

# Minneapolis tax board approves 6.95 percent levy increase against Park Board's wishes

Total skips parks request for \$1.5 million more for youth programming.

By Miguel Otárola (<http://www.startribune.com/miguel-otarola/396828811/>) Star Tribune |

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Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey won approval Wednesday for his recommended increase in the property tax levy, while the Park and Recreation Board fell short in its quest for a larger levy hike.

The 6.95% increase approved by the Minneapolis Board of Estimate and Taxation is the ceiling that can be levied for next year's city and parks budgets. That means the city could levy up to \$374 million from property owners next year, though a decision on the exact levy is still weeks away.

The vote was unanimous, with Park Board President Brad Bourn abstaining. Bourn and the Park Board said they needed \$1.5 million more than what Frey had recommended in his budget, which they said would go toward expanding youth programs.

Bourn and City Council President Lisa Bender voted in favor of the higher levy. Frey, Council Member Abdi Warsame and the two elected members of the tax board, David Wheeler and Carol Becker, voted against it.

Frey said the best way to increase funding for youth is through a multijurisdictional effort that includes the city, schools and Hennepin County.

"I don't think that this ... is in the best interest of Minneapolis. I do not believe that it's in the best interest of our taxpayers that are already burdened," Frey said of Bourn's effort.

Becker, the board's vice president, agreed, saying she hadn't "seen a real plan" from the Park Board on how the increased funding would be spent.

"I haven't seen the details. I don't know where we're going. And I don't know that this is our only option," she said. "Until that, I don't think we should be asking for people to pony up money out of their pockets."

Bourn said the Park Board may now have to make cuts to certain services in order to allocate funding for youth services.

"We had the opportunity in the city of Minneapolis to expand the pie. We chose not to do that this year," he said. "And so for the next couple of months, we'll be fighting over the scraps and how to best make that investment in youth."

The City Council and the Park Board will meet over the fall to determine the final budgets for next year. City departments will present their proposed budgets to the City Council through October; Park Board Superintendent Al Bangoura is expected to present the proposed parks budget Oct. 16.



GLEN STUBBE

Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey, shown in April delivering his second State of the City address.

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