COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WINNIPEG
Wednesday February 25, 2004

The Council met at 9:34 a.m.

The Clerk advised the Speaker that a quorum was present.

The Speaker called the meeting to order.

The opening prayer was read by Councillor Smith.

ROLL CALL

Clerk: Mr. Speaker Councillor O'Shaughnessy, His Worship Mayor Murray, Councillors Eadie, Clement, De Smedt, Gerbasi, Pagtakhan, Smith, Steeves, Thomas, Vandal, Wyatt and Lazarenko.

INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME OF GUESTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Speaker: We have two Pages with us today. First of all we have Brittany Perija from Mennonite Brethren Collegiate, she resides in the Old Kildonan Ward. We also have the brains and the looks of the Kachur Family, also from Mennonite Brethren Collegiate, also residing in the Old Kildonan Ward, our City Clerk's son, Anthony Kachur.

We have some guests with us today. I'd like to introduce Mary Jane MacLellan and Steve Vogelsang with their journalism students, 75 journalism students from Red River College. Welcome.

I'd also like to recognize Councillor Gerbasi if I might.

Councillor Gerbasi: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to announce today that this will be our very first Council meeting ever that is closed captioned. This is an achievement that has taken a lot of work from the Access Advisory Committee from the community of people with disabilities.

In addition to that, the elevator is working. Finally after all these years if one of our citizens runs for council they can actually sit around this table with the rest of us here. Or, they can come in delegation and speak to us at the same level as any other citizen. I think that's a very very important day when I was elected over five years ago, those were things I thought would never happen. They were certainly things that I wanted to see happen, and many of us wanted to see happen.

I want to congratulate Council. I want to thank the Mayor for his support on accessibility issues, and all of you because we have done some remarkable things in the last five years on accessibility. We've developed the Universal Design Policy, the first city in Canada, and the first city in Canada to have a sign language interpretation policy. Those are huge achievements, and we've gone from being one of the least accessible cities to one of the most accessible cities. I think it's important to acknowledge the good news as we often spend a lot of time griping about the negatives and the things we aren't able to do. Here's something we have been able to do.

Finally I want to acknowledge the community of people with disabilities who we also are first in the world for leaders and champions in human rights for issues with disabilities, and are recognized throughout the world. Disabled People's International is headquartered in Winnipeg, not only for the reason, that's where all the leaders come from, or most of the important ones.

I just want to say something positive. I want to congratulate everybody. This is a historic day. I've heard from the technician that the closed captioning is in fact working, and will be available on television for all the viewers. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: With the positive and happy sometimes come the sad as well. I'd ask the Clerk to read a special condolence motion.

Motion
Moved by Councillor Lazarenko
Seconded by Councillor O'Shaughnessy

That Council place on record its profound sorrow at the death of former Councillor

June Westbury which occurred on February 11, 2004.

Mrs. Westbury served the citizens of Winnipeg as Councillor for the Roslyn Ward from 1971 to 1979.

This Council extends to the Westbury Family its deepest sympathy and condolences in their bereavement.

(Moment of Silence)

MINUTES

Councillor Steek moves the Minutes of the meeting of January 28, 2004, be taken as read and confirmed. All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

The Report of the Executive Policy Committee of February 18, 2004. Mr. Mayor.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE DATED FEBRUARY 18, 2004

Mayor Murray: I would move Items 1 to 4 as consent.

Mr. Speaker: 1 and 4. Items 2 and 3 as consent. All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Item No. 1.

**Item No. 1 – Policy on New Forms of Municipal Taxation
File FR-2**

Mayor Murray: I think there's just a disagreement over approach. We think it's a little premature since we don't have a newer deal yet, and there is no proposals at this point for any new taxes. Executive Policy Committee is not concurring with the recommendation.

Councillor Steek: Thank you Mr. Speaker. My concern here was that this motion was merely filed because it's been made quite clear to us that the son of the new deal will be coming into the future. I think that when you read this motion I was somewhat surprised to hear that members of EPC were a) baffled, or, b) felt it had no substance.

For those of us who have been here and seen the spending on the new deal proposition you'll remember a million dollars has been spent relative to the advocating of a new deal, and we know the citizenry of Winnipeg have come back with a resounding no to new levels and forms of taxation.

I think what is important though Mr. Speaker, is had the new deal been realized, there was a potential today $60 million to $70 million from this economy.

One of the reasons it did not proceed was because a balanced budget legislation over at the Province. Introduced in 1995 by the Conservatives, and subsequently adhered to by past administrations. This precludes the raising of income taxes, sales taxes and other forms of revenue without the calling of a referendum.

Why is it important? Well had the Provincial Government been supportive of giving us the taxing authorities that were being requested, these new levels of taxation could have been passed on frankly to a citizenry that did want them.

What have we seen happen at the Province in the last eight years? We have not seen increased levels of income tax. We have not seen increases in the sales tax.

There are those that will say, well, you know what, you're elected to lead, and that's absolutely true.

The fact remains is that if you look at this particular piece of motion before you, we were simply asking for an administrative report. I think what is important about it Mr. Speaker is this.

We're going to have a test case coming forward in the not too distant future. As the Mayor has indicated the son of the new deal has yet to arrive. One of the anticipated elements of the new deal or, for sake of hypothesis, is removing garbage collection taxation element off the property taxes but replacing it with a

fee per bag. All well and good in the front end.

The genesis for this came not necessarily from me, but rather from the Chamber. For those of us that were at the Mayor's Address to the City, we heard the Mayor say, he was embracing those elements laid out in the Chamber paper. Well the cornerstone of it was that there should be an absolute capping on taxes.

Now in their particular document they said for the sake of argument, if you've got a new tax level of two percent it stays at two percent. If you want to go to three percent you have to revisit it somehow. Now they didn't cite a mechanism.

I cited the referendum for this reason. That I believe it's the ultimate tool for accountability. We have a situation here where if a garbage fee for instance comes forward at a dollar a bag and we take $16 million off people's property tax bill, people say, we'll that's a wash. That's the way it's being proposed at this point.

However, like so many projections, you don't have to look any further than photo radar, projections are just that, they often don't materialize.

In the future there's absolutely nothing to preclude this city council from taking it to two, three, four and five dollars a bag if it sees fit. What I'm saying is, if you have to take this to a referendum of the taxpayers, you'll come forward with a case that you believe is rock solid. And you may persuade the taxpayers, the citizens of Winnipeg that there is an increase warranted.

It's been made abundantly clear to us and certainly based on the conduct of this council since 1995, we have done everything humanly possible to either freeze property taxes or allow them to decline.

You really can't have it both ways. If we're in a situation here where we anticipate that our revenues aren't sufficient and we bring in a host of new user fees, then this is uncapped.

It's fine to say, and a number of my colleagues have said to me, we were elected to lead. They're absolutely right.

We also know that right across the country, be it federally, provincially or municipal, there's no desire to raise levels of taxation. The Toronto Dominion Report that the Mayor asked us to all review during the course of the new deal proceedings, was very clear. That you cannot enhance the tax burden.

It's fine to talk about polluter pays, but the fact remains and this is why you have to be cynical about what's being trotted out and the fact that this was immediately filed. For those of us who remember the great garbage debate, it was premised on the fact that we were doing it to be environmentally friendly. Then suddenly there was a change in midstream and we weren't being environmentally friendly, we needed revenue. We were told in this chamber repetitively by the Mayor and by Councillor Angus at that time, there was no jurisdiction in North America that had met its targets without punitive measures. Guess what? This city did it in one year.

I'm saying, don't file this as a motion, rather send it forward to the Administration and simply say, in the anticipation that the son of the new deal arrives and there are new levels of taxation coming in.

Should we have a specific cap and a very definite mechanism thereafter for raising them? I think that if you can come out and say to the citizenry of Winnipeg look, we've done operational audits in various departments we're effective, we're efficient, we're at the wall. As a result, we need new forms of revenue, you might realize this. But one of the wonderful things about having balanced budget legislation at the Province has been, no increases in income tax, no increases in sales tax. Even the incumbent government has said point blank. We didn't come here to raise taxes. People are looking for effectiveness and efficiency from city government. I think we've been able to show that on a number of occasions.

I'm concerned about new levels of taxation being introduced to this city. The fact that as they evolve that they don't allow us to realize the kind of revenue projections anticipated that suddenly we go back and as I say, one dollar a bag becomes two dollars and so forth.

This is really done with one idea in mind. It's taxpayer protection. It's not glamorous, I realize that. But it certainly has been very very effective for the Province. I think it would do well for this city to look at it and get an administrative report. Those are my thoughts.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Lazarenko.

Councillor Lazarenko: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I would suggest to the movers that this should be referred back after the report is drafted, be referred back to council for final decision.

I'll be supporting this motion. When we talk about referendums, I presented in the many years in these chambers, I guess about four motions on a public referendum dealing with capital work projects. One was at five million dollars to have a cap, anything over ten million dollars to be sent out as a referendum for people to make a decision as the referendums we had in place until the year 1968 when the New Democrats were elected and they deleted all together. We used to have a referendum in the City of Winnipeg in all major projects building bridges and other facilities such as the libraries.

Mr. Speaker, when we talk about a new deal that was presented last year, to me it was a fiasco because it didn't get no place. There wasn't enough information provided that the citizens of Winnipeg would be familiar to know exactly what the intention of that new deal was.

When we talk about raising additional revenue for the citizens of Winnipeg, we can go ahead and say that yes, we are not increasing your taxes but we have increased user fees. What's the difference between one pocket or the other pocket, people still have to pay. They have to understand. We have a policy right now that we have to collect school taxes and you tell me, which school division has zero tax increase. They have made it very clear. If you want us to lower your taxes we'll cut your services, we'll cut the teachers and programs and there you go, take it or leave it. They have to accept it. The increasing costs in services is there.

When you talk about garbage user fees which I thought it was a dead issue sometime ago, I cannot see how this would even come back for discussion because the taxpayers of Winnipeg have been paying for these services for about 100 years. Any major changes to the type of services that the taxpayers receive they will retaliate.

How do you control without a business plan, how are we going to regulate and control garbage. We have to charge because there's too much recyclables going into the landfill site. It was proven about two years ago as what material was going to the landfill site, what they called the residue from recycling. Tons and tons of it every year, about 140 metric tons went in one year out there to be buried, covered.

Why are we getting garbage from other municipalities Mr. Speaker? The answer was simple. We need the revenue. Ten million dollar profit we were making out of the landfill site, all of a sudden we found out we're only making three million dollars. We lost seven million dollars because we didn't think. When we're imposing the tipping fees over and over again, the Administration had told us, don't because we'll tip ourselves out of business. What happened? The private company BFI decided to purchase property at Rosser and they built a landfill site even with the objections for the City of Winnipeg to the Clean Environment Commission which cost us about $200,000 to challenge that. We lost that. And I've always said, since when do we have the authority over another municipality. So we've lost $7 million in revenue. Try to regenerate that revenue is going into different ways and means.

The new deal was supposed to be addressing this but it didn't address it to the point Mr. Mayor because people had made it very clear. We have the autobin system. Which is working out very well, clean environment friendly. No residue outside. There's no garbage, there's no stray cats or dogs. It's clean. People make sure it's clean. The problem we have Mr. Speaker is that the enforcement of that by-law, the autobin by-law is not being used when you have people dumping all kinds of chesterfields and couches and chairs. A lot of it is coming in from outside of Winnipeg. No enforcement, not one charge has been laid in our by-law courts. I've asked that question over and over again. Why not? If you want to have something, why aren't we enforcing it. Is it because there's a plan that's made for people to get ticked off on the autobins, saying, I don't like it because look what I've got in my back lane.

Mr. Speaker, a referendum is the most democratic way of getting your books balanced and let the people have a right to say what they pay for. People will tell us what they want. I would like to see a report on this motion if it's passed, that the Administration would have to be directed to draft a policy to ensure the forms of taxation are kept to specific levels. People are getting tired of telling us over and over again you're not doing what you said you would do when you get elected. It's come to the point, how many people are fed up, they quit.

We're not proceeding, we're not going to continue to fight City Hall because it's to no avail. We can do it six months before the election because everybody gets on that roll to say that we will do what you want us to do, we'll work for you.

Mr. Speaker I know that the Executive Policy Committee have a hard task ahead of them, they've been doing it now for a number of years. I voted for the budget that has been presented. I'd like to see a zero tax increase but what effect does it have on the long run. What effect will it have in five, ten years from now, what we do now. Somebody's going to have to pay the piper sooner or later.

What effect does it have on the user fees that we impose each and very year? Our sewer and water rate increases. Our transit. Libraries. Swimming pools. That doesn't even fall within the budget process. That in itself Mr. Speaker has to be addressed to a point. And I would request Mayor as the head of Council the Chief Elected Officer for the citizens of Winnipeg, should explain to the citizens exactly what we intend to do what we want to do. And heed the warning, heed the concerns of colleagues that are stressing over and over again. Like I said, I presented about four or five money by-law referendums in these chambers to no avail. Out of the 29 council members I had only five supported me. Fifteen members of council I think I had three and Councillor Thomas was one of them. That was just to put something in place. We used to have it before, it worked very well, it kept us on our toes. If people did not those who were elected would not agree to what the taxpayers their constituents are telling them, they're booted out. Tell me who wants to get booted out of elected office? Who would like to lose an election and fight like hell to come back again? I did that in 1977, after the 50 member council was decreased to 29. Let me tell you, it wakes you up very fast. Do what you were elected to do.

We're not riding a gravy train that we're here forever. I think the Liberals in Ottawa are beginning to find that out. I'll tell you what. This is just the tip of the iceberg. How many are going to be shying away? How many are not running for public office because of what is happening? How many of those that wanted to run such as the Reeve of Gimli, decided to pull out because he knows the feedback would be bad. Mayor Murray made a wise decision. He's still young, he's got lots to do over here. He's not ready for Ottawa.

Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting this. May I urge members of Council to do this. This is not an issue that is fait accompli. This is to come back. But let's try something some different methods if other municipalities and provinces can do this, why can't we? Let's take that role of

forwardness to say to the citizens of Winnipeg, we're trying every method we can to provide you and give you what we think is right. Your fairness in paying your taxes. Because taxes will never go away. Taxes are even taxed on people that have died. You're born to pay taxes, you die to pay taxes. That formula is in there, will stay there, it will never go away. But try to have something in place Mr. Speaker to give the opportunity, and Councillor De Smedt is the seconder of this motion maybe he'll be able to when he speaks is to guarantee that this come back to Council for a final decision. You can't just shoot it onto the Administration without it coming back, you have to see what the Administration have to offer in their report.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Steeves.

Councillor Steeves: I'm a little unclear as to what exactly is being requested here after listening to the comments from my friend from River Heights. Some of the comments that he made frankly I didn't disagree with but in looking at the strict reading of the motion which I take is what we're doing.

Just to point out, the resolutions do state that any increase in these forms, the Civic Administration be directed to draft a similar policy to ensure that any new forms of taxation are capped at specific levels. And be it further resolved that any increase in these forms of taxation be realized only after a majority of the voters in a referendum authorize same.

I guess generally speaking, I'm not in favour of referendums for a lot of the reasons mentioned. They don't ring true with me. And Councillor Steek himself had alluded to the idea of leading. I think somebody here might stand up and say, there is an automatic referendum every four years that Councillor Lazarenko alluded to and I want to thank him personally for telling us a story about the close election, that's my favourite one. In my opinion it's really not a council meeting unless we hear that one.

The problem is, we refer to it as the son of the new deal and what might be coming forward. I don't think any of us or maybe only one of us in this chamber know exactly what is going to be coming forward in terms of the newer deal, or the son of the new deal.

What worries me a little bit is there's probably a lot of manifestations Mr. Speaker that the newer deal could take on. It could be something ground breaking, it could be something completely new. It could be something completely controversial, or frankly it could not be. I don't know. It could be something that sweeps this chamber 16-0, that we're all comfortable with. It could be something that fails 2-14.

I guess we should leave room for the possibility that there might be some forms of taxation that exists that might not offend either anybody in this chamber or, potentially any of our citizenry. What qualifies as "new form of taxation". A lot of the debate that I heard at the town halls and I'm sure that all of us heard at the town halls, centered around for example the gas tax for example. Granted there was lots of controversial things at the new deal seminars but I don't think the idea of gas tax being allocated to the City of Winnipeg was one that met with a lot of offence from people. In fact, from what I can see I think the City of Winnipeg citizens actually felt the idea the City of Winnipeg might capitalize in the gas tax was actually a pretty good idea, a pretty progressive idea, and maybe something we could all support. If it's not gas tax maybe it would be something else, maybe it would be a GST rebate.

Do these qualify as "new forms of taxation pursuant to this motion"? Councillor Steek is saying of course not. But I would argue within the body of the motion that he's advanced, they may well. I would hate for us to get into a situation where even something as innocuous as that would probably be very supported within the citizenry could be caught up in a motion like this. If that's not the intent, my argument would be that this motion isn't nearly clear enough. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor De Smedt.

Councillor De Smedt: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I'll try and be very short. I think there's only three major points here that should be brought up.

Clearly the motion probably could have been a little more elaborate. The intention of the motion was to have the Administration review public policy, under the context of controlling future taxation limits in the City of Winnipeg.

There are various models they could look at. I think that was really the intention here before we get into a debate. Whether we liked to have referendums or not, whether we're in a leadership role, whether certain models of new taxation should be limited or not, will really depend on an analysis that should be brought forth by the Administration.

Clearly what we're simply asking is that, I think in the body of the future of how the City operates, that the Mayor and others have articulated so very well, that we're not on a sustainable model right now. We're just making due from year to year until we can get to that point in time where new deal taxation in this country which reviews both the Federal, the Provincial and Municipal taxation policies can be harmonized so that municipalities can get their due share of the income generated in their community.

We've seen this debate go on and on, and in fact I do credit the Mayor as I've said before for taking the lead on this nationally and we have a lot of people interested in it. Without frankly a high level task force in this nation with representation on three levels of governments to talk about tax reform, we're going to have some difficulty getting there. We'll be nibbling in the margins, we'll get some taxation benefits like GST return this year of 3% for a total of $7 million of which only $2 million belongs really to the operational budget. $5 million belongs to the operational budget. $2 million of that $7 million belongs to the Water and Waste Department.

Nevertheless, trying to get three levels of government together to decide how you share the pie is going to be critical. Part of good public policy essentially that is my second point, is developing some boundaries in which the citizens can have confidence that there will be boundaries. We know there are boundaries at the Federal level and the Provincial level. Certainly in this province with balanced budget legislation we do have some fairly tight boundaries put on our colleagues there. And they're respecting that no matter what political stripe is over there. I think that's been a healthy issue.

I think municipalities when they get into a newer structure of revenue generation, should have these boundaries upon them. That's essentially what this resolution was asking for. The motion was saying, come on administration, you've had time to spend lots of time looking at new deal scenarios. We've had staff working on this and as the Mayor had indicated last fall in fact that they've been working on it for well over a year on trying to develop a modelling system of how we can get new taxation levels. My goodness, we should be able to ask the Administration to do their best efforts to start developing the architecture of analysis, come back to a committee if necessary, I'm sure the Chair of Fiscal Issues would be very interested in taking a lead on behalf of council to kind of guide the Administration on this review. Then we could come back to all members of council and say, look it, here's some of the issues that need to be thought out, continue with the research and then present a motion back to council or a report back to council for due consideration. That's all we're asking for.

My third point is simply this. Many of us were new since '98. There's four new councillors around the table. Some came in in '95.

One of the themes led by Mayor Murray and many of you that are here today, old-timers that are here today, is that you wanted change. You were tired of what was happening through the '70s and '80s. Unlimited capital investments. Perhaps necessary but we had a huge debt. So we made change. We restricted capital infrastructure projects. Doing internal financing. We've tightened the belt everywhere. Every ward councillor has

tightened the belt. The Mayor has tightened the belt. We've put a little bit more money into arts and culture because I think it's vital and essential to our community. The whole community of Winnipeg. Essentially we've tightened the belt.

We have lived with the tax cuts. We have lived with holding the line as we've seen in the proposed budget for this year, and we're not really certain what the service cuts are. There have been some. We survived. I think we can survive a bit longer which means there's still some elasticity in the organization. At some point in time and I think as Councillor Lazarenko had mentioned, we're going to have to pay the piper if there isn't another sustainable model of getting some revenue generation.

My point is, everybody has embraced the notion of change. It's time to do things differently. We've led and talked about these issues here. In fact, some of you have been so welcoming of change that during the great big pension debate, you welcomed change by saying, you know, I didn't vote for it in '92, I didn't vote for it in '97 when we had an RRSP proposal, but I'm going to vote for it today. I'm changing my mind. I'm changing my mind because the City is now affordable, words in Hansard, affordable. All of a sudden we were affordable back in 2001. Of course in 2003 we have a crisis, we're looking at the new deal and sustainability. A lot of it is valid. And we have a crisis in infrastructure deficit.

We were quite willing to change our mind on other things. I think we did some positive issues.

My point is, if you're not willing to change your mind today on a very simple thing in asking the Administration to come forward with a report, and I'm really asking the members of the Executive Policy Committee to change their mind and show some leadership here, that this is not really offensive to them or to anybody else, it's trying to establish some boundaries that give the citizens some confidence.

If you can't change your mind on anything, how can you change anything. I leave it at that.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Thomas.

Councillor Thomas: Thank you. When a motion is based on spurious assumption, that often leads to illogical conclusions.

I'm looking at the first whereas, and it talks about the new deal will result in raising of additional $70 million from the citizens of Winnipeg and Manitoba. Where does that assumption come from? The new deal hasn't been finalized. As we've been saying over and over again when we've done each and every budget, the problem is, municipalities across the country have a very small piece of the existing pie. We have about six or seven percent of the total funding pie goes to municipalities. The focus of the new deal, the focus of what we're talking about is trying to get a resharing of that pie. The Federal Government came to the table in a very minor way a couple of weeks ago, and gave us an additional $7 million. That did not cost the citizens of Winnipeg or the citizens of Manitoba any additional taxing at all because it was a redistribution of existing revenue.

We've asked for a share of gasoline revenue because when vehicles go up and down our streets, it costs us. Have we said we want them to raise gas taxes to do that? That will be a decision that the Federal Government or Provincial Government makes, but we haven't asked for them to raise their taxes. We've asked that they share more fairly with us since we're the ones who built the streets, the roads, provide the transit service. That money that's collected from people who use the transportation system, should go back to the people who are responsible for building the transportation system. If you start with that illogical assumption, then you're going to lead to the conclusion that, any of these kind of increases have to be realized by a referendum. Well this new deal is lots of discussions, quite a few. We're getting a bit each and every time. Does that mean that every time the

Provincial Government or the Federal Government comes up with something where they allow us something that before we do anything about it we go back and have a referendum? With the $7 million for the GST rebate coming to us, if that kind of thing that happens has a referendum attached to it, we'll spend more money on referendums than we will actually getting the taxes that we need in order to properly fix our streets.

That's why I say, spurious assumption leads to an illogical conclusion. I think that we need to focus more on getting appropriate that by tying the revenues that we get…every time there is a negotiation that is completed, if we were to have a referendum it would cost us more to implement those referendums than it would to actually take the money and use it appropriately.

As I was saying, one of the things that we're hoping to do that we've been working on with each and every budget, is attach the revenues that we receive to the programs that we want to fund. One of the ways of doing that is to make our government more accountable and more open to the citizens of Winnipeg. I think by making what we're doing very clear so that citizens can see so that they can come down and participate in the budget process with an understanding of what their money is going to, I think that's the best thing that we can do for a citizen rather than throwing out referendums that may be spurious and inconclusive. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. Councillor Wyatt.

Councillor Wyatt: Thank you. I rise to support the motion before us today.

I think the old saying goes back many years, no taxation without representation. You can make the argument that residents and the citizens of this city have representation here this council to make these decisions.

There's no doubt there's a growing feeling in the community and in the City, not just here in Manitoba but across the country that more and more citizens want to have an active role in how government is run, and how we raise revenues.

More and more we're hearing that, not just here in Manitoba but across the country. It could be for a variety of reasons. It could be because of a scepticism about how government is managing monies of the people. One only has to look as it was pointed out by my colleague what's happening now in Ottawa, for the public to have some reason to doubt the management of their funds.

It could also maybe have to do Mr. Speaker with the fact our governments have grown dramatically in this country ever since World War II. Not just municipally, but federally and provincially. And that they're larger today than ever before.

So there is a healthy scepticism I would argue in the land when it comes to what we should be taxing and what we shouldn't be taxing, and if we should be taxing something at all.

The ironic thing is I think these fears that we cannot tie our hands….

Mr. Speaker: Excuse me councillor. There are three different multi councillor conversations going on while someone is trying to speak. Could we please have order in the chamber. Continue.

Councillor Wyatt: It comes back Mr. Speaker to the fact that across this country citizens I think not just here in Manitoba want to have an active role in what government is spending money on. The ironic thing is I do not think that residents of this city are unreasonable. The concern that was expressed that this would tie our hands, prevent us from doing anything is completely based on perception and wrong perceptions at that. I believe the public when an issue is put to them and they understand, and they understand the implications, will support even new forms of taxation. That's been proven out in the past. When it's been put a very clear question, do you want new taxes to fix your roads. Do you want

a new form of taxation to repair your streets. Put the question.

I would suggest to you that I think a lot of the public may turn around and say, right, as long as the city's managing its funds efficiently, fairly and effectively, they would support something like that.

What I heard at the meetings on the new deal across the City last fall, was a scepticism that the monies whether it be existing taxation or new taxation, this motion talks about new forms of taxation not existing taxation that would be redirected, but new taxation would once again go into that black hole called our general revenues and they wouldn't see any improvement on their streets. They wouldn't see any improvements with their sidewalks. They wouldn't see any improvements on the regional streets which our streets are now crumbling and falling apart, or in their parks and playgrounds. There was a lack of trust. And what better way to re-establish the trust then to say, we are putting a bit of power back into your hands and to say, you have ability to have come forward and decide as a city what should be our priorities and spending priorities especially when it comes to new forms of taxation.

I have a strong fear that we're going to introduce new forms of taxation and it will go right into our general revenues and we'll never see it again. We see that happening right now with the debt servicing reductions, the cost of debt for the City going down, that money should be going into capital projects, it's going into the operating costs of the City, being sucked in. We see now $7.5 million coming back from the Federal Government being sucked into the operating costs of the City Mr. Speaker, not into capital projects. You can be guaranteed $15 million coming in from gas tax, that is a big pot of money to look at when it comes to trying to balance your operating budget when there's a $40 million hole this year.

The people of this city have a right to be sceptical, and they have a right to wonder what we're going to be doing with all these new forms of revenue if they should start to roll from Ottawa. I would argue Mr. Speaker any new form of taxation, it's been established by the Provincial Government that any new form of taxation not existing taxation which there was some confusion on this floor. If you read the motion, it's new forms of taxation, should be subject to a referendum and a clear question. We should be trusting the citizens of this city rather than not trusting them and thinking the worst of them that we won't support something when we need it as a city. If the question can be put clearly and straightforward, I would suggest to you Mr. Speaker, if the history of the City shows the people of the City will support it, if they believe it's reasonable, if they believe it's right, and if they believe it's necessary. Over and over again in history the people have shown that to be the case. They've been the salvation quite often not our leaders. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Smith.

Councillor Smith: Mr. Speaker, normally I would not be supportive of a motion like this because you know I think it's difficult to communicate. For example, say we went to the taxpayers about the Provencher Pedestrian Bridge. We wouldn't been able to sell it I don't think. It's a beautiful structure, it enhances our city.

I don't generally like referendums. But, I'm supporting it this time because this administration has seemed reluctant to go ahead and to consult people.

For example. When they talked about the garbage levy last time. I talked to the Mayor, I said look it, why don't you go ahead and establish the $2 per bag for a set length of time, and maybe I can support it then. Oh no, he wants to be able to go ahead and raise it every year like he does the transit fares. This says, new forms of taxation. Therefore I think I can be very supportive of this because I think it puts a break on the Mayor and the Executive Policy Committee going wild.

Mr. Speaker: Wild Councillor Gerbasi.

Councillor Gerbasi: I didn't know we were getting a chance to go wild Mr. Speaker. That might be kind of fun.

I just wanted to make a couple of observations. It's interesting that those that are standing up and demanding this referendum have all been councillors for the most part, the ones moving the motion and few others that actually want to increase property taxes. They seem to be opposing looking at new forms of taxation. This is certainly one way to stop that from happening. I think it's pretty ironic and it's kind of trying to have it both ways as was mentioned earlier.

Another thing that I just can't help thinking of, is a few years ago when the Reform Party had a campaign to have referendums. You might remember the This Hour Has 22 Minutes campaign where they got people to e-mail in if they believe we should have a referendum on changing Stockwell's name to Doris. They got a million people that wrote in and wanted a referendum and it would have cost millions and millions of dollars to the taxpayers. That would have been quite a scandal.

There is a real cost to referendums that also has to be considered. I think what the goal here is consultation with the public which is a very worthy goal.

I found it pretty hard to listen to the idea that we've been reluctant to consult with the public when we've gone out on this massive new deal campaign, sat in town hall after town hall to be yelled at, and that was discussing raising all different kinds of taxes. Everything from liquor tax to sales tax, and having that open dialogue with our public. Which by the way although not everybody liked all the proposals, we certainly got a lot of kudos from the public for having the courage to go out and talk about taxation. I'm just amazed that anyone would accuse us of being reluctant to consult with the public about new forms of taxation. I think I'm living on a different planet than some of these other councillors. That's not how I remember what we just went through. It was one of the biggest consultations in history and it took a huge amount of courage to talk about new taxes.

I also think we have to face reality that we need to consider forms of taxation that are more progressive knowing that property taxes are the least progressive form of taxation. We are trying to do that. I heard someone call it user fees. It's a balance of different forms of taxation that's the most progressive. There are times where user fees do make sense especially when they're environmentally connected and they create incentives to work towards more environmentally sustainable community.

It's not any one form of tax that's the answer. We all know that. This is a complex issue. We've had the courage to go out not reluctantly but courageously talking to our citizens about issues getting yelled at by people who aren't happy about even talking about it.

I think these criticisms are basically, this motion is basically an attempt to avoid addressing the big and deep problems we face in terms of having a more diverse revenue base. We do have to consider new forms of taxation. That doesn't mean we're increasing the burden on Winnipeggers, it means we're looking at different ways of taxing that are more fair, that are connected to the environment, and that are socially equitable. Because when we talked about the new deal there was a number of principles that it was based on, one of which being social equity. Right now I don't know that this is the fairest system. And to be criticized for looking at all those things is just a resistance to change simply.

I'm disappointed that some councillors are so resistant to change that they're not prepared to acknowledge the steps that have been taken to try to make this city more sustainable, make the City more environmentally sustainable, and to come up with a better way to pay for the services that people want.

We've had that dialogue with the citizens, and I'm proud of that. I think this is just opposition politics. They're running out of things to say because we're doing a good

job. Sorry. Those are my comments Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Mayor summing up.

Mayor Murray: Mr. Speaker I'm always amazed that the loose relationship that some people have with the truth. The revision of history. I'm actually going to take the Hansard for this meeting and highlight it because there was so many jewels of wisdom today that I don't think should be lost and should be kept for future reference.

Councillor Smith has to go down in the annals of City Hall. I think rather than my picture being mounted up there his should be.

The liberties he took with history Mr. Speaker for a former teacher, I found somewhat bizarre actually. We don't consult. We don't consult enough. Councillor Wyatt, I'm going to hang his picture right beside Councillor Smith's. Citizens are cynical Mr. Mayor, they need to be more engaged in government.

What have we been about? Eighty-eight meetings on the new deal with 88 community groups from the Chamber of Commerce to the North End Community Redevelopment Corporation. Seven town halls where people lined up two polls, two e-town halls on the new deal. On the environment strategy. User pay garbage, I've forgotten who it was, that one was so bizarre it went right over my head. We didn't consult. I don't know which community when we had the user pay garbage debate I didn't go to with Councillor Clement and Councillor Eadie, we had one up in North Kildonan, Councillor Thomas' Ward, where there weren't hundreds of people expressing their views about user pay garbage. We did a poll before and we did a poll after, and support went from 41% to 62%.

The environmental strategy. Councillor Steeves, how many town hall meetings did we go to from South St. Vital to the University of Winnipeg? I don't know, I've been looking in the last five or six years for someone else or another group of politicians that is more out engaging citizens than we are. I don't know anybody. Pick a major policy issue that we haven't put in thousands of hours of time in neighbourhood community centres and that. We're rewriting the entire new deal now based on polls, research, public consultation. Tell me a government that isn't engaging citizens. But this isn't taxpayer protection Mr. Speaker, this is cover your butt politician protection. This is proposed by the same politicians Mr. Speaker, a group that loves to criticise us for being secretive and not engaging, and they don't get the information. My favourite was Councillor Wyatt who often criticizes us because we need a line by line budget. Well I can tell you because I read the budget that Richard Kachur gets $250 to spend on sandwiches and has a $1,000 to spend on books and materials this year. I don't know how much more detail you want. I can tell you we're adding 35 staff to our complement next year. I can tell you exactly what the police department is paying on computers and how many computers there are. The budgets are pretty detailed.

I guess I'm tired of this. Actually if you say it it must be true. I'm going to tell you one of my new years resolution is to challenge what I call the bull you know what factor around here. The budget is line by line, and the budget is detailed. If you take the time to read it's there.

Let's talk about this. Taxpayer protection. Balanced budget legislation that Gary Filmon introduced. Good legislation, except we've had it for 137 years. It was introduced in the City of Winnipeg in 1874, we can't run a deficit. We wanted change. We all have a chance to run for Mayor Mr. Speaker. That's the big referendum. Some of us choose to do it, some of us didn't choose to do it. Some of us aren't afraid of the electorate because then you have to have a whole series of ideas that hang together.

Yes, I actually agree with Councillor De Smedt's analysis. I don't have any issues with Councillor De Smedt, he was right on the money all the way through. People wanted change. Councillor De Smedt was right on the money. People wanted change. They wanted the debt down.

Did we cut it by about 10%? No. Did we cut it by 25%? No. We cut it by 50%. Find a government that's cut debt by 50%. We've frozen and cut taxes for seven years. That's the change I want. I ask the electorate, I go to town hall meetings, I don't need a referendum to tell me why I'm here doing my job.

Quite frankly this just kills me. Taxpayer protection even though they had balanced budget legislation, what was the next thing the former premier of Manitoba did bless his soul? Went out and ran an election on a billion dollar promise, $500 million in cuts, $500 million in new revenues. Remember they were cutting taxes.

What's happened in the last 10 years in this city? Federal revenues grew by 70% Councillor Steek, 70%. The GDP only grew by 45%. That means the Federal Government took money out at a significantly faster rate than the economy was growing. The Provincial Government revenues during the last 10 years grew by 50%. They're taking money out of City of Winnipeg economy faster than that economy is growing. They got now taxpayer protection. Yes they have to have a referendum. The inflation rate in that same period of time was about 20%. If you do the math real quickly you'll find out that the Provincial Government's taken revenues have grown two and a half times rate of inflation. And the Federal Government at four times the rate of inflation, up three and a half percent, four percent. Our revenues are eight percent during that same period of time. That's 50% the rate of inflation, 20% at the rate of the economy's growing.

This is the other speech I love Mr. Speaker on this referendum. That we have to protect the citizens of Winnipeg, what did you call it Councillor Wyatt? Growing government. This government that's going out of control, that EPC is wild. Wild, we're wild. We're so wild that we took the City from 11,000 to 8,000 staff, on top of debt reduction. We're so wild that the City's footprint in the GDP has gone from 6.1% of the GDP to 4.7%. We're the only government I can find in North America that delivers services by occupying less than 5% of the economy. We use 4.7% of the economy's resources.

What do we need? We don't need protection, we need to get a share of those growth revenues. I know many of you, I referenced this yesterday read the Canada West Foundation report that said in Western Canada whether you're talking about Calgary or Vancouver or Winnipeg, property taxes would have to go up by 50% to pay for the streets, Councillor Smith's lanes that he wants to see, our sewage treatment facilities, 50%.

Mr. Speaker I agree with that. We don't need a referendum to tell us that we've got an infrastructure problem. We have elections to do that. People get to vote and they get to express opinions and they get to be part of the process like they never have before. What we need is solutions.

And the same councillors that are arguing this, are arguing against tax cuts Councillor Steek has said very clearly, he didn't support tax cuts, I guess he doesn't believe we have inordinately high property taxes. At the same time we've increased our investments in infrastructure.

What we need is new and dynamic solutions. It's really interesting when you put the question to some of our colleagues, the vast majority of Council, I'll conclude by this statement Mr. Speaker since you've given latitude to others on all kinds of topics, the majority of this Council I've thanked over and over again for bringing ideas to help solve problems. What we need now is ideas on how to make the newer deal work. We don't need a process to test it out on the public again. What we need are constructive useful ideas on how to fix our infrastructure challenges and build our city. A referendum ain't one of those good ideas. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: The vote will be on the Executive Policy Committee recommendation that the motion be filed. All in favour of the EPC recommendation please rise.

A RECORDED VOTE was taken the result being as follows:

Yeas

His Worship Mayor Murray, Councillors Eadie, Clement, Gerbasi, Pagtakhan, Steeves, Thomas, Vandal, Mr. Speaker Councillor O'Shaughnessy.

Nays

Councillors De Smedt, Lubosch, Smith, Steek, Lazarenko, Wyatt.

Mr. Speaker: The motion is carried, 9 – 6.

Item No. 4.

Item No. 4 – Reallocation of Funding in the 2003 Capital Budget – Residential Street and Sidewalk Renewal Projects File FC(2003)

Mayor Murray: Actually Mr. Speaker, this is a report originally from Fiscal Issues, I turn it over to Councillor Clement.

Councillor Clement: Thank you. I appreciate that without an explanation that people may wonder what this is. This is really a little bit of bookkeeping.

We were given the latitude about three years ago that we could use some of the money collected on frontage levies for residential streets. I'm talking about the tag lines were for sewer and water and that type of thing.

The trouble is, is that we wanted to tap into that this year. We wanted to move money around. It wasn't to increase residential street renewal, it was to make our capital budget balance and be able to do a number of different initiatives.

What we did was, we moved a little over $5 million out of those levies into residential streets which already had a number in them of something in the neighbourhood $11 million or $12 million. But the intent wasn't to spend $17 million, the intent was to then take $5 million of the money we had originally budgeted in residential streets and use it for other issues because we can't transfer the money from the levies to the those other issues, we can only transfer it to streets.

All this was was a bookkeeping change. Although we were given the authority to do this, it's not really clean and it has to be made a little better, the language. This is not the first time we've had to do this, I think this is at least the third time we've had to do this. That's all this is doing. It's not taking money out of streets, it was simply allowing us to move money around so that we could continue to do the same amount of money on streets, and do some other initiatives at the same time.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Steek.

Councillor Steek: Thank you Mr. Speaker. The Chair of Fiscal Issues has addressed the issue as laid out in this report. I guess what he has is, he's underscored my concern, and that's simply this.

That there must be a mechanism that we can come up with that allows us to be doing this in the fashion that we are. Naturally when you see $5 million being moved like this from frontage levies into streets, and then out of streets elsewhere, it's going to tweak your interest.

That was the reason really for bringing it forward. I understand the explanation and saying really, this is something I think as the Chair of Fiscal Issues, Councillor Clement may want to address with the Administration to see if there is another mechanism. That's the reason for bringing it forward. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour of the clause? Contrary? Carried.

Motions. We have a motion moved by Councillor Wyatt, seconded by Councillor Eadie. Would be automatic referral. You want to deal with this now. Motion No. 2. Asking the Province to forgive the 7% provincial sales tax to the City of Winnipeg. Motion would be to suspend the rules and do this on the fly rather than treating it as policy. All in favour of

suspending the rules? Give us one minute as to why we should suspend the rules.

Motion No. 2
Moved by Councillor Wyatt
Seconded by Councillor Eadie

WHEREAS the Federal Government in the Throne Speech announced a 100 percent GST rebate for all municipalities;

AND WHEREAS as of February 1, 2004, the GST will be accumulated for distribution to all municipalities;

AND WHEREAS the City of Winnipeg also pays a 7 percent Provincial Sales Tax (PST);

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Council request that the Province of Manitoba follow the lead of the Federal Government and provide a 100 percent PST rebate to all Manitoba municipalities;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this motion be forwarded to the Association of Manitoba Municipalities to be included as part of the resolution discussions at the 2004 AMM annual convention.

Councillor Wyatt: I think this is an issue which we can deal with now. Actually to give credit where credit is due, Councillor Angus who's not here today drafted this motion. He asked me if I could move the motion.

I amended the second portion of it to add the Association of Manitoba Municipalities in there. I think this is an excellent motion. This talks to the need to have fairness over the way the Province treats us, no different than the way the Federal Government treats us. This is something that I think we should deal with today, and move onto the AMM Convention. I think there would be broad support there as well for this.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Murray: I won't speak to why we suspend the rules because apparently we're on another topic now.
We are proposing a new deal and we're trying to articulate a coherent position with the Provincial Government. I think this has merit for a whole lot of reasons. I'm certainly supportive of the idea, I think it would be much better if Council took an entire position on what we actually want from the Province rather than doing one offs.

I would suggest this go back to EPC, we give it a chance to go to Connie and her staff. Within the next 30 days we should have a new deal out for discussion of which this could be part of it. I commend Councillor Wyatt for the initiative. I do agree with the spirit of it. Our relationship with the Province I think needs some predictability and some reasonableness right now. I think if we're going to ask for this we should give the Premier heads up and we should do our homework on how much this is worth and how it fits with the other proposals that are being considered.

Mr. Speaker: Question on suspension of the rules. All in favour? Contrary? It is referred to the Executive Policy Committee.

By-laws for third reading only Mr. Mayor.

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION OF BY-LAWS

Mayor Murray: I'll move that the rules be suspended and that By-law No. 141/2003 be read a third time, and that the same be passed and ordered to be signed and sealed.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Regular by-laws.

Mayor Murray: I'll move that by-laws numbered 14/2004, 15/2004, 16/2004, 17/2004, 18/2004, 19/2004, 20/2004, 21/2004, 22/2004, 23/2004 and 28/2004 and 32/2004 be read a first time.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Clerk: By-laws numbered 14/2004, 15/2004, 16/2004, 17/2004, 18/2004, 19/2004, 20/2004, 21/2004, 22/2004, 23/2004, 28/2004 and 32/2004.

Mayor Murray: I'll move that by-laws numbered 14/2004 to 23/2004, both inclusive, 28/2004 and 32/2004, be read a second time.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Clerk: By-laws numbered 14/2004 to 23/2004, both inclusive, 28/2004 and 32/2004.

Mayor Murray: I'll move that the rules be suspended and by-laws numbered 14/2004 to 23/2004, both inclusive, 28/2004 and 32/2004, be read a third time, and that the same be passed and ordered to be signed and sealed.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Question period. Councillor Wyatt, Councillor Steek.

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE QUESTION PERIOD

Councillor Wyatt: Mr. Speaker I rise to ask the Mayor a question. Yesterday with the release of the budget and the information, I have a question regarding that. It pertains directly Mr. Speaker. It's my understanding from the Administration that the budget proposes to cut $250,000 out of boulevard maintenance, $115,000 out of weed control. What that does Mr. Speaker is, it reduces the amount of cycles that the boulevards can get cut down from nine to ten, down to eight or nine a year in neighbourhoods and parks. It reduces our ability to actually inspect private properties. We're going to go from five inspectors to four inspectors. It's going to basically turn the amount of waiting time from 12 to 15 days even higher, three or four days longer for private properties. An issue in the innercity, an issue all across the City.

My question Mr. Speaker to the Mayor is this. How can we be doing that? In the budget book on page 103, hidden under increased and cultural grants, we're increasing arts funding this year by $500,000, $500,000 on top of last year, yet the very basic services of the citizens of Winnipeg expect are being ignored. Mr. Mayor, please answer that question.

Mayor Murray: Yes there are some reductions to boulevard maintenance. We have a very tough budget this year Mr. Speaker. As you know we had a $40 million shortfall. We think we can manage this. We hope moving forward we're able to get in future budgets better sources of revenue in property tax to make these kinds of investments in the longer term. We think it's reasonable and manageable. These are not decisions we like to bring forward but we are in tough budget times. We think that arts and culture is one of the biggest drivers of our quality of life. There are tradeoffs there. We did make a commitment in the last election, councillors adopted a policy to double arts funding and to rebuild our arts and cultural community which I think we take great pride in, and it hadn't seen an increase in 12 years, 13 years. We're finally rebuilding it, and I think that was a wise decision.

It's ultimately up to Council Mr. Speaker to proclaim its final authority on these things, and I look forward to our March meeting, and we'll see what the budget looks like at that point.

Mr. Speaker: Supplemental Councillor Wyatt.

Councillor Wyatt: Mr. Speaker, $500,000 more for the arts, our trees are now on a 35 year…

Mr. Speaker: As you know there's no preamble to supplemental questions.

Councillor Wyatt: The ship is sinking and the Mayor is down in the galley putting a pot of tea on. I would suggest Mr. Speaker that the Mayor, I want to

know what are the priorities. Are tree pruning less important than the arts? Let's hear it on the record.

Mayor Murray: I guess it depends if you're a 25 year old living in Winnipeg would you find more interesting staring at a tree, watching the grass grow or going to the Fringe Festival Mr. Speaker. Personally I happen to like trees, some of my best friends are trees. I also like the arts, and I also think what keeps people here makes it exciting.

We're doing a lot of things Mr. Speaker. In 1997 when many of us were considering our first run for the Mayor's Office, we had a zero residential street budget. That's now up to the mid $20 million. We stopped borrowing money. We're now spending more infrastructure now every year than we were the year before. I made a speech earlier, we're now fighting to get gasoline taxes to put into our streets. I don't think I need to justify my personal commitment or that of this council to a new deal for cities to rebuild these things. I don't think we need to justify the increased spending on infrastructure. We don't have enough money for Councillor Smith's lanes but I think that given the very high gasoline taxes we pay in this country we should be able to get a reasonable share of those to go back into our facilities and our infrastructure.

We're also trying to do other things Mr. Speaker. We put $20 million into Red River College. We put money into True North. We put money into a baseball park. We're putting money into the Millennium Library. We're going to build the Kenaston Underpass. We're going to do these things though they are new because our city can't stand still Mr. Speaker, it must move ahead. It is always a balance, I know Councillor Wyatt is empathetic to that between fiscal prudence and expenditures. There is no perfect budget, this isn't a perfect budget, this is a good budget Mr. Speaker. As my friends often say, the enemy of good is perfect.

Mr. Speaker: Final supplemental Councillor Wyatt.

Councillor Wyatt: It might be a laughing matter to the Mayor but these service cuts are starting to add up and they're starting to affect the citizens.

Soccer fields. We can't aerate our soccer fields. There's very little money no money, we're down to 20% aeration of soccer fields. What is the Mayor going to do about that? We've got soccer fields in desperate need. We've heard from community clubs, recently at EPC.

Mayor Murray: Mr. Speaker, I think it's quite clear as I've said. If you look at what we were spending on residential streets. If you look at the amount of money that we have increased in those areas, it's a matter of how much money you want to go where. This budget the last couple of years, we've put a priority on fire, police, paramedic services. We've added 74 paramedics. The budgets of police, fire, paramedics are up 33% in the last five years Mr. Speaker. You simply can't do everything.

It is a little bit of an easy game. You can go somewhere through this budget and find some area where we should be spending more money. I just want to advise that Councillor Wyatt is now proposing to add to the inventory of recreational facilities with a great softball facility in South Transcona. We've added a hundred athletic fields in the last ten years Mr. Speaker.

This Council and Councillor Wyatt is continuing that tradition to build our inventory of sport facilities. He's asking for support on that. As my friend Larry Fleisher used to say around here, you can't suck and blow at the same time. I guess we could sit down and simply say, we shouldn't add to the inventory. We all know there are balances there. Quite frankly, we have seen I think our fields in pretty good condition. Could they be better? Absolutely. I think we have so many volunteers in our 77 community centres who do a good job for us. We continue to make investments in that. I don't think our fields are in that rough shape.

We are also adding proposing to add in negotiations about a field user fee, as you may know for exactly this purpose. That was not supported by many people around here. I believe Councillor Wyatt was opposed to it as well. That's actually how they paid for them in Saskatoon, Edmonton, Calgary, Vancouver and Regina, and we do have user fees for that.

We are looking at creative solutions to improve them, and I hope that Councillor Wyatt if this is an important issue for him will either see his way to support those field fees, or find another source of revenue to increase our activity on the fields and improvement on the fields.

Mr. Speaker: Questions from Councillor Steek followed by Councillor De Smedt, followed by Councillor Smith.

Councillor Steek: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Through you to the Mayor. During the informal budget consultations that were conducted by the Chair of Fiscal Issues, Mr. Mayor you didn't happen to be present. One of the comments that was made with reference to the $22 million initial was that "we took out any and all fulltime equivalence".

I would like to know, was the review on those fulltime equivalent requests, and I would cite specifically police service requests for an additional 21 officers that for the year 2004 were expensed at $800,000, which is fascinating that we could find $500,000 for arts. The question is straightforward. Was the request for fulltime equivalency by the police for an additional $800,000 in this year's budget reviewed, or was it simply removed because it was a fulltime equivalency request?

Mayor Murray: We're using partial costs. I think we've all seen the report from the Police Chief, it says, to actually maintain 40 officers in uniform, the actual total costs when you throw in equipment and everything is now $3 million. That is why we're trying to negotiate upward our provincial grant with the Province because we get $2 million from them for 40 officers. We appreciate the money.

We had five years ago a complement of 1,140, six years ago, that was raised to 1,180. In last year's budget it was raised to 1,199. We had an affecting staffing level last year in the Winnipeg Police Services of 1,220. We will have an affective staffing level in the Winnipeg Police Service in 2004 of not less than 1,220 according to Chief Ewatski.

Our first responder budgets have gone up by exactly $61 million over the last five years. It's been a 33% increase.

Is it perfect Mr. Speaker? No. Could I argue for more resources? Absolutely. Do I think there's been generous increases over the last five years, as a matter of fact unprecedented. I don't think you can find a five year period in the history of the City of Winnipeg that saw those departments get a 33% increase. Is it enough?

You know Mr. Speaker, what we don't need is just sniping about whether we get another five or six officers. What this Executive Committee and what this Council has been focused on are the multi-million dollar challenges of infrastructure and security and safety because quite frankly as I've said, trying to spread a twin sheet over a king size bed which is the difference between what our capacity is and what the demand is in the longer term. Solving that on the backs of property tax ratepayers, with property tax increases isn't on, so we need creativity and we need leadership Mr. Speaker. It's easy to ask these questions. I'm not going to debate with Councillor Steek we need more police officers, but I will also defend our record as being outstanding in increasing those budgets and working with the Police Chief who I think is doing a good job for us.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Steek supplemental.

Councillor Steek: It's a great answer, it never answered the question. Let me change to something different.

Coming straight from yesterday's budgetary discussion, the two new initiatives for the year '05, a proposal to

move to single assessment sustaining tax assessment and user fee for garbage are not there. My question really this question relative to where we are Mr. Speaker, relative to discussions with the Province on a potential singular assessment department probably should be more likely directed to Councillor Thomas in view of the fact that she is our liaison for Intergovernmental Affairs. Can I direct it to Councillor Thomas and ask, how discussions are going with the Province?

Mayor Murray: Mr. Speaker as you know we had an assessment report good work that Councillor O'Shaughnessy and his committee did which I think they're big believers in. That's gone over. We have laid out over the next 12 months a public consultation engagement with the Province on that. We remain save Newfoundland the only city in Canada that has to run its own assessment operation.

We had an audit report as you know two years ago that pointed out the very high cost of administering assessment. Those discussions will be getting underway formally.

I imagine as the Minister has said publicly today that the Province is prepared to look at it. We did not propose it for this year because we think those negotiations are very important, and we need to listen to what the Province's proposals will be.

There is a lot of time set aside this month because the newer deal proposal will be coming forward. I think the assumption is on both sides that we'll be talking both about disentanglement and some savings that will be achieved through efficiency as well as a new financial and fiscal arrangement with the Province, and this will feature prominently in those discussions as will our other proposals Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Final supplemental Councillor Steek.

Councillor Steek: With reference to my initial question. Did the Mayor receive a copy from the Administration wherein Winnipeg Police Services asked for 20 officers at a cost of $800,000 for the year '04, and an additional $300,000 for part time personnel at a cost of $300,000? Did he receive that document?

Mayor Murray: Mr. Speaker, I don't know whether I received that particular document, but I know that the Police Service and every department was asked for ideal scenarios if budgets improved we always look at a list of add ons. They also at the same time as you know, the Administration prepares a list of reductions of step backs. A million dollars less, a million dollars less, that's been part of the budget exercise for five years. We try to accommodate some of those things that were additional improvements to the Police. I want to thank Councillor Clement for his leadership in suggesting that we try to take all the one-time expenditures that the Police Service had that we could afford, and take them out of the surplus accounts, we didn't say no. Executive Committee in recommending the budget has gone to great lengths to try and accommodate new requests from the Police Services.

I think in the short term we're making real progress. Councillor Steek once said, he was going to hold my feet to the fire unless I could find "tens of millions of dollars more for the police service". I totally agree with him, he should continue holding my feet to the fire. I think the down payment from the Federal Government of about $7 million from the GST is helping us pay for police. Maintaining high staffing levels. I think we have to work very hard.

I think the $500,000 that we spent on the million dollars for the new deal money, has already seen a multifold dividend back from the Federal Government. I'm hoping that the second phase, very good meetings with Minister Goodale to talk about how such things as GST or gas tax sharing could occur. The mayors meeting in Ottawa with the Finance Minister, the 22 mayors resulted in a commitment to try and achieve a new partnership with cities to be implemented next year Mr. Speaker. So I'm hoping that when Councillor Steek and I have this discussion 12 months from now we'll be talking about how to spend more sustainable funding for the

Police Service rather than trying to scratch out money out of very slim wallets of our citizens on property taxes.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor De Smedt.

Councillor De Smedt: Thank you. Very quickly. I will ask the Mayor a question of policy, I'm sure he'll be pleased since this is the Executive Policy Committee question period. Since others have taken up the issue of budget, it's really related to a policy matter on the budget that was presented yesterday.

I am somewhat concerned Mr. Mayor that we are going to be taking from a utility their rightful rebate on the GST. As you know it was announced that we would be getting about $7 million back on GST rebate of which approximately 30% of that emanates from the water waste utility. I think rightfully the ratepayers into that our citizens would like to see their water rates adjusted accordingly but I understand that you may wish to make a case on a one-time basis for this year.

I am concerned that we would be setting a precedent here, and I would like Council to be informed so that we can discuss the merits of this. I'm not trying to take away $2 million from you and trying to close the gap but it is really unusual that we would do so and we haven't had clarity on that matter. So it's a matter of policy.

I am a member of the Fiscal Issues Committee….

Mr. Speaker: You have two minutes to introduce the question already. Thirty seconds is the limit.

Councillor De Smedt: Five seconds and I'm finished. As a member of the Fiscal Issues Committee who has a responsibility to give advice on matters of budget and financial matters, we did not talk about this during the budget presentation. I would be grateful for your policy analysis on where we're going.

Mayor Murray: Mr. Speaker, I wholeheartedly agree with Councillor De Smedt's intention. As you know a GST rebate was not part of our new deal discussions, and I know you've been very supportive of this idea of rationalizing our revenues to our expenditures. For example, if we collected gasoline tax it should go to roads, transit, bridges, transportation related infrastructure and issues that deal with the transportation capacity of the community. We haven't gone as far as dedicating taxes because you need a little bit of flexibility, we don't want to end up like California which has surpluses in one account and deficits in the other. There has to be room for the reason of human beings in council in this, we don't need a prescription for it. But we do need commitment and transparency, and we should be able to demonstrate that all our gas tax revenues if we get it go into our transportation system.

Had the GST rebate been part of that discussion I think we would have easily plugged it into that formula because we're committed to bringing forward in stages the service based budget starting in 2005. Because of the city's rather serious financial shortfall and the inability and the time we had to try and actually come up with a policy framework and reaction to the Federal Government's initiative it was hard to do that so it was applied to general revenues which is not a bad thing, that is police, that is boulevards, that is our utilities.

I think going forward we're going to have to review and as we've bought ourselves a bit of time on the 2005 and 2006 budget, and we have the newer deal coming forward, that we should fit the GST rebate into some rationale around that. I know there's a range of opinions on it. There are those like Councillor Angus who have advocated that it be used for infrastructure. Councillor De Smedt I think is suggesting that we consider at least looking at the idea of assigning the GST rebates to the utilities and not put them into the general property tax supported revenue. I know Councillor Clement has been doing analysis on what the GST rebates would mean to the cost of different infrastructure projects like Kenaston Underpass and things like southwest transit corridor potentially Peguis Trail and others of what would that

do to the long term costs of capital because that's where there is a lot of savings. We just pass the savings onto those projects.

We do have some more work as a council to do on that. I will be guided strongly by Councillor De Smedt's recommendations because I think he and I are trying to achieve a similar objective, and I thank him for his question.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Smith.

Councillor Smith: Mr. Mayor, in your answer to Councillor Wyatt, you referred to 100 athletic fields. Are these just in your imagination?

Mayor Murray: I dream about many things and imagine many things, but I haven't been up at night counting athletic fields yet. Councillor Smith continues to become a more interesting individual every year I spend with him Mr. Speaker.

Councillor Smith, no that was a report that was tabled in the initial discussion around the PUF report, the Public Use Facilities Study. As you know we're working very hard, our administration is doing great work. One of the points that they made, while our budgets have gone up in some areas for maintenance of fields and facilities, the Administration was pointing out that from the late '80s to the late '90s through that period of time, we added apparently 100 different playing fields, baseball diamonds and that. Some of them were done by community centres, some of them were done by departments. Some of them we inherited somewhat involuntarily but we added 100 to our inventory.

That's part of the discipline I think of us as elected officials. We do like to add things without that. When we did the improvements in the downtown, the Charleswood Parkway you'll notice in the budget there's increased maintenance money that's attached to the Charleswood Parkway, Waterfront Drive, Provencher Bridge and downtown, if we build the Chief Peguis Trail, Councillor Lubosch is working on and providing some leadership on, trying to find transportation solutions, we've got to look at building some additional maintenance capacity.

Ideally where we'd like to end up Councillor Smith is where the SURP Report if you remember that says, we should build into our budget the life cycle maintenance cost of every facility we have. We actually looked at starting that this year city-wide. The cost was over $4 million Mr. Speaker, and we felt that that was a little too aggressive a kick start on the program. What we've done is, we went through anything that we were adding in new inventory and built in those maintenance dollars going forward. If we can get gas tax or some of these other new revenues in the future then I think we would be able Councillor Smith to increase the maintenance budgets on these facilities, and I totally agree with the point you're making and I will try to keep imagining a gasoline tax maybe rather than athletic fields, and GST sharing, and maybe that can come true through psychic power of some sort.

Councillor Smith: Mr. Mayor could you furnish us with a list of these 100 athletic fields to all councillors?

Mayor Murray: I would be glad to ask the people putting together the public use facilities who've been out there counting fields and buildings to give us an inventory. Councillor Smith what we will have and I agree with you and the point you're making by the way. What we will have by the end of this year at some point, a list of all our facilities, fields and buildings and analysis of the condition they're in.

That somewhat surprises me Mr. Speaker that we have not as a city government I don't think ever had a list of every facility that we own or we lease or we lease out to somebody all of the fields we have and what condition they're in. I think people have been afraid to ask two questions. How much stuff do we have and what condition it is in? I think once we know what we have and what condition it's in, we can decide what we want to keep, what we want to reinvest in and what unfortunately we may have to let go of and we will be better able to invest in

those fields. I think Councillor Wyatt and I agree with him, is rightly concerned about the condition of our athletic fields and other things. Right now if you ask yourself how much money should you put in the budget for athletic fields or for community centres, if you don't even know how many you have and you haven't analyzed what condition they're in in one place, then it's hard for council to fairly address that budget challenge.

I think this is the year of research. This is the year where we do count the fields and take an inventory of their condition. I'll look forward to working with you Councillor Smith and Councillor Wyatt who's been raising the same issue on finding a long term strategy to properly finance the repair maintenance.

Mr. Speaker: Second go round. Councillor Wyatt.

Councillor Wyatt: Just picking up on that Mr. Speaker. My question to the Mayor is this. Clearly he's not prepared to take funding $500,000 more from the arts towards the badly needed situation where we're going to be cutting our boulevard maintenance this year and cutting our weed control this year, where we're going down from a nine to ten cycle of boulevard cuts down to eight or nine, and we're not going to be able to stay on top of the growing problem of vacant private lots with grass and the problem that causes in the innercity, he's not prepared to take the $500,000 out of the arts even though everything else is falling apart. Is he prepared to cut $500,000 out of the EPC Secretariat since the budget is now $832,076?

Mayor Murray: It's this variation to reality that some people have. Maybe Councillor Wyatt took Councillor Smith's advice and has been dreaming and imagining things.

We have actually in older neighbourhoods now have a $17 million total $60 million partnership with the Federal and Provincial Governments in housing and neighbourhood renewal, which was not there five years ago. That is a huge reinvestment. We've also just added $2 million, not in this year's budget but last year's budget was maintained to increase staff in the Planning, Property and Development Department to improve housing and property inspections.

A small reduction in light of multi-million dollar increases in spending in related areas has to be taken into account. I just have to say respectfully Mr. Speaker, I think that Councillor Wyatt is taking one little bit of information out of context of a larger spending pattern in the City.

I can't let the comment on arts go. Arts and culture when you ask Winnipeggers what they are most proud of about their city, if you're going to come to visit what do they brag about, the Ballet, the Symphony, the Fringe Festival, the Children's Festival, the Folk Festival. We bragged about everyone from Evelyn Hart to Chantal Kreviazuk to Remy Shand and on and on and on.

We are a cultural city. You would be hard pressed to find few things that go on in our community. Yes we put money into heritage buildings, Red River College, the Crocus Building. Look at the life that that's brought to this area. You walk out of City Hall now, you see young people out there, cafes, our tax base is growing.

We also know from the studies of Richard Florida, Jane Jacobs and others, the TD Bank, the investments in arts and culture is one of the biggest drivers in economic growth. We're trying to grow our tax pie Mr. Speaker, improve our quality of life. We spend a measly $1.9 million it wasn't increased for 12 years. We're doubling it now, we're introducing public art. Even after that Mr. Speaker we will still not be anywhere near the same spending levels of other cities.

I would hate to tell you Councillor Wyatt, I'm hoping after we doubled it that we can move into a leadership position as we are trying to do with libraries, Millennium Library is an important investment in our community and building the kind of library service we want. I don't apologize for those things Mr. Speaker, in fact I believe they're the kinds of things that Winnipeggers want to do. I don't think Winnipeggers are overly concerned about

whether we have eight or nine cycles in our boulevards if the department says they can work with that in the implications with the City's maintenance and conditions are minor.

Mr. Speaker, I am looking forward to the suggestions that Councillor Wyatt has on where we find the money to enhance our boulevard maintenance. I've heard an unrelenting unending amount of criticism about what could be in the budget, what isn't in the budget. Councillor Wyatt like me is not paid to criticize, he's paid to come up with solutions. I anxiously await his first one. I'll buy him a martini of choice when he comes up with that first suggestion on how to make the budget better Mr. Speaker.

Councillor Wyatt: Well I guess the Mayor's not listening, I did have a suggestion, $500,000 out of arts to go towards boulevard maintenance. According to our own staff Mr. Mayor, we're on the verge of being in contravention of the Manitoba Noxious Weed Act…

Mr. Speaker: No preamble on supplemental questions.

Councillor Wyatt: Are you prepared Mr. Mayor to be in contravention of the Act in light of the fact that we're putting another $500,000 in arts meanwhile we can't even keep up with what's going on on boulevards and our streets?

Mayor Murray: Councillor Wyatt lives in a different city. When I talk to Winnipeggers they're pretty excited about some things. One of the things that they're particularly excited about is the fact that we're putting less toxic materials in our boulevards and our lawns. And yes we are reducing the amount of money. As a matter of fact the Public Works Committee has taken some great leadership in trying to look at some of the things that are going into the soils and that.

There is something noxious around here sometimes Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure it's the weeds, I think it's sometimes the attitudes where nothing is ever good enough for some folks.

I think that the Public Works policy right now on reducing pesticides and herbicides is a good thing. I think the approach that we're taking with mosquito control and larviciding which is again about an $800,000 increase. We're now in a couple of million dollars we spend on larviciding. We're seeing increases in those budgets and scaling them I think appropriately. We had a mosquito free year, we're going to give it our best shot to make this year a mosquito free year. But we're not spraying melothion all over neighbourhoods anymore, we're now out there getting the little suckers before they get out of the water which I think is a better approach.

We are looking at a more environmentally green approach. Councillor Steeves has shown some great leadership on the environmental strategy on looking at what's going in environment getting better science on this so we can make some better decisions.

I celebrate Mr. Speaker the reduction in herbicides and pesticides. I also celebrate the fact that we're making more progress on pest control in the last couple of years especially with mosquitoes than we have in a long time, and we should have spending priorities. I'm more concerned about mosquitoes then dandelions Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: End of question period. Move onto the Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development, the report of February 3, 2004. Councillor Vandal.

REPORT OF THE STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON PROPERTY AND DEVELOPMENT DATED FEBRUARY 3, 2004

Councillor Vandal: I'll move Items 1 through 10 as consent items.

Mr. Speaker: With the exception of Item No. 3 which was referred back.

No. 10. By consent, Items 1, 2, 4 through 9 both inclusive. All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Item No. 10.

Item No. 10 - Proposal to Regulate the Condition and Maintenance of All Vacant Buildings
File EX

Councillor Vandal: Very very briefly. This is an initiative that's been worked on for months. This will replace the existing vacant buildings by-law.

We all know about the history, and we all know about the negative affects that vacant and boarded up buildings have in the City of Winnipeg.

I want to focus on the differences between this by-law and the existing one.

Number one. This by-law would in addition to residential buildings would also address commercial and industrial buildings. This by-law will include provisions that allow the City to take title to vacant buildings without compensation to the owner in accordance with the City of Winnipeg Charter.

This by-law will continue to have proprietors of vacant or boarded up buildings purchase permits. Those permits would be the residential. The commercial and industrial permits would have longer timeframe than residential permits. Residential permits are six months. Commercial/industrial permits are one year. They would be more expensive than residential permits. Unlike residential permits there would be no limit to the number of boarding up permits for commercial/industrial buildings.

In addition, there would be an annual fee for interior inspections for all permits. That fee is $100 for residential dwellings, and $500 for commercial dwellings.

All commercial and industrial buildings would have to file a security and fire plan when the building is vacated.

Mr. Speaker I'll wait to see what the concerns are of Councillor Lazarenko and try to answer the questions. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Lazarenko, followed by Councillor De Smedt.

Councillor Lazarenko: Thank you. I don't think I have too much of a concern on the motion that's before us dealing with the clause.

I, one member of Council from the '70s, I'm stilled muzzled from the Landlord Association. When I took the battle on in 1977 in respect to vacant buildings and the condition of those buildings.

Mr. Speaker, this is long overdue. Many many years, it's long overdue. It has deteriorated in some areas of the City of Winnipeg such as parts of the innercity, I represent a portion now since redistribution of the ward boundaries. That in one block area there's something like 10 homes, 10 houses that have been vacant for about six to seven years. The value of the property in that area people that still live in those homes has dropped drastically. Some have even lost their insurance policy because of the hazardous condition of some of the houses, threats of fires and the rest.

The City of Winnipeg are holders of property we took through tax sale, some are in that bad of a condition also. I have talked to the Director and I have mentioned it to him and he said he's going to take action. We have to act because we're not going to practice, we have to practice what we preach.

The one concern that I have Mr. Speaker is, without compensation to buildings, we're talking about residential and commercial. But it does not elude to land. The land in itself would not be derelict, land is land. I'd like to know maybe if the Chair might be able to address that because I feel there may be a challenge in the courts, if you take all the properties, if you take them under the Act what we'll have. To take both the building and the land. Where would the City stand if that was challenged in a court of law, if you're taking a derelict building what do you do

with the land. You take the land too. Maybe that could be addressed. I apologize, I didn't have time to go before the Committee, but this has just been brought to my attention just this morning.

I have been vocal a number of years Mr. Speaker, the Fire Department have been very concerned because some of the buildings that have been boarded up for many years, if there's a fire, they have to go in there. They don't have the faintest idea when you're inside a boarded up building, it's dark, and a number of times serious accidents could happen. They've had that concern and I welcome their concern. They went together with this, when I went to the seminar that was held where they had made their presentation. Not only them, also the Police have to go into those premises and they may be faced or are faced with the same hazard, same concern.

When we were taking buildings through a tax sale, as the City we decided to try and see if we could sell the property or give the property to Habitat for Humanity and some areas in the North End Habitat has built beautiful homes. Three or four derelict buildings in a row have been demolished and new homes have come up. You have new neighbours and the surrounding neighbours are very happy because it's revitalizing their area. This is what you want.

Through the court system there were challenges made by the landlords especially the Association of the Manitoba Landlords were able to muster enough will to challenge in a court of law that if a building was vacant, you would target the owner then you find out that there is a sub owner. In one case there was a lady that was a sub owner of a property that we're looking at for a number of years to try to do something. You try and locate that owner and that owner was living in Florida. Especially in the wintertime they would be there for five or six months. Then they move again. Names would be added onto the ownership, and it was hard. The legislation has given us the authority to proceed.

I welcome this. I know the Administration have worked very hard to come up with something that is going to be, they'll have some teeth in the by-law that we will implement and have control clean up the City of Winnipeg.

Derelict buildings. Councillors that don't have them in their area will not know how bad it is for the community. The fear that the criminal element is using them. The criminals are going and growing marijuana in some of the derelict buildings. To monitor that we don't have enough inspectors. I would hope that the Executive Policy Committee would be able to and now they're doing something here to say look, we will introduce inspectors that will be able to monitor this. We have a problem where people have called me and said, that there's a house that's vacant but all of a sudden there's bright lights shining in that house during the night even though it was boarded up. Police have investigated and it takes a long time, because you cannot just go into a house even though it is boarded up and if people are there then they have the authority along with the City administration to proceed to get the people evicted. Some people are not only using it as a haven for drugs and prostitution but they're using that as a place for them to live. Some even street people that are using some of these derelict boarded up buildings.

To have this in place now Mr. Speaker, I know it's a big relief to me. Like I said in that one block area when you have about six to eight houses that have been boarded up for many years and people are just fed up. Some of them have decided to move they can't even sell their property. Areas that have been cleaned up I worked hard on one street where the landlord threatened to sue me because the houses were demolished under the Health Act. That in itself, I said, if you would move out of Tuxedo and move into that area know what people are faced with not only as what is happening but the criminal element that they're faced with also the fires that are caused in a lot of these properties. What's happened in the past we had the fire bugs out there

and we had one hard time to try and put rewards out and the rest of it.

Mr. Speaker, this I know it will go through council. It is a good clause. We'll have a good by-law but the one Mr. Chairman if you could address that. Has that been discussed about land because you talk about buildings and land are two different even if this has to be referred back. You have to have a tight by-law that cannot be challenged in a court of law so that the property owners can walk away and say, I challenged them, my building was boarded up for six or seven years or ten years and I don't care, I've done what I wanted and it will stay there. I think the by-law should include specifically that when you're taking buildings a vacant building it should be compensated for the land that the building sits on. I wish Mr. Speaker that the Chair will be able to answer that. Once again Mr. Chairman, this is long overdue.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor De Smedt.

Councillor De Smedt: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I obviously will be supporting this particular clause, and I would like to thank the Chair Councillor Vandal of the Property and Development Committee and the members of the Administration for getting this report out.

It's been a long time coming, and I think we did have a vacant buildings by-law, it was just related to residential. We had asked the Administration some two years ago to look at commercial and industrial properties as well to expand the by-law. I don't mind taking a bit of credit to pursue that issue with the Administration, and with the support of our committee as you remember Councillor Vandal, Councillor O'Shaughnessy was on it, I think Councillor Lubosch at the time that we gave some guidance, and we now have the results of this.

I know there are some members out there in the public that might see this as the heavy Draconian hand of government. But on the other hand I think what the Administration have come forth with and with some consultation with industry, not perfect consultation with everybody that is going to happen after today's first reading of the by-law to get some additional public consultation, that we have balance. Balance between the rights of property owners which are very strong and we ought to be very careful to protect, but also rights of the public at large where you have vacant buildings that go on end year after year diminishing property values, creating urban blight, buildings on our signature streets such as Portage Avenue, Henderson Highway and others that really deteriorate the neighbourhoods.

This is a response really to many citizens who have been asking is there not an ability within government to provide some balance to motivate owners to move their properties.

I'm very certain that public consultation that we will do will show great support for this. We have balance here. I think perhaps a reply to Councillor Lazarenko. I don't think we're talking about compensation here. This is the acquisition of vacant buildings, not land which would ultimately if they are creating a safety urban blight scenario that lead to demolition.

I think most of the property owners are quite aware of the properties that they have and creating the negative conditions to their community. I'm sure they will come on side very quickly when they see the mounting penalties that will be incurred as you have to apply for licenses which with an increasing value by year five which would mean something like around $4,500 a year license to maintain a vacant boarded up commercial building. That isn't small change. People will recognize that they should be doing something with their property and hopefully in consultation either with the City or with other property owners they can find a way to move these properties.

I'm very pleased with what we see here today. I encourage your support for it. I look forward to the public hearing on it, and to see if there are any ways that it can be refined, but I'm sure we have on balance a good proposed by-law. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Lubosch.

Councillor Lubosch: Thank you. I'm also in the camp that says that this by-law is long overdue. In fact I don't think it goes far enough. But sometimes we have to get things a bit pregnant around here before we can go the full term.

We have absentee lands everywhere, landlords everywhere in Winnipeg and North Kildonan is no exception. Along Henderson Highway there are abandoned properties primarily by landlords with deep pockets.

The Bank of Montreal for example has abandoned a property at the corner of Henderson Highway and Springfield, and this property has been in various stages of disrepair over the years. Some 60,000 automobiles pass by this location each and every day. There's no indication that the Bank of Montreal is going to be opening up another branch there anytime soon.

Decommissioned service stations, gas stations proliferate many of our regional streets, Henderson Highway is no exception. There are two decommissioned Esso Stations along Henderson Highway. The most recent one on Bonner Avenue. I understand that the corporate policy of Exxon is to allow decommissioned sites to lay dormant for five years at minimum. One can only speculate why they would do that. Perhaps it's to let the site cool off, or to let the possibility of contaminates in the soil reach farther into the ground so that the cleanup after the site is redeveloped or during the redevelopment of the site is less expensive.

However the fact remains, that these properties are an eyesore. They do not contribute to the overall tax coffers that the City of Winnipeg requires to service. The very expensive frontages along our regional streets, and they should be cleaned up.

Moreover they are littered with garbage, with wrappers, with graffiti, often broken glass, and I believe they not only create an aesthetic sore point, but that they contribute to the overall malaise of our communities. They're a sick abscess that should be removed.

It's been said by our mayor from time to time that we tax those things we want to discourage and we enlighten the tax burden on those things we want to encourage. I hope we will someday see a day where we will be taxing the owners of absentee properties, of derelict properties to a greater extent than we would tax those owners of properties who are proposing to redevelop their properties, and to increase the vitality and enrich our city.

The subject of derelict properties has also come up in our debate. I also don't think we're going far enough on that point Mr. Speaker. We only have to look south of our city hall to where the Leland Hotel once stood to see how a derelict property can affect a neighbourhood. We've got tremendous and wonderful redevelopment going on all around us and yet that site continues to remain the location of a garbage bin and damage….that may be so Mr. Mayor but I can tell you when I walk by it on a daily basis to go for my lunch in the Exchange, I continue to see that property as an eyesore. At the very least derelict properties should be turned into greenspace and perhaps there may be some tax incentive for doing so. This may be of interest to Councillor Steeves as the Chair of the Environment Committee as an opportunity to green our city with what was once derelict properties.

In closing Mr. Speaker, I'm going to be supporting this motion enthusiastically and I'm going to be looking forward to opportunities to amend the policy so that we can tighten the noose on derelict properties and try to strive for a regenisis of the same. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Steek.

Councillor Steek: Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the clause. I would just add a footnote that was fascinating coming out of the discussions at PP&D.

That was when we ask our own administration how many of our own buildings are vacant properties would come under question as a result of this particular new by-law, the answer was well we really can't answer that. I think what is critical is that the City obviously take a lead on the properties that it owns before we start asking it from everybody else in the City. It's a fair and reasonable request.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Vandal summing up.

Councillor Vandal: Thank you. Relative to Councillor Lazarenko's question, Section 190 of The City of Winnipeg Charter defines property in the context of this new proposed by-law is all the property on which the derelict building is situated. There's also a cross reference to the Municipal Act. Yes it is land, it is building.

I want to thank the Administration who've worked many months on this policy. It cross references across many departments from fire prevention to building inspection to Intergovernmental Affairs. It's going to be the toughest by-law relative to vacant and boarded up buildings in all of Canada.

I want to stress that responsible building owners have absolutely nothing to fear. If a responsible business owner, property owner wants to maintain minimum standards on vacant property, he or she can do that for as long as they choose.

I also want to stress that this is the first reading only and there will be a formal public hearing by Executive Committee date to be determined.

I thank you for your support, I thank the Committee and I thank Councillor De Smedt for his keeping us on track and keeping us vigilant to make sure this occurs. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour of the clause? Contrary? Carried.

Report of February 5, 2004.

REPORT OF THE STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON PROPERTY AND DEVELOPMENT DATED FEBRUARY 5, 2004

Councillor Vandal: I'd like to move Items 1 to 8, and Item 10 as consent items, and move Item 9 be referred back to Committee.

Mr. Speaker: Items 1 through 8 and 10. All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Motion by Councillor Vandal that Item 9 be referred back to the Committee. All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Motions. We have one motion moved by Councillor De Smedt, seconded by Councillor Eadie. Amendment to clarify the position of the community committee. All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

By-laws, first reading.

STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON PROPERTY AND DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATION OF BY-LAWS

Councillor Vandal: I'll move that By-law No. 35/2004 be read a first time.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Regular by-laws.

Councillor Vandal: I'll move that the following by-laws be read a first time, by-laws numbered 24/2004, 25/2004, 26/2004, 27/2004, 29/2004, 30/2004, 31/2004, 33/2004, 34/2004 and 37/2004.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Clerk: By-laws numbered 24/2004, 25/2004, 26/2004, 27/2004, 29/2004, 30/2004, 31/2004, 33/2004, 34/2004 and 37/2004.

Councillor Vandal: I'll move that by-laws numbered 24/2004 to 27/2004, both inclusive, 29/2004 to 31/2004, both inclusive, 33/2004, 34/2004 and 37/2004, be read a second time.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Clerk: By-laws numbered 24/2004 to 27/2004, both inclusive, 29/2004 to 31/2004, both inclusive, 33/2004, 34/2004 and 37/2004.

Councillor Vandal: I'll move that the rules be suspended and by-laws numbered 24/2004 to 27/2004, both inclusive, 29/2004 to 31/2004, both inclusive, 33/2004, 34/2004 and 37/2004, be read a third time and that the same be passed and ordered to be signed and sealed.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Addendum by-law.

Councillor Vandal: I'll move that By-law No. 39/2004 be read a first time.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Clerk: By-law No. 39/2004.

Councillor Vandal: I'll move that By-law No. 39/2004 be read a second time.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Clerk: By-law No. 39/2004.

Councillor Vandal: I'll move that the rules be suspended and that By-law No. 39/2004 be read a third time, and that the same be passed and ordered to be signed and sealed.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Mr. Speaker: Question period. Councillor Steek.

STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON PROPERTY AND DEVELOPMENT QUESTION PERIOD

Councillor Steek: Through you to the Chair. In June I attended the meeting of PP&D, ironical to everyone at that meeting was a former chair of the department. It was a request that came forward at that meeting. You'll remember Mr. Speaker regarding basic policies as they related to PP&D. One of the most straightforward and simple was, did the Department have a definitive policy on sales of land? In otherwords in Edmonton, you put in an offer and in five days it's yes, no or we're continuing to negotiate. We were told starting in August that we would have that definitive policy back, it is now of course February, and the usual banter has been overworked, underappreciated and so forth.

Is there any opportunity that we will receive this report back, the Chair has told me monthly it is coming, is it his intention to see this report come out for next month?

Councillor Vandal: Mr. Speaker I did submit something to all of council relative to our policy on selling property. We do have a relatively new director of real estate services, and he is overseeing or reviewing all existing policies with the name to making them more relevant and improving them for I hope our next meeting.

Councillor Steek: I appreciate that optimism, I look forward to the report. The question I have for the Chair then is simply this and really ties in very directly with this. In situations of rezonings and dedications, does the Chair believe that the applicant should have a definitive number relative to the dedication amount he or she is expected to pay?

Councillor Vandal: Our policy on dedication is 10% of the increased value in the land through the rezoning. I don't know what more I can say to that.

Councillor Steek: I think we all understand the policy, that isn't the question. The question is, should the applicant be told at the time of rezoning what the additional costs for dedication will be? Yes or no.

Councillor Vandal: As per our policy I believe he or she should.

Mr. Speaker: Move onto the Report of the Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services, dated January 12, 2004.

REPORT OF THE STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON PROTECTION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DATED JANUARY 12, 2004

Councillor Gerbasi: I'll move the report of January 12, 2004, Item No. 2 as consent.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Report of February 9, 2004.

REPORT OF THE STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON PROTECTION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DATED FEBRUARY 9, 2004

Councillor Gerbasi: I'll move Items 1 and 2 as consent.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Item No. 3 – Goods and Services Tax Rebate to Municipalities File FR-2

Councillor Gerbasi: Item No. 3 there was a difference of opinion at Executive Policy Committee. The motion I'm moving now is the motion from the Standing Policy Committee concurred with taking the GST rebate and putting it to infrastructure.

I actually voted against it, I don't agree with it. I believe we have to first vote on….

Mr. Speaker: We do not vote on a contrary recommendation from EPC. We vote on positive motions of the Committee. We're dealing with the report from your standing committee not of EPC.

Councillor Gerbasi: The Committee's position was to support the motion which…

In introducing that motion I would just like to say that, we've included that revenue in the operating budget to solve the problem we have this year. I believe it's logical to use that GST revenue money for operating costs because that's where it sort of comes from. It is actually a logical connection. I just don't believe we have a lot of other options right now in dealing with our current budget. It seems appropriate. I do not support the Committee's support of this motion.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour of the recommendation of the Standing Committee on Item No. 3. Recorded vote has been called for. All in favour please rise.

A RECORDED VOTE was taken the result being as follows:

Yeas

Councillors Smith, Wyatt, Lazarenko.

Nays

His Worship Mayor Murray, Councillors Eadie, Clement, De Smedt, Gerbasi, Lubosch, Pagtakhan, Steek, Steeves, Thomas, Vandal, Mr. Speaker Councillor O'Shaughnessy.

City Clerk: The vote Mr. Speaker, Yeas 3, Nays 12.

Mr. Speaker: The motion is defeated.

Councillor Gerbasi: I would then move the recommendation from Standing Policy Committee to file this motion.

Mr. Speaker: It's done.

Motions, none. By-laws.

STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON PROTECTION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES CONSIDERATION OF BY-LAWS

Councillor Gerbasi: I'll move that the rule be suspended and that By-law No. 38/2004 be read a first time.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Clerk: By-law No. 38/2004.

Councillor Gerbasi: I'll move that By-law No. 38/2004 be read a second time.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Clerk: By-law No. 38/2004.

Councillor Gerbasi: I'll move that the rule be suspended and that By-law No. 38/2004 be read a third time, and that the same be passed and ordered to be signed and sealed.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Councillor Steek followed by Councillor Wyatt.

STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON PROTECTION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES
QUESTION PERIOD

Councillor Steek: Through you to the Chair. During the course of the budget deliberations with EPC, the preliminary discussions. Did you speak in support of police services request for the additional $800,000 for officers and the additional $300,000 for civilian additions? There was a request in the '04 operating budget for an additional $1.1 million, and I'm speaking to that element of it only. Did you speak in support at EPC for those numbers, the $1.1 million?

Councillor Gerbasi: Mr. Speaker, no, I supported the other increases that are mentioned in the budget. Because when you pull one thing out of context it's an effort to portray me as not being supportive of police services, and I think that's unfair.

All of EPC did agree that we could not afford to meet out everything on everybody's wish list. As you know it wasn't in the budget and that's what we put forward and EPC agreed on what we put forward. We did put in some new monies as we've talked about to expand the community patrol program and other things. I know there's an effort here to portray me of not being supportive of police, in fact I feel this has been very supportive of police. The answer to your question is, no I didn't support the entire wish list that was put forward.

Mr. Speaker: Supplemental Councillor Steek.

Councillor Steek: You say there's no effort to portray the Chair one way or the other. My next question then is simply this. Prior to making that decision along with EPC, did you speak with the Chief of Police about his concerns and his requests?

Councillor Gerbasi: Mr. Speaker as the Chair of the Standing Committee I speak with the Chief of Police on an ongoing basis numerous times about his concerns and his view on the capacity of the Police Service. Yes I certainly would speak to the Chief on an ongoing basis about the needs of the Police Service.

Mr. Speaker: Final supplemental.

Councillor Steek: That was not the question. The question was, did you speak to the Police Chief about this specific request for 20 officers, $800,000 additional backup personnel, civilians for $300,000, a total of $1.1 million? I guess what I'm getting at here Mr. Speaker is this. Did the Chair as the head of Protection speak to the Police Chief about this request before she denied it?

Councillor Gerbasi: Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to go into exactly what specific things I talked to the Chief of Police about. If Councillor Steek doesn't agree with the decision that EPC made, he can certainly vote for a motion to add 50 or 100 more police officers or whatever he wants to do.

As I said, I speak on an ongoing basis with the Police Chief, I'm not going to go over line by line what we talked about with the Police Chief, I don't see the point in that. I don't really see the point of the question at all.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Wyatt.

Councillor Wyatt: Mr. Speaker my question is to the Chair. The Community Services Department is coordinating the public use facility review. I'd like to know, when I met with staff regarding that some time ago, a year ago now, I was assured that there was going to be a public consultation process done extensively prior to falling on any recommendations in the report. Is there still going to be a public consultation process, because I'm hearing now that there's not?

Councillor Gerbasi: Through you to Councillor Wyatt. My understanding is nothing has changed as to how the study was proposed originally. The consultant has been doing their work I understand and they've been doing some discussions with different stakeholders. The process that's laid out in that active policy framework that we passed at council recently ensured that any changes that we make that are going to effect citizens, there will be full citizen participation in all of those changes.

We haven't even got the report before us yet to discuss let alone get to the point of saying that we're not going to consult people about the recommendation. I think it's a little premature. There have not been any changes to how it was originally proposed to do, and we have an active which is the anachronism of the policy framework of how we're going to proceed to look at our facilities. Which is very difficult to look at. It's a complex issue, and we intend to include the public in that discussion.

Councillor Wyatt: I think the Chair misunderstood my question. Apparently there was supposed to be public consultations as part of the process prior to falling on any recommendations, and it was the new deal public consultation meetings that kind of high jacked that process and prevented the Department to roll out any sort of public consultation without confusing the heck out of the public.

It's my understanding now that there will be no public consultation prior to recommendations coming down. This is information coming from the staff. Are you saying that before recommendations follow that there will be no public consultations prior to having final recommendations because that is a complete change of what the original intent was?

Councillor Gerbasi: Well as I said there hasn't been any change that I'm aware of. I could certainly speak with the staff and get back to you and have them explain the type of consultation they are doing. There's a number of different types of public consultation and it isn't always a town hall meeting, sometimes it's a more intimate sort of meeting with groups or whatever. I haven't been involved with that specific part of it at this point. I will endeavour to speak to the Director of Community Services.

By the way, this project is being done across three basically departments. It's also in partnership with Public Works and PP&D and Community Services. All three of those departments are involved. But I can certainly check with Ursula Stelman's Department and find out what type of consultation they are doing and endeavour to get back to you on that.

Mr. Speaker: Final supplemental.

Councillor Wyatt: In light of the fact that we don't know if there is going to be public consultation, but I appreciate the fact that the Chair will get back to me. That will have an effect of course when the report comes forward. When is the report coming forward on the public use facility review?

Councillor Gerbasi: My understanding that it was to be April or May was the timeframe I was told, and I have been told that it's on schedule. I haven't heard of any delay. It should be coming forward in a timely basis.

Mr. Speaker: Round two. Councillor Wyatt.

Councillor Wyatt: My question to the Chair. My question is regarding a motion moved by Councillor Lazarenko seconded

by myself regarding a police commission. We're still waiting for results coming back regarding the police commission. What is the status of that? Where is that at? When are we going to see a report coming back regarding a police commission? It's long overdue. I think this council would like to see something pertaining to that.

Councillor Gerbasi: Yes we're very aware of that request. The CAO is very aware of it and has committed to have it ready in the next couple of months. They are working on it, it's not something they're going to put off indefinitely. They realize that there's an expectation that this gets back to council within the next couple of months.

I can't give you an exact time. I could ask the CAO to give me some idea beyond that. I really don't think it's expected to be more than a couple of months.

Councillor Wyatt: Just to understand you correctly. You're saying a couple of months because this has now been going on for quite a long time. What I understand from our administration that the report has been written already and we're still waiting.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Steek.

Councillor Steek: One of the items that did not realize the light of day in the initial budget prep, was a request from police services for $1.3 million for overtime. Did the Chair have any discussions with the Chief as to why there was a request for $1.3 million in overtime?

Councillor Gerbasi: Mr. Speaker we will be having a budget meeting coming up informally and formally for councillors to discuss. The Chief will be there. We can deal with all those questions there. I'm not really sure what the point of that question is. Whatever is in the budget is what EPC's agreed on having. We met with the Administration and came up with this budget. It's a proposed budget. We have a month to work on it. If Councillor Steek would like to change something in that budget, he can come forward with a motion, and he can also attend several meetings that we're going to have as a standing committee with the Chief of Police present to address all those issues. I'm really not sure that this is really a useful question.
I talk to the Chief all the time.

Mr. Speaker: Standing Policy Committee on Public Works.

**REPORT OF THE STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS
DATED APRIL 15, 2003**

Councillor Steeves: I'll introduce Item No. 4 of the report. I should say that this one is a bit unusual in that the Public Works recommendation was overturned at EPC. My understanding after speaking to the Clerk is that we vote on the Public Works recommendation first.

Mr. Speaker: We vote on Public Works.

**Item No. 4 – Review of Policy on Financial Assistance for Wastewater Sewer Connection Replacement for Business Properties (Sewer Connection Replacement for Businesses)
File WS (Vol. 6)**

Councillor Steeves: Just to give a bit of background, this has to do with sewer mains connecting to our sewer and how we're sort of protecting and helping people in times of sewer collapse where repairs need to be made.

I was not on the Public Works Committee at the time of the genesis of this report, the report is dated essentially in March. Just to conceptualize it for folks, to understand what we're talking about. We're talking about sewer connections from the building to the sewer main for example in the middle of the street in all probability.

We're talking about the sewer connections on the City right-of-way portion of the land. We're not talking about the portion that's on the private property.

Currently as per the report, the City of Winnipeg maintains its current financial

assistance program for sewer connection rehabilitation done under Schedule B, the by-law for single family dwellings and owner occupied duplex units which program excludes businesses in multi-family residential and rental properties. So currently businesses and multi-family properties can't get any relief I suppose.

What was proposed by the Public Works Committee, is that the assistance program be extended to all properties with no deductible. That the City of Winnipeg provide a financial assistance program for sewer connection rehabilitation for all properties without applying a deductible fee.

The Executive Policy Committee of which I was a part of and support in a different direction, in that we recommended a financial assistance program for sewer connection maintenance for all properties applying a $500 deductible fee for single family dwellings and owner occupied duplex units, and $1,000 deductible fee for business properties, multi-family and rental properties

Just to give folks an idea of the numbers in terms of our current servicing, I'll give you '02 and '03 because the numbers are a bit irregular. In '02 we fixed 70, and in '01 we fixed about 128.

The costs of fixing of the average residential fix are about $5,000 Mr. Speaker. The costs of the average business or higher density fixer is about $8,000. Our current costs as I understand them, again this is strictly from the report, is that we're around $525,500 to meet our current needs under the status quo. With the Executive Policy recommendation again the $501,000 deductible, our costs go up to $770,000. If we were to accept the Public Works recommendation, our costs would go up to $857,000.

I'll introduce that clause as is, and that's essentially the essence of it.

(Councillor Lazarenko in the Chair)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Thank you. All in favour?

(Point of Order)

Councillor Eadie: On a point of order, I'm prepared to move that we sit beyond 12 o'clock to complete the agenda. We only have this item and maybe one other.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Councillor Steek.

Councillor Steek: Mr. Speaker, this particular item came forward because of an incident actually in Councillor Vandal's ward, where a business owner who was connected to a sewer line that was probably 92 years old to 100 years old had to incur these very significant costs. I think what you have to distinguish in the presentation made by the current Chair, is the impact on the City's finances. The current program cost is $525,000 a year.

The removal of the deductible nets differential slightly over $300,000. You'll also note from the numbers that he gave you that well over half are residential. In many of the instances when these occur and I know it well because the area I represent is old, numerous people had these sewer lines collapse and the $500 deductible is an enormous hardship. In many instances these are seniors and older homes, they're on fixed incomes.

When it comes to the issue relative to businesses, ironically when people have come forward it's been from the small business community, where an additional $1,000 means they had to sell $5,000 worth of goods at a 20% margin to cover it off. It's a massive expense.

In a city that has an operating budget of $692,000, a potential increase and that's all it is is a potential increase of $300,000, is not Herculean. I know we're going to hear the usual song and dance here about, $300,000 is a huge amount of money, every dollar in the budget is. But it's an issue of priority.

In these older areas as these sewers collapse, we also have a policy as you're aware Mr. Speaker, where in older residential areas often the tree roots are

getting in and clogging up these lines. Once a year people have their lines cleaned out and they get a $50 credit from the City, but it costs them a couple hundred bucks a year. Frankly, this is part and parcel of an aging infrastructure, I know I'm going to hear the usual story, well it's on your property, and you're responsible and so forth.

We could do $500,000 for public art. I'm not going to go through the list of things that we spend money on here. This is a common sense issue. To remove this deductible so that homeowners know that when these vintage sewers collapse, the City underwrites it, it's not a lot of money.

When you went back through the documents on it, as a matter of fact Councillor Steeves has only talked about the most recent years '01 and '02, if you went back further it was the same kind of story. It's not as if the whole city is going to collapse over night. You know what, when you're a senior and you're living on Home Street on a fixed income and you're doing everything you can to keep the place running, and the line collapses, $500 is a huge amount of money.

I'm saying, that we spoke in support of this particular recommendation at Public Works, it was overturned at EPC as one would expect. I would ask my colleagues to look at this carefully. Councillor Vandal was there when his own constituent came forward and said, a $1,000 is back breaking here. And it is. It was somebody that was new to the business, was only there three or four years and the line collapses on him.

I'm saying, that under the circumstances when you take a look at the things that we do spend money on around here, this is not a leap. What it does do is it sends a message out to the citizenry of Winnipeg that you've recognized what they've done, the contributions they've made, the taxes they've paid in the past, and believe me it's somewhat akin to the scenario when we were introducing speed humps around here. The arguments we got were that you know what, every street is going to want a speed hump. Guess what? A year later there's only four streets in the City. You didn't get a spade of them. Nor will you get a spade of claims on this.

Ironically this seems to affect obviously people in older residential areas, but it has profound impacts on seniors in particular.

I'm asking Council to support the recommendation as it came out of Public Works knowing full well that there isn't a huge financial implication to this. You know what? I know we're going to hear some songs about we scrapped $300 here and $200 there and everything else.

The fact remains, even though we had the usual sky is falling, we've got a $40 million deficit. Guess what? No tax increase this year. And there won't be any tax increases if you introduce the clause as brought forward by Public Works wherein the deductible would be waived. Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Councillor Thomas followed by Councillors Vandal and Wyatt.

Councillor Thomas: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I have to confess that this was an issue that I brought forward to Public Works. I was disappointed in the results of what has occurred. So I will be supporting the EPC motion, and not supporting the Public Works motion.

The concern that I had was a constituent who was operating a small business out of their home had to come up with a total amount of money to pay for it. What he proposed to me was that since it was also his home as well as a business, that he should have some sort of deductible maybe not the same rate of deductible as totally residential homes, but ask council to look at him having a deductible as well instead of having to come up with the whole $5,000 by himself. I did ask the Public Works Committee to look at it.

When the Public Works Committee came back and suggested that all financial assistance be covered by the City, and that nobody pay anything for having the sewer repair work, I thought whoa. We've been trying to keep our budget under

control and the previous speaker has been one of the hardest people to keep under control. When it comes to spending money he seems to think that we have tons of it, and then gives us a lecture for over spending when one of the worst over spenders is himself.

I'm disappointed to find out that the recommendation is oh, the City can pick up the whole tab. Well we can't do that anymore. I would like to see some fairness particularly for home based businesses that they not have to come up with the whole thing when they see their next door neighbour and maybe they're only making $2,000 to $5,000 additional income and that whole additional income for that year goes to pay the sewer repair. I thought that was totally unfair and thought that they should be dealt with in a similar fashion to their next door neighbour who doesn't have a home business in their home. But felt recognizing that they do have some additional income that someone that doesn't have a home based business that that somehow be recognized.

I feel that the recommendation coming from Executive Policy Committee will more than satisfy this individuals concern for fairness and accommodation because it would go from being from a $5,000 bill to a $1,000 bill, and I think he'd be very relieved to find that.

I don't think that the citizens of our city would be at all relieved with the fact that now the City will be paying for everything when it comes to fixing the connections to the street sewers. I know that we have to kind of balance what we're doing for the householder and what we're doing for the community at large, and I think that the EPC recommendation does that.

I'm constantly frustrated by people who say, we can find the money. You know what? EPC worked very hard to bring forward a budget that didn't call for a tax increase. We had to reduce the amount of infrastructure renewal that we're doing this year by a little over $4 million in order to achieve that zero budget. We actually had some help from the Federal Government to the tune of $7 million. We are having greater and greater difficulty achieving that balance each and every year. To flippantly hear oh, $40 million went to zero, so anything is possible. I don't know where he gets his ruby slippers but, I can't click my heels together and make a wish and have it happen without a lot of hard work. It's very frustrating to hear the work of Executive Policy minimized while the idea is spend spend spend on one hand, and then tell us we have to have referendums on spending because our spending is out of control. This is a conversation that this person comes up with again and again in which he seems to be facing in two directions. I think if he decides where he's going on this issue, common sense would support EPC's motion on this rather than let's pay for everything because we can't. We're doing our best, we can't pay for everything. Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Councillor Wyatt.

Councillor Wyatt: Mr. Speaker I'd like to rise to move referral back to the Standing Committee on Public Works.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: You've heard the motion. You want to speak to the motion.

Councillor Steeves: Speaking to the motion only not summing up on the clause.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Just referral.

Councillor Steeves: We've had the discussion on this. The options are fairly clear. You're either for or against it. I didn't hear any supporting reasons for the motion for referral. I won't be supporting the motion for referral.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The motion for referral is on the floor. All in favour? Contrary? Lost. Councillor Wyatt.

Councillor Wyatt: It was to see if we could find a compromise with regards to the deductibles. I think there could have been a way to do that. Clearly there's not.

I think it's better than nothing than we have right now. I think it would been

good to eliminate the deductible on homeowners, $500. I read the report, there's a concern from our administration that there's a possibility that the $500 deductible act is a disincentive for everyone to come forward and start wanting the City to start replacing their water lines, the sewer lines, and that's a concern.

The $1,000 deductible will definitely, it's a huge improvement for small business in light of the fact that there was no coverage there before. I'll be supporting the motion.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Councillor Eadie.

Councillor Eadie: Mr. Speaker, a little bit of history first of all. Just to indicate where we started from on this whole discussion. Both the City Charter Act and the Manitoba Municipal Act and I believe almost every municipal statute across the country has clear language that indicates that homeowners, property owners are responsible for the repair, the maintenance, and replacement of private sewer connections from the connection at the property to the connection at the main, and that includes that section of the pipe that is underneath the public street or a public right-of-way. For years in the City of Winnipeg that was the policy, we had to craft our by-laws to conform to the then City of Winnipeg Act.

In about 1983 Mr. Speaker and you were on Public Works at the time I think, maybe not, in any event, in 1983, the Public Works Committee of the day said, we want to have changes made. I know about that history Mr. Speaker, I did a lot of work on the legislation that we have in place which was eventually adopted by council in about 1983 or 1984, it took over two years and we had to convince a reluctant council at the time that the policy we currently have was the right one. Then we had to go and convince a very reluctant provincial government that we needed some changes to the City of Winnipeg Act to allow us to do this. We eventually got them, and today we have the legislation that we have which does allow for the City to repair a private sewer connection subject to a deductible.

Councillor Steek talked about hardship, $500 or $1,000 deductible hardship. He doesn't know what he's talking about. I'll tell you what hardship is Mr. Speaker. I'll tell you what hardship was before we passed the legislation we have today.

Hardship is a single young guy who bought his first house on Ferry Road and six months later woke up to find his sewer isn't working, he's unemployed and he's faced with a $4,000 repair bill, and he's not working. Hardship is a senior citizens couple who live on Minto Street who had the same problem with a $11,000 repair bill. I'm talking 1982. Hardship is a couple on King Edward Street, young couple with three kids who woke up one day to find they've got a $7,000 problem, and they don't have the ability to pay for it. That is hardship. $500, a drop in the bucket. A $1,000, a drop in the bucket. To be able to today have the City pick up the majority of the costs which today are probably going to run into $15,000, $20,000 to repair sewer connections especially where streets have to be torn up. That would be hardship if we didn't have the legislation we have today.

The compromise that Councillor Wyatt is looking for is here. The compromise is the suggestion of Executive Policy Committee is yes, we will amend the sewer by-law. We will now expand the program to take into account multi-family dwellings and businesses subject to a deductible. That's the compromise. That's the compromise that Public Works Committee or a majority of them couldn't arrive at. We've arrived at. We haven't disagreed with the premise that legislation that is now 20 years old should be expanded to include other citizens in our community or other types of property, and that's what we'll be voting on eventually.

Yes, we contain under this compromise proposal the $500 deductible for single-family residential properties, and we will add $1,000 deductible for the multiple family and other properties. Because if we didn't have that Mr. Speaker, and if we didn't have the legislation we have, all of those citizens whom someone is claiming hardship would be paying the very full

freight because that's what the Charter and that what's municipal legislation requires.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very good compromise. It's not a hardship, it's actually preventing a hardship. $1,000 might be difficult for some, but I suggest to you Mr. Speaker that it's a hell of a lot better than $25,000 or $10,000 or $15,000 which was the way it was before we had the legislation we have today.

I'm not going to support the recommendation of Public Works Committee well intended as it may have been. But I think the amendment from Executive Policy Committee is far more sound. It does expand the legislation. It does provide this service, which we don't have to provide, we're not legally obligated to provide it. But it does expand the service to the multiple family properties and to other business properties that we weren't able to do in 1983. But today Mr. Speaker in 2004 we can do it, and I think we should be doing it the way that Executive Policy Committee has recommended. It's fair, it's proper, it's just, and it's a hell of a lot better than what we had 20 years ago.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Final speaker is Councillor Lubosch.

Councillor Lubosch: Well Mr. Speaker what a foul debate, all this talk about sewers.

I can't possibly duplicate the sermon from the mount that my learned colleague from St. James has just given us. So I'm going to say that I agree, this is a reasonable compromise. There are some things under the responsibility of homeownership that homeowners must accept. Driveway approaches, the sidewalks that run through the driveway approach, even repairing your roof for example or a window could be in the order of a $1,000 or more. I don't believe a $500 deductible is onerous and certainly my colleague from St. James was absolutely correct. The costs for actually replacing and making a sewer connection can be in the many thousands of dollars, in some cases exceeding even $10,000. That truly is a hardship for anybody when they're not expecting something like this to occur.

I will be supporting the Executive Policy Committee motion in that regard. I believe that a $500 deductible for the residential homeowners and a $1,000 deductible for a business is a reasonable compromise.

Further to that Mr. Speaker, I don't think that we should be giving people the false impression that tree roots are the cause of a sewer collapse. The reason the tree roots get into the sewer in the first place is because a lot of these sewers were designed with ceramic casting or materials that have crumbled over time, and in fact the water leaking out of the sewers is what's attracting the roots in the first place. If you have to clean out your sewers more than once a year, it's probably time to replace that sewer. As a responsible homeowner a $500 deductible is something we can budget for as homeowners, is not an unreasonable expense to anticipate when owning an investment as large as a home. With that I will be supporting the Executive Policy Committee compromise.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Councillor Steeves summing up.

Councillor Steeves: Just briefly. I believe this is going in the direction that I hope and I thank Council for that.

I do want to respond briefly to Councillor Wyatt in his hope to having ongoing consultations, indeed all of Council. If at anytime, anybody in this council chambers sees something on the Public Works agenda that they wish to consult with me, I hope that I don't have to say this, but my door is always open to talk to anybody at any time prior to the meeting so folks can come in and consult.

I like the consolatory tone of Councillor Wyatt, and I was sorry he was feeling he didn't have a chance to speak to me about it. Anytime you like Councillor Wyatt, I'd even be willing as Chair of Public Works to use some of the travel allowance to take a trip out to Transcona and spend a little quality time with you.

On the direct question of Councillor Thomas' directed towards Councillor Steek as to where he buys his ruby slippers, I'll endeavour to have administration follow up with that.

The only point that wasn't raised in the debate Mr. Speaker, was the idea…I do want to highlight the direction that the sewer repairs are taken in the City of Winnipeg. I don't know why in the last year there was only 70 sewer repairs, but I can tell you between the years 1998 and '01, sewer repairs went from 72 to 97 to 117 to 128. Perhaps some concern that our costs could be going up in this realm. That is the other thing. There are significant costs associated with this.

We were talking about this and I did say that I would mention this if it ever came up again. There is problems that clearly exist with infrastructure. This is one of those things I guess that probably won't make it to the headlines. When we're talking about new deal and the need for more funding for infrastructure, nowhere is it more glaring and sort of the mundane everyday non sexy things like sewer main connections. We are clearly going to need more funding at some stage from some source to deal with these problems in a very very real sense.

As such, we're forced to deal with this matter sort of on the insurance model. It should be said, we are going to fix the residential sewer and the business sewer connections at $8,000 and $5,000 a piece. We are asking people to pay a deductible. It is based on the insurance model because it wasn't said here. The fact of the matter is, with ongoing sewer repair people can avoid a lot of these unfortunate instances where they will have to pay that deductible. Of course I want to ensure that people have an incentive built in whereby they're adhering to that.

With that Mr. Speaker, thank you for your time and I'm prepared to entertain the vote.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Councillors we'll be voting on the Public Works recommendation first. All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Recorded vote has been called for on recommendations from Public Works. All in favour please rise.

A RECORDED VOTE was taken the result being as follows:

Yeas

Councillors Steek and Wyatt.

Nays

His Worship Mayor Murray, Councillors Eadie, Clement, De Smedt, Gerbasi, Lubosch, Pagtakhan, Smith, Steeves, Thomas, Vandal, Mr. Deputy Speaker Councillor Lazarenko.

City Clerk: The vote Mr. Speaker, Yeas 2, Nays 12.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The clause is defeated.

We now need someone to move from Executive Policy Committee. Councillor Eadie moves the EPC recommendation. All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

No motions. By-laws.

STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS CONSIDERATION OF BY-LAWS

Councillor Steeves: I'll move that By-law No. 36/2004 be read a first time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Clerk: By-law No. 36/2004.

Councillor Steeves: I'll move that By-law No. 36/2004 be read a second time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Clerk: By-law No. 36/2004.

Councillor Steeves: I'll move that the rules be suspended and By-law No. 36/2004 be read a third time, and that the

same be passed and ordered to be signed and sealed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Question period. Councillor Smith followed by Councillor Steek.

STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS QUESTION PERIOD

Councillor Smith: To the Chair. My question involves the pedestrian bridge, Provencher Pedestrian Bridge. I remember what we passed at Council, but I want to be sure, so I went to the City Clerk and I said, give me the Hansard, give me the clause that we passed. I got this, and there's no mention of a restaurant.

My question is, who approved this expenditure to build a restaurant facility on the Provencher Bridge, pedestrian bridge?

Councillor Steeves: This may even predate my days on Council, I'm not sure. I don't know the answer to the question. What I'll do is I'll endeavour to find out.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Second question Councillor Smith.

Councillor Smith: My second question is, can you get for the Council members the cost of building this restaurant facility with the plumbing and so forth for all councillors?

Councillor Steeves: Yes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Your final question.

Councillor Smith: All I know is, we never even had a mention of a restaurant at this council meeting when we dealt with the pedestrian bridge. Only person who referred to some sort of concession was Councillor Vandal who talked about something like the Crepery at the old bridge.

My question is, what is this costing us to provide this restaurant when this council has not voted for it?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: You'll get the information. Councillor Steek.

Councillor Steek: Just picking up on Councillor Smith's line of questioning here. Is there anybody on EPC that can tell us, does the City have a tenant for the restaurant, yes or no?

Councillor Steeves: As Chair of Public Works I can tell you I don't have any knowledge on a tenant at this moment. I would defer to my EPC colleagues if they have any knowledge.

Councillor Vandal: There's a process underway whereby a tenant will be chosen for the public space, Esplanade Riel. In the middle of the Provencher Pedestrian Bridge I can say that this is something that's going to be unique, not only in Manitoba, not only in Canada, but North America. And for generations to come it's going to be the place to go visit when you're in Winnipeg and we're all going to be proud of it.

Councillor Steek: My last question is this to the Chair of Public Works. In the press release that came out relative to the budget, it states quite clearly that one of the new initiatives in '05 will be the introduction of garbage fees offset by a reduction in property taxes. Is that indeed the position of the Chair of Public Works? Does the Chair support the introduction of garbage fees?

Councillor Steeves: I guess in theory philosophically yes. I think that we can find a better way to do our solid waste collection than the way we're doing it right now.

I think that this Council will be able to come up with a model that will both reduce the amount of solid waste that's going to the landfill, and reduce the amount of money that the City of Winnipeg taxpayers are paying to collect solid waste in the City of Winnipeg. I believe that's possible. I think we'd be crazy not to consider something like that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Your final question Councillor Steek.

Councillor Steek: Mr. Speaker the Chair said he supports the garbage fees. Does he support an appropriate and offsetting reduction on the property tax bill? In other words it will open up as a quid pro quo.

Councillor Steeves: Absolutely I do. In fact it would be in my opinion impossible for us to implement any type of program that has to do with a polluter pay concept whereby there won't be a financial windfall to the citizens of Winnipeg from a tax paying perspective. If you look at it from any angle something like that can only serve to have the citizens of the City of Winnipeg paying less.

I should say this Mr. Speaker. I'm open to discussion with the citizens of Winnipeg and my council colleagues as to how we'll go about this. What we were suggesting is there may be a better way, and sometimes to the ebon flow of discussion we get to a place that meets almost everybody's needs and from time to time everybody's needs. I don't think anybody in this council chamber would dispute the idea that we should always be looking at new and better ways to do business. That's what we're suggesting here.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Councillor Wyatt.

Councillor Wyatt: Just picking up on the pedestrian bridge. We recently heard we understand the reports of the cost overruns of anywhere from $7 million to $8 million based on the original projection of the pedestrian bridge. I'd like to know out of the cost overruns what portion of the cost overruns are related to the installation of the restaurant and the million dollar toilet? Are those part of the cost overruns? Can we get a breakdown of that?

Councillor Steeves: Tell you what, we're going to get some costing on the Provencher Bridge. Again just to generally sort of answer some of these questions. This was not on the agenda, there was no report with respect to this agenda. You don't have to take me up on this anybody. But, if you would like, you are perfectly welcome at any time, this invitation goes to anybody on Council. If you wish some information on this, you are welcome to come into my office at any time and ask me for it. If it is available, I will get it to you.

Councillor Wyatt: I take it then and I appreciate the offer by the Chair. I will definitely and I have in the past talked to him whenever I have a question or concern. Thank you. Since we're talking about it now that you'll be able to get back to Council on those questions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Councillor Steek second round.

Councillor Steek: Thank you. Through you to the Chair. The long awaited and much vaunted report on sustainability was received as information by Executive Policy Committee and forwarded it on to the Administration for review.

I'd just like to ask the Chair if he is supportive of the recommendation in his document that suggests that MPIC start charging insurance to users of vehicles based on the mileage they drive? If that is indeed the case, would we allow exemptions for police and people for instance who use their vehicles on a regular basis? It's in your document. I'm sure you've read it. It says exactly that.

Councillor Steeves: I was trying to look for the exact clause because I don't believe that my friend has done the clause justice.

What we are suggesting with the MPIC is simply this. That other cities, other jurisdictions are doing some very creative things in terms of encouraging people not to occupy single occupancy vehicles, and to get on public transit. It's not onerous. It's not forced. It's voluntary.

What we are suggesting is, could MPIC although we fully recognize, we don't have direct jurisdiction over them, could they look at some of these things. That's all we're suggesting. I think that's perfectly reasonable.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Thank you. Committee on Fiscal Issues. No report. Motions, none. By-laws, none. Question Period. Councillor Steek

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON FISCAL ISSUES
QUESTION PERIOD**

Councillor Steek: Really just reiterating a question of the last council meeting to the Chair of Fiscal Issues. It was earlier referenced as to what's going to be evolving with the Assessment Department, and my question at that time was, what has the City incurred in the way of legal costs in battling the Hotel Association thus far to the Supreme Court? It was a simple and straightforward question. The Chair said to me, he would get back to me as to what our costs were this far. I hadn't heard, I'm simply reiterating the question.

Councillor Clement: I don't have the answer yet.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: No further questions.

Alternate Service Delivery Committee. The first time Councillor Pagtakhan, you're being initiated here today. There may be some questions of you. Present your report of January 20, 2004.

**ALTERNATE SERVICE DELIVERY COMMITTEE
DATED JANUARY 20, 2004**

**Item No. 1 – Alternate Service Delivery Policy and Process Review
File GL-5.6.1**

Councillor Pagtakhan: Thank you. It's my pleasure to introduce the Alternate Service Delivery Committee Report dated January 20, 2004.

It's pretty simple. It's pretty straightforward, it allows for a process that facilitates an open participatory inclusive process amongst all councillors. I'd like to with that just move adoption of consent agenda Item No. 1.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Councillor Wyatt.

Councillor Wyatt: I have more of a question, maybe you'll be able to answer it in closing remarks. It's to do with the old process versus the new revised process. From looking at the old process council would be consulted about four times. The new process involves council roughly by the looks of it twice being involved with regards to reviewing departments or divisions for ASD.

I'm just wondering what sort of safeguard is there in place to ensure that it's not just simply administratively that there's also council input, and that we're not missing any opportunities with regards to ASD.

Councillor Pagtakhan: Through you to my colleague from Transcona. Simply to answer that the report requires the CAO to report back to the ASD Committee in the event that the CAO recommends that not proceeding with the council approved ASD initiative. So there is that requirement that the CAO report back to ASD and for us to consider those discussions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: This is on the as amended. All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Before I call for adjournment I want to thank the Red River Community College with the journalism students. You've been here all morning. You've witnessed something you'll be experiencing later on when you take up a position maybe as a politician. I wish you well in your endeavour in journalism, and may you be a success.

With that, Councillor Eadie moves adjournment. Roll call.

ROLL CALL

Clerk: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Councillor Lazarenko, His Worship Mayor Murray, Councillors Eadie, Clement, De Smedt, Gerbasi, Lubosch, Pagtakhan, Smith, Steek, Steeves, Thomas, Vandal, Wyatt.

COUNCIL ADJOURNED AT 12:38 P.M.

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