#7

MAYOR, MEMBERS OF EPC

GOOD MORNING, I AM ANDREW WEREMY AND I AM VERY PLEASED TO BE ABLE TO TO SPEAK TO YOU AS PRESIDENT OF THE WINNIPEG ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC SERVICE OFFICERS AS YOU DELIBRATE ON THE 2010 OPERATING BUDGET.

OUR MISSION IS TO PROACTIVELY REPRESENT OUR MEMBERS TO THEIR EMPLOYER REGARDING ALL MATTERS OF COMPENSATION, BENEFITS, WORKING CONDITIONS AND OTHER EMPLOYMENT ISSUES.

WAPSO MEMBERSHIP IN THE CITY OF WINNIPEG CONSISTS OF ACCOUNTANTS, ENGINEERS, IT PROFESSIONALS, PLANNERS, PROJECT MANAGERS, MID LEVEL MANAGERS AND CO-ORDINATORS OF CITY SERVICES AND PROGRAMS.

THE TOTAL NUMBER OF WAPSO MEMBERS CURRENTLY EMPLOYED IN THE CITY IS 594.

PREVIOUS CITY BUDGETS HAVE RESULTED IN THE ELIMINATION OF WAPSO POSITIONS AND REGRETFULLY THE LAYOFF OF A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF PEOPLE.

THE NUMBER OF POSITIONS ELIMINATED OVER THE LAST FOUR YEARS TOTALS 113 AND 75 PEOPLE HAVE BEEN LAID OFF.

A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF THESE POSITIONS WERE DELETED TO MEET THE BUDGET REDUCTION TARGETS AND NOT AS A RESULT OF SERVICE POLICY DECISIONS OR THE ELIMINATION OF PROGRAMS.

ALTHOUGH THE CITY HAS MAINTAINED THAT SERVICES WERE NOT AFFECTED, THE ELIMINATION OF CRITICAL POSITIONS IN PLANNING, PROPERTY AND DEVELOPMENT, COMMUNITY SERVICES AND OTHER DEPARTMENTS WHERE IN OUR OPINION THESE REDUCTIONS HAVE AFFECTED THE TIMELINES AND QUALITY OF SERVICE DELIVERED TO THE CITIZENS.

BUDGET DOCUMENTS HAVE REFERRED TO THE ELIMINATION OF MANY POSITIONS AS "EFFICIENCIES". WE DON'T DISPUTE THAT THERE IS ALWAYS A REQUIREMENT TO ENSURE THAT OUR GOVERNMENT OPERATES EFFECTIVELY AND THAT IMPROVEMENTS SHOULD ALWAYS BE A GOAL, HOWEVER, THE BUDGET DOCUMENTS DO NOT SHOW OR EXPLAIN HOW THESE REDUCTIONS HAVE RESULTED IN A MORE EFFICIENT SERVICE DELIVERY. IN OUR OPINION "EFFICIENCIES' HAS SIMPLY BECOME STAFF REDUCTIONS AND DOWNSIZING.

WE ARE ALL AWARE THAT THE WORLD HAS GONE THROUGH A DIFFICULT RECESSION AND THAT WE ARE NOT YET OUT OF THE WOODS. WE ARE CONCERNED THAT SOMEHOW THE NOTION THAT REDUCING THE SIZE AND INCOMES OF PUBLIC SECTOR WORKERS IS GOING TO ASSIST WITH IMPROVING THE ECONOMY.

WE FEEL THAT ELIMINATING JOBS ONLY ADDS TO OUR ECONIMIC WOES. WHERE DO YOU THINK OUR MEMBERS SPEND THEIR MONEY?

THEY SPEND IT IN THEIR COMMUNITIES, LOCAL BUSINESSES AND OUR LOCAL ECONOMIES. IF THE ABILITY OF PUBLIC SECTOR WORKERS TO BE CONSUMERS IS REDUCED, THE ECONOMY WILL SUFFER EVEN MORE THAN IT HAS.

THERE ARE ARTICLES IN THE LITERATURE THAT INDICATE IN DIFFICULT ECONOMIC TIMES THE NEED FOR QUALITY SOCIAL PROGRAMS INCREASES. THE NEED FOR COMMUNITY SERVICES, RECREATION PROGRAMS FOR OUR YOUTH, ACCESS TO LIBRARIES AND OTHER SERVICES THAT ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR OUR CITIZENS BECOME GREATER. REDUCING MUNICIPAL SERVICES IS JUST NOT GOOD SOCIAL POLICY.

OUR MEMBRS ARE DEDICATED HARDWORKING EMPLOYEES, COMMITTED TO PROVIDING THE HIGHEST QUALITY OF PUBLIC SERCIVES POSSIBLE.

THESE RECENT REDUCTIONS HAVE SERIOUSLY IMPACTED THEIR ABILITY TO DELIVER THOSE SERVICES. MEMBERS HAVE, IN MANY INSTANCES, BEEN REQUIRED TO ABSORB THE WORK OF MEMBERS WHO HAVE BEEN LAID OFF. PLAIN AND SIMPLE: THE WORK HASN'T GONE AWAY.

OUR MEMBERS, ARE REPORTING LONGER HOURS OF WORK AND ADDITONAL DUTIES. TEMPORARILY THIS MAY WORK, HOWEVER WHEN THE ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITES AND VOLUME OF WORK SETTLES IN AS A PERMANENT ARRANGEMENT A TOLL IS TAKEN ON EMPLOYEE WELL BEING, MORALE AND THEIR OVERALL QUALITY OF LIFE.

THE CITY NEEDS TO CONTINUE TO BE AN EMPOLYER THAT IS ABLE TO ATTRACT AND HOLD ON TO EXPERIENCED PROFESSIONALS IN A NUMBER OF DICIPLINES. IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL THE CITY MUST BE SEEN AS AN EMPLOYER OF CHOICE THAT VALUES IT'S STAFF AND CREATES A WORK ENVIRONMENT THAT RECOGNIZES THE VALUABLE CONTRIBUTION THEY MAKE IN THE DELIVERY OF THE IMPORTANT SERVICES THE CITIZENS OF WINNIPEG DESERVE.

WE URGE COUNCIL TO BE COGNIZANT OF THE IMPACTS OF FURTHER REDUCING THE CITY'S WORKFORCE IN YOUR BUDGET DELIBERTATIONS. THE ABILITY OF THE CITY TO DELIVER QUALITY SERVICE TO OUR CITZENS DEPENDS ON A COMPLETE UNDERSTANDING OF THE OUTCOME OF EACH DECISION ON THE SERVICE AND ON THE ECONOMY.

WE RESPECTFULLY ASK THAT IN REVIEWING AND PASSING THE 2010 BUDGET THAT YOU ENSURE THAT THE ROLES PERFORMED BY OUR MEMBERS ARE UNDERSTOOD AND THE IMPACT OF ANY FURTHER CUTS TO THESE PROFESSIONAL AND LEADERSHIP POSITIONS ARE EVALUATED AND UNDERSTOOD.

WAPSO HAS WORKED COLLABERATIVELY WITH CITY OFFICIALS IN THE PAST TO ENSURE THAT CIVIC SERVICES ARE DELIVERD IN THE EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT MANNER AND WE REMAIN COMMITTED TO WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP IF GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY.

WE ARE GRATEFUL TO HAVE BEEN GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE OUR THOUGHTS AND CONCERNS WITH YOU AND WISH EPC WELL IN THE DIFFICULT TASK OF BUDGET MAKING.

THANK YOU.