2012 Seattle City Council Green Sheet

Ready for Notebook

Tab	Action	Option	Version
116	3	A	1

Budget Action Title: At no net cost to the General Subfund, create one new full-time assistant city attorney to staff municipal court infraction hearings and one half-time paralegal to support collections work, and impose a proviso on funding for the new assistant city attorney position

Councilmembers: Budget Committee

Staff Analyst: Ben Noble

Council Bill or Resolution:

Date		Total	SB	BH	SC	TR	JG	NL	RC	TB	MO
	Yes										
	No										
	Abstain										
	Absent										

Summary of Dollar Effect

See the following pages for detailed technical information

	2012 Increase (Decrease)
General Subfund	
General Subfund Revenues	*$85,000*
General Subfund Expenditures	*$85,000*
Net Balance Effect	***$0***
Total Budget Balance Effect	***$0***

Budget Action description:

This green sheet includes two separate actions:

The first would add a revenue-backed assistant city attorney position in the Law Department to provide dedicated staffing for disputed infraction hearings at the Seattle Municipal Court. Due to past budget reductions, the Law Department has been relying on a mix of interns, volunteers and some limited time from city prosecutors to staff these hearings. A full-time attorney dedicated to these hearings would cost $85,000, but is likely to generate more than this amount in incremental fine revenues, relative to current levels. For the purposes of this green sheet, I have taken a conservative approach and assumed that the increased revenue will just offset the additional cost.

Given that the addition of this position is predicated on the additional revenue, this green sheet includes the following proviso to ensure that the additional funding provided to the Law Department will be used to staff infraction hearings:

**** Has Proviso***

"Of the appropriation in the 2012 budget for the Law Department's Criminal BCL, $85,000 is appropriate solely for infraction enforcement and may be spent for no other purpose."

The second action included in this green sheet creates an unfunded half-time paralegal position in the Law Department's Civil Division to assist in collections enforcement. With the downturn in the economy, the number of unpaid debt referrals from both SPU and City Light has increased. Given the volume of referrals, staffing limitations at the Law Department have led to an increase overtime from $2,500 to $5,000 to $10,000 in the threshold for referrals that are actively pursued. The Law Department is currently working with the utilities to develop an agreement under which the cost of additional legal staff would be paid by the utilities through an MOU. The proposed paralegal position would be assigned to pursue additional collections. The unfunded paralegal position authorized here would only be filled if such agreements could be finalized and funding was secured from SPU and/or City Light. If such agreements are not reached, the vacant position would be abrogated in one of the quarterly supplemental ordinances that Council will consider in 2012.

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116	*3*	*A*	*1*

Budget Action Transactions

Budget Action Title: At no net cost to the General Subfund, create one new full-time assistant city attorney to staff municipal court infraction hearings and one half-time paralegal to support collections work, and impose a proviso on funding for the new assistant city attorney position

#	Transaction Description	Position Title	Number of Positions	FTE	Dept	BCL or Revenue Source	Summit Code	Fund	Year	Revenue Amount	Expenditure Amount
1	Create one new assistant city attorney position for infraction hearings	City Attorney,Asst-BU - FT	1	1	LAW	Criminal	J1500	00100	2012		$85,000
2	Create unfunded position to support collection efforts	Paralegal - PT	1	0.5	LAW	Civil	J1300	00100	2012		$0
3	Increase GSF revenue due to additional city attorney for infraction hearings				GSF	Court Fines & Forfeitures (100%)	455900	00100	2012	$85,000	