EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE

QUESTION PERIOD

Minute No. 96
Councillor Gerbasi suggested that the intergovernmental relationship between the City and the Province had deteriorated and the approach to negotiation had become negative. She questioned whether the Mayor, as Council's intergovernmental representative, would use diplomacy or continue the current level of hostility going forward.

His Worship Mayor Katz responded that while the Councillor had made many innuendos, he was unclear as to specifics. He further responded that he had several recent meetings with many Ministers on many topics, and that they enjoyed a good working relationship.

Councillor Gerbasi stated that she was not hearing the message from the community that things were wonderful between the province and the city, and suggested that things had never been worse and asked the Mayor to advise how he would improve things.

His Worship responded that if Councillor Gerbasi were to speak to any of the Ministers, she would likely be surprised to find out that there was a good working relationship with all of them.

Councillor Gerbasi stated that the issue was one of diplomacy and was difficult to raise, but high level people, on all sides of the political spectrum, had indicated to her that the relationship needed improvement and inquired if the Mayor, as the person responsible for improving intergovernmental relationships, had any intention of doing something to improve it.

His Worship responded that he talked frequently to the Premier and Ministers and had a great relationship with all of them. The issue of poor relations had not been raised by them.

Councillor Smith noted that every year the Mayor had a Christmas party that Councillors and department heads were invited to and inquired if such a party would be held this year; to which His Worship replied that every Councillor would get the invitation at the same time if there were one.

Councillor Mayes questioned if the Aboriginal Scholarship and Service Awards program, offered to Winnipeg School Division Students would be expanded beyond the Winnipeg School Division and made available to other school divisions.

His Worship stated that the public service believed the program should be expanded and any changes to the program would have to come back to Council.

Executive Policy Committee – Question Period (continued):

Councillor Mayes noted that it was reported in the most recent census that Tagalog, the language of the Philippines, is the second most commonly used language at home, and questioned what services were available through the City of Winnipeg in Tagalog. He noted that he picked up a multilingual leaflet at the St Vital Library that noted books available in the Philippine language.

His Worship noted that French and English were the official languages and confirmed that there had been growth in Winnipeg within the Filipino community. He further indicated that several services were available in several languages; and agreed to look into it to see if anything further was being planned.

Councillor Eadie inquired if the Mayor was aware that the Winnipeg public libraries reach out to bring in different language materials for people to borrow from the library. His Worship replied that he was not aware and thanked Councillor Eadie for sharing that information.

Councillor Eadie inquired if the Mayor would expand the 2013 budget City grants to organizations that make a real impact in regards to crime and the services they provide in the communities.

His Worship agreed that the City made significant investments in organizations through grants; the graffiti gallery being one of the many organizations that were provided funding through grants and provided a very good service to the community.

Councillor Eadie inquired if the Mayor would commit to asking the province to allow the City to utilize some of the $25 million the City pays the province for social services to expand grants to community organizations that were having an impact on crime?

His Worship responded that over the last few years the City had been asking the provincial government for a share of the pie, a fair share of the pie, including a gas tax, a refund of the provincial sales tax, and something from the motor vehicle fee considering all the cars that drive on City roads that were deteriorating. He further added that there had been no answer to date, and agreed to send a letter to the Province making the request suggested by Councillor Eadie.