

TOWN OF PALM BEACH

Information for Town Council Meeting on: December 10, 2019

TO: Mayor and Town Council

VIA: Kirk W. Blouin, Town Manager

FROM: H. Paul Brazil, P. E., Director of Public Works

RE: Ficus Benjamina Removal Program Special Pick-Up

DATE: November 22, 2019

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Town staff recommends that the Mayor and Town Council review the information and provide direction to staff on the collection and disposal of ficus hedge material from private properties.

GENERAL INFORMATION

At the August 14, 2019 Town Council meeting, Resolution No. 69-2019 was adopted to facilitate the collection and disposal of ficus hedge material from private property. This resolution established collection fees, revised the Master Fee Schedule, and provided specific information on scheduling and collection periods.

During the Town Council meeting on September 10, 2019, the Public Works Committee report was accepted with the comment that the Committee and Public Works staff should study the cost impacts if the service was provided free of charge to the residents (as an incentive to proactively remove the hedge material). Staff prepared cost estimates and presented the information at the Public Works Committee meeting on October 11, 2019.

At the November 12, 2019 Town Council meeting, the Public Works Committee report was approved. Staff was directed to put the Ficus Benjamina removal program in place with the quantified cost on the December 10, 2019 agenda for further discussion. The following is information previously provided to the Public Works Committee for their review and discussion:

- **Collection Costs:** The cost identified for equipment and labor is based on an hourly rate referencing the FY2020 Compensation Plan and 2019 FEMA equipment rates. The collection crew consists of four (4) members utilizing three (3) pieces of equipment. The total cost of the collection crew is \$370.96/hour. To estimate daily and seasonal costs based on participation, the assumption is made that a maximum of three (3) separate property collections could be performed, requiring eight (8) working hours, on any Saturday during the summer collection season.

- Disposal Cost: In addition to collection costs, the direct cost of disposal is based on the Solid Waste Authorities Tip Fee Rate Schedule, under Construction/Land Clearing category at \$52/ton. To estimate overall disposal costs, the assumption is made that one (1) 30-cubic-yard dump truck holds four (4) tons of material which is equivalent to roughly 150 lineal feet of hedge material and root balls, and that would be typical for each service location.
- Potential Scenario: To assist in estimating the inclusive seasonal cost of offering this service, the assumption is made that the service is scheduled and provided for eight (8) hours each Saturday throughout the summer season. The cost for each of these days is \$3,591 and for 26 Saturdays, the total amount is about \$93,383 for the entire summer season. Attached is the estimating worksheet used in preparing this information.

FUNDING/FISCAL IMPACT

The actual cost will depend upon the demand for this service, but if fully utilized each Saturday in the summer season, costs would likely approach \$100,000. The additional collection of the ficus on Saturdays during the summer season also overlaps with the heaviest collection period of the year when the majority of vegetative debris is collected. This will require compensating the employees at overtime rates. The impact of operating the equipment for additional hours will also increase costs for maintenance and repair. The FY2020 budget for the Public Works Department does not include funds for this additional service, and the cost impacts associated with it. If the demand for this service exceeds the capabilities of Town staff, Public Works would look to utilize a contracted service to perform a portion of the tasks. This service would come with a cost, not identified in the above information.

Attachment

cc: Jay Boodheshwar, Deputy Town Manager
Jane LaClainche, Finance Director
Eric Brown, P.E., Assistant Director of Public Works
Chester Purves, Services Division Manager