.
6. Pause all major capital projects.
7. Liquidate Greenhouses on 33rd Street and Avenue P.

One of the recommendations highlighted in the letter is, reducing staffing levels in specific departments such as Environmental Sustainability, Human Resources and Labour Relations, Communications, and Planning and Development. "Conduct an external human resource audit with a goal of reducing staffing by 10 per cent," Moen suggested.

The NSBA noted that the city takes a deeper dive to ensure programs falling under other levels of government are adequately funded by them. According to Moen, municipalities often spend time and resources on projects outside their jurisdiction, and Saskatoon must not fall into this category.

Another recommendation stated is putting a hard pause on all major capital projects. Temporarily suspend major capital projects, such as the new Library, BRT, and the Downtown Event and Entertainment District, until finances are in order," Moen urged. "However, we reiterate our support for the DEED project, suggesting it be put on hold for the time being."

As part of the letter, the NSBA encouraged liquidating the greenhouses on 33rd Street and Avenue P. "Sell the land immediately for infill development to offset the budget shortfall," Mr. Moen suggested.

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As we approach the next budget deliberation meeting on July 25, 2023, recognizing that the urgency of the city's financial situation is paramount, Moen stated, "Now is the time to listen, analyze, and act. Difficult choices are going to be made, and it is important more than ever that we get it now by prioritizing and considering only essential services."

For more information:

The NSBA is a member-driven and focused business association in Saskatoon that serves, promotes and protects businesses throughout Saskatoon and beyond. The NSBA has recently rebranded to be known simply by its acronym – NSBA – to reflect its current membership, which has grown beyond Saskatoon's north end. The NSBA has developed its mandate and reputation by being relevant, topical and effective organization that interacts with all levels of government and industry on various issues for the betterment of our local economy.

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[Original NSBA Letter Submission](#)