STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON PROTECTION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

QUESTION PERIOD

Minute No. 442
Councillor Wyatt requested a list of the pools and hours that would be impacted with regards to reductions in services starting in the fall as per the budget that was passed.

Councillor Browaty advised that the vast majority of what was contemplated in terms of funding reduction for the aquatic facilities had been reinstated. He added that staff had the prerogative to adjust hours and make changes, where necessary, without impacting service and perhaps even enhancing service in many cases. He also noted that library branches were looking at expanding hours without requiring additional staffing and could be operated with less staff as some of the new branches have better sight lines and do not need as many staff to operate.

Councillor Wyatt asked the Chair if he was aware that staff recently indicated in a meeting to him that they were looking at the budget reductions, that they had reversed approximately 50 percent of them and put some money towards marketing of facilities, but that the City was still looking at reductions in terms of programming in pools.

Councillor Browaty agreed to investigate with the department for report back to Council.

Councillor Eadie asked the Chair to talk about the innovative bargaining methodology to help deal with labour costs in terms of firefighting; to which Councillor Browaty replied that he was not aware of what was being referred to.

Councillor Eadie expressed concern that transportation to many City pool and recreation facilities was a problem for many in the community and questioned what was happening with the community services promotion funds totaling $50,000, and asked if some of that money would be utilized to help get people to the pools.

Councillor Browaty indicated that he would like to get more information on the marketing programs that were allocated in the past budget and how they were used and encouraged the Councillor to forward any specific ideas for feedback.

Councillor Schreyer mentioned structural difficulties which had held back the opening of the East Elmwood Community Centre and asked the Chair to provide information regarding the intended opening date for the centre.

Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services – Question Period (continued):

Councillor Browaty confirmed that he was not aware of the cause of the delay and agreed to refer the question to the Chair of the Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development since it is an actual building issue.

Councillor Mayes referred to a May 25th announcement that power stretchers were being introduced in the City ambulances after a trial period involving two power stretchers and a good partnership with the Province of Manitoba and asked Councillor Browaty to expand on this matter.

Councillor Browaty stated the City had a full fleet of semi-automatic and some full lift power stretchers. He added that being a paramedic was back breaking work and people end up leaving the job and have long term back and body injuries. He also noted that the levels of obesity in the population had gone up exasperating the problem so the new semi-automatic and fully mechanized stretchers were making the work easier and that this was very good news.

Councillor Mayes questioned if the Chair was aware that this initiative was not new money but money that the Fire Paramedic Service was able to locate within their own budget and put towards this project in conjunction with the unions, that it was an initiative staff came up with to do something innovative to reduce work place injuries, to which the Chair confirmed that he was aware of this fact.