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Corporation budget as per CMA guidelines

In all probability, the Coimbatore Corporation budget for 2017-18 may not be an exercise with public participation and budget presentation, too, may be a very low-key affair.

Sources in the civic body said that the Corporation was preparing the budget as per instructions from the Commissionerate of Municipal Administration (CMA), which has prescribed a standard format for municipal corporations across the State.

The budget would be under five heads - accounts, revenue, engineering, town planning and health - and not in the format the corporation had been preparing by having separate account heads for property tax, water charges, monthly rentals, etc.

After the CMA sent the instructions around the last week of January 2017, the corporation had been preparing the same.

There was no deadline as of now. Once it finished the budget preparation, the corporation would send the draft to the CMA for approval and thereafter release the approved budget.

There would be no budget presentation, either, as there was no council. The Special Officer - Commissioner K. Vijayakarhikeyan - would release the budget in his chamber and a press release could follow.

But there was nothing in the rule that prevented the Corporation from seeking suggestions from the public, non-governmental organisations or other bodies, especially when there was no council, said B. Balachandran, a former Regional Director of Municipal Administration.

The Special Officer preparing the budget should take inputs from his subordinate officers - city engineer, city health officer, town planning officer and others - and also from members of the society and various organisations.

In fact, the corporation could issue a press release inviting suggestions. And after the government approved the budget,

the corporation should make it public.

Former councillor K. Purushothaman said that the corporation was obligated to consult the public in preparing the budget because it was doing so with public money. It should consult leaders of recognised political parties, consumer bodies and other civil society organisations.

And, what applied to the Union and State budgets would also apply to the civic body budget, he said and added that it should remain a only-bureaucracy exercise.