

At its Aug. 9 meeting, Powell City Council's Finance Committee continued its departmental budget analysis by reviewing the budgets of the City's Public Service and Parks & Recreation departments.

Jeff Snyder, who serves as the department head for both departments, provided committee members with a written overview of the two budgets, citing examples of revenue generated and cost savings realized.

"We do everything within our areas of expertise in-house," Snyder said. "That generates a savings for the City."

Snyder said there are currently six full-time staff members between the two departments. Previous budgets had allowed for seven full-time staff members.

"We have six full-time staff members as a result of leaving one full-time position vacant, not as a result of laying off an employee," said Snyder, adding that the vacancy generates a savings of approximately \$50,000 annually for the City.

Snyder said his staff is responsible for all of the day-to-day maintenance in the City throughout the year, which includes park maintenance, splash pad maintenance in the summer, drainage issues, building maintenance and snow plowing, among other duties.

"We all share in the workload," Snyder told committee members. "Snow plowing is probably the most visible work that we do in the community, but those same guys cut the grass, trim the trees and maintain the parks. We have guys working seven days a week."

The department's workload varies depending on the season, Snyder said, and his crew has been especially busy this summer dealing with the Emerald Ash Borer in addition to its regular duties.

"We have numerous ash trees that are dead or dying within the City, and our crew is removing those as they have time to do so. That is a crisis that is growing weekly," Snyder said.

The public service department generates additional savings for the City by contracting with outside agencies for services. Snyder said Powell is one of several municipalities in a cooperative agreement for salt purchases, and the City realizes a big savings by having Rumpke provide trash collection and recycling services.

"I can't begin to imagine what it would cost to try to do our trash collection in-house," Snyder said. "With the costs of staff, vehicles and regulatory fees, it's cost prohibitive to conduct this program in-house. And we save a great deal by bidding for our rock salt as part of a consortium."

Snyder said he and Silas Bowers, the assistant director for the Public Service and Parks & Recreation departments, also handle the seasonal parks & rec programming.

"Our parks and rec department was self-sustaining for the first time this year, and I'm not aware of any other municipal parks and rec departments that have done that," Snyder said.

Snyder told committee members that the seasonal parks & recreation program guides are being distributed to a wider audience via The Bag rather than being mailed to City residents only. As a result, more people are signing up for the department's classes and programs.

"This summer was our greatest registration period on record," Snyder said. "We increased the amount of guides distributed from 4,189 to 8,400 and realized a \$200 savings after the increased distribution."

Snyder said there is some outsourcing done within the parks and rec department, all dealing with classes that are scheduled with contracted instructors.

"There is little reason for our department to outsource anything else," he said.

Finance Committee members commended Snyder for his detailed presentation and for the work done within both departments. The committee's next budget analysis is scheduled for Tuesday, Sept. 13 at 7 p.m., during which time it will review the Building and Development departments. The meeting, which takes place in Council Chambers, 47 Hall St., is open to the public.