EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE

QUESTION PERIOD

Minute No. 662
In reference to comments made at The Small Business Summit hosted by The Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, Councillor Lukes asked His Worship Mayor Bowman to elaborate on his announcement that he was going to review City services, how they are delivered and how the public views same.

His Worship Mayor Bowman thanked Councillor Lukes and the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce for hosting the Small Business Summit, where the comments occurred. He further advised that he would make a motion at an upcoming Executive Policy Committee (EPC) meeting to ask the public service to provide an assessment of customer service-related training.

Councillor Wyatt inquired about the Mayor's campaign promise to elect members of the Executive Policy Committee.

His Worship Mayor Bowman replied that the promise Councillor Wyatt referred to was part of an overall package to increase collaboration by City Council. His Worship Mayor Bowman advised that he had asked the City Clerk and Legal Services to see what was permitted under the rules. He also advised that he had taken steps to include non-EPC members of Council on the two hiring committees, namely the hiring of the CAO and the search for a new City Auditor.

Councillor Wyatt referred to the City of Winnipeg Charter and the Mayor's power to appoint members of EPC and asked if His Worship was aware that the Charter was silent on how he arrived at his decisions on those appointments, to which His Worship Mayor Bowman stated that he was aware of the Charter.

Councillor Wyatt asked if His Worship Mayor Bowman would keep his election promise in terms of appointing EPC based on being advised on an election of its peers.

His Worship Mayor Bowman replied that he had addressed this and reiterated that he would continue to increase collaboration of Council and asked all of Council to do the same.

Councillor Eadie inquired if His Worship Mayor Bowman was willing to allow Council to set more rules to elect the chairs of EPC at the informal organizational meeting.

His Worship Mayor Bowman replied that he would not attend the informal organizational meeting and leaves it to the members of Council to have those discussions before the formal organizational meeting.

Executive Policy Committee – Question Period (continued):

Councillor Eadie asked if His Worship Mayor Bowman was able to tell Council who let Councillor Morantz know that Councillor Wyatt was being considered for a new position as a liaison.

His Worship Mayor Bowman indicated that he had numerous meetings with a number of Councillors and continued to look for opportunities to support Councillors to make meaningful contributions, but noted that he would be leaving details of those discussions that he has had with each respective member of Council.

Councillor Eadie asked if His Worship Mayor Bowman believed that Councillors could trust in the process of having confidential meetings to which His Worship Mayor Bowman replied that he had demonstrated great openness and transparency with members of Council and would continue to do so.

Councillor Schreyer referenced the Mayor's comments on a 14 year property tax freeze and asked His Worship to acknowledge that some parts of Winnipeg had property tax increases of 20 to 30 percent.

His Worship Mayor Bowman said he looked forward to seeing those numbers should the Councillor wish to provide them, to which Councillor Schreyer replied that he would be happy to do so.

In reference to the spirit of collaboration and cooperation, Councillor Wyatt asked if His Worship Mayor Bowman would undertake a strategic planning session, in which all members of Council could participate and work towards the City's top priorities over the next three years.

His Worship Mayor Bowman advised that Councillor Wyatt was a member of Council when the OurWinnipeg 25-year plan was developed and may recall that extensive public consultations were done at the time. His Worship Mayor Bowman noted that he would be happy to work with Councillor Wyatt and all of Council to discuss the efforts of OurWinnipeg.

Councillor Wyatt asked if His Worship Mayor Bowman was aware that the previous Council had attempted to pull together a strategic plan, but that it was the Mayor who needed to spearhead it, to which His Worship Mayor Bowman replied in the affirmative.

Councillor Wyatt inquired if the Mayor was aware that OurWinnipeg was required to be reviewed or a new OurWinnipeg required to be initiated no later than 2016 and that the Public Service had advised that only a review would be conducted, not a new OurWinnipeg.

His Worship Mayor Bowman advised that he would look into Councillor Wyatt's statements, and stated that he supported OurWinnipeg, as it was a good planning document that engaged the public.

Executive Policy Committee – Question Period (continued):

Councillor Orlikow inquired if His Worship Mayor Bowman was aware that at a previous attempt to do a strategic plan, certain members of Council went on a retreat to devise it, to which His Worship replied he understood that to be true but could not confirm as he was not a member of that Council at the time.

Councillor Eadie asked if His Worship Mayor Bowman remembered a report that he (Councillor Eadie) had sent out to all Members of Council last year, regarding an in-depth research study of the assessment roll over the last six years, showing the trend of higher taxes in older neighbourhoods.

His Worship Mayor Bowman responded that he did not recall the report, but that he would look it up and refresh his memory.

Councillor Eadie asked if His Worship Mayor Bowman was aware of all the things the citizens of Winnipeg wanted Council to do with OurWinnipeg.

His Worship Mayor Bowman replied he was aware of the contents of OurWinnipeg.

Councillor Dobson inquired if there was a reason that not all of the Councillors were involved in making the changes to the Standing Policy Committees.

His Worship Mayor Bowman replied all members were involved earlier. Furthermore, he advised that he requested monthly meetings with each member of Council and encouraged Councillor Dobson, and every Councillor, to meet with him to increase dialogue.