EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE

QUESTION PERIOD

Minute No. 196
In reference to Item 1 of the Report of the Alternate Service Delivery Committee, dated May 17, 2005, "Solid Waste Collection Services Business Plan", adopted by Council on July 27, 2005, Councillor Lazarenko inquired about the status of the proposed elimination of 900 roll-out bins and noted that the proposal was not part of the Council discussion.

In response, His Worship Mayor Katz clarified that the "Residential Solid Waste Collection – Alternative Service Delivery Business Plan", dated April 25, 2005, contained a recommendation that the 890 roll-out cart locations be converted to manual collection. He added that it also recommended that collection be on Wednesdays and coordinated to the same day the recycling is collected, which means that it would be collected 50 times, as opposed to 52 Wednesdays.

In order to maintain the status quo of the roll-out bins, he noted that there would be an additional cost of $47,000 per year, which is based on $87.50 per house / per year for roll-out pickup plus the $5,000.00 maintenance charge, less the $40.00 dollars per house / per year for the cost of the manual pick-up.

He further noted that the net impact in the year 2006 would be a 2 million dollar saving, over 10.3 months; in 2007 a 2.45 million dollar saving; and in 2008 a 3.3 million dollar saving. Taking into consideration the adjustment of maintaining the status quo with roll-out bins, the cost of collecting garbage would be $39.57 per household, compared to the cost of $76.55, were the City to provide the service.

He stated that the savings were significant and the City was prepared to maintain the status quo of the roll-out bins but also emphasized that the proposal was in the business plan and no one was trying to hide that information.

Councillor Lazarenko inquired when it would be made official that the status quo will be maintained. His Worship indicated that there would be a motion at the Executive Policy Committee and it would be official as soon as the report from the administration was received.

Councilor Wyatt inquired about the status of the administrative review of the Rapid Transit Task Force; noting that on October 19, 2005, the Executive Policy Committee requested the administration to review the report of the Rapid Transit Task Force and report back to the Executive Policy Committee within 90 days. His Worship replied that it should be coming very shortly and would be dealt with promptly.

Executive Policy Committee – Question Period (continued)

In noting that 11.64 million was expected to flow within 30 days of signing the gas tax agreement, Councillor Wyatt questioned when the monies would start to flow from 2005 into infrastructure in the City. His Worship stated that 2005 money is flowing and 2006 money will be as well. He added that the Public Works Department was in the planning stages of allocating their priorities and the physical work would start in the spring.

Councillor Wyatt asked when Council would have an opportunity to input as to what those priorities were and where the money would be spent. His Worship replied that the Capital Budget would be completed the first week of February and a Council Seminar would be planned shortly thereafter to share the information and provide an opportunity for input.

In noting that the Executive Director of the Winnipeg Arts Council left on September 9, 2005, Councillor Smith questioned why there was still not a new Executive Director to which His Worship advised that he would look into it and report back to Councillor Smith.

Councillor Benham referred to the document "Selling Winnipeg to the World" that was released by the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce and inquired why His Worship rejected the Chamber's plan for a Chief Marketing Officer and their suggestion against throwing more money at Destination Winnipeg.

His Worship stated that Destination Winnipeg was doing a phenomenal job in marketing Winnipeg and attracting new businesses and that there was not an event that takes place in Winnipeg that Destination Winnipeg was not part of. He added that he does not always agree with the Chamber of Commerce and stated that the City has a marketing arm that is doing a wonderful job, which can be substantiated by the fact that on January 24, 2006, the Premier of Manitoba and the Mayor each put an additional $60,000 dollars of funding into Destination Winnipeg. He added that he believes so strongly in Destination Winnipeg that the money came out of the Mayor's Office budget.

Councillor Benham questioned why the Mayor would allocate more money to Destination Winnipeg without considering the Chamber's very serious criticisms of that agency and its proposals for reform.

His Worship responded that no matter what an individual or an organization says there was always criticism. He added that he was of the opinion that the organization was doing good work and based on what he has seen over the last 18 months, he believed that he and the Premier have made a very astute, profound and good decision.

Councillor Benham inquired if the Mayor would reconsider his opposition to the Chamber's plan to hire a Chief Marketing Officer and meet with representatives of the Chamber to come up with a plan to sell Winnipeg to the world.

Executive Policy Committee – Question Period (continued)

His Worship clarified that he has no problem whatsoever with the Chamber hiring a person to do marketing but noted that the unique thing was that the City was being asked for funding. He further stated that if Councillor Benham was of the opinion that this should be one of the City's major priorities, there would be an opportunity to raise that during the Operating budget deliberations and that the money would have to be found from somewhere else.

In noting that some very important delegates from around the world will be attending the 2006 Hemispheria Conference in Winnipeg, May 31st to June 2nd, and that the City of Winnipeg will be required to coordinate with the Province how security will be managed at the conference, Councillor Lubosch questioned how the financial contingency would be met and dealt with in the Current Budget. He also questioned if the Province had made a firm commitment in writing to co-sponsor the event.

His Worship emphasized that the event is the Province's initiative and that he would be happy to gather the information and report back.

Councillor Swandel asked for an update on the status of the City Summit. His Worship replied that many people were still not aware of the City Summit, which will be taking place the first two days of June and that the purpose of the summit was to get people from different cities sharing ideas and obtaining input from citizens in Winnipeg. He added that there would be some very special announcements in the near future, but that he was not in a position to enlighten Council further until everything was confirmed.

Councillor Swandel inquired if there would be an opportunity for initiatives such as that put forward by the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce and the Winnipeg Arts Council to be raised at the City Summit; to which His Worship replied in the affirmative.

In reference to a FIPPA request made by a constituent for all contracts, correspondence agreements, internal memos, letters and funding sources relating to the Olywest Project, Economic Development Incentive Package, Councillor Wyatt questioned if the Administration had been issued a gag order inasmuch as the applicant was informed that they should not expect any more information than that which was supplied to Council and made available to the general public, even though the request was made through FIPPA. His Worship replied emphatically that a gag order does not exist and expressed disappointment that a Councillor would entertain such an idea.

Councillor Wyatt questioned if the Mayor would do whatever possible to ensure that the requested information flows to the constituent who made the application. His Worship replied that he does not deal with FIPPA requests but assured Councillor Wyatt that he would be happy to share any information he has with Councillor Wyatt, who could then share it with other individuals as he chooses.

Executive Policy Committee – Question Period (continued)

Councillor Wyatt inquired about the status of the Capital and Operating Budget and questioned why there had not been an opportunity for Council to have input or discussion.

His Worship replied that he personally called all Councillors to obtain feedback about the Operating Budget and Capital Budget to see what areas they thought more or less money should be spent on and for ways of raising new revenues. He added that long, difficult, enduring meetings have been ongoing and that the budget should be available the first week of February and would be followed by a Council Seminar.

Councillor Benham inquired how much of the 43 million dollars in Federal and Provincial government funding has flowed to community centres in Winnipeg. His Worship advised that he believes the administration had completed a recreational facilities plan, would soon have projections and that the money would start flowing this year.

Councillor Benham again questioned how much money had flowed. His Worship noted that the administration had completed a very detailed plan, that there was now a policy in place which never existed before for community centres, and reiterated that the money would start flowing this year.

Councillor Benham asked what assurances the Mayor had that a deal that was worked out with a Federal Liberal Minister would be kept by the new Federal government. His Worship replied that he was fortunate enough to have had a courtesy visit from Steven Harper and it appears that all agreements were going to be honored.