Minute No. 289
Report – Executive Policy Committee – March 17, 2021

Item No. 4 Policy for Referendums / Plebiscites

COUNCIL DECISION:

Council concurred in the recommendation of the Executive Policy Committee and adopted the following:

1. That the Winnipeg Public Service be directed to conduct a cross jurisdictional analysis and report back to Council within 180 days with recommendations on a policy to guide the use of referendums/plebiscites, and the report also include the following:

    A. Criteria for when a referendum/plebiscite should be triggered.

    B. What types of matters should or can appear as a referendum/plebiscite.

    C. Rules related to advertising, promotion, messaging, and spending limits for respective positions.

    D. Determination of the effective/correct wording of the referendum/plebiscite question to ensure a fair and accurate answer.

    E. Whether the results are binding.

    F. Whether 50 percent plus one is a sufficient score to deem the result the decisive will of the people.

2. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

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DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

Moved by His Worship Mayor Bowman,

That the recommendation of the Executive Policy Committee be adopted.

His Worship Mayor Bowman called for the yeas and nays which were as follows:

Yea: His Worship Mayor Bowman, Councillors Allard, Browaty, Chambers, Gillingham, Gilroy, Lukes, Mayes, Nason, Orlikow, Rollins, Santos, Schreyer and Sharma. 14

Nay: Councillors Eadie and Klein 2

and the Item was declared carried.

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On March 17, 2021, the Executive Policy Committee passed the following motion:

1. That the Winnipeg Public Service be directed to conduct a cross jurisdictional analysis and report back to Council within 180 days with recommendations on a policy to guide the use of referendums/plebiscites, and the report also include the following:

    A. Criteria for when a referendum/plebiscite should be triggered.

    B. What types of matters should or can appear as a referendum/plebiscite.

    C. Rules related to advertising, promotion, messaging, and spending limits for respective positions.

    D. Determination of the effective/correct wording of the referendum/plebiscite question to ensure a fair and accurate answer.

    E. Whether the results are binding.

    F. Whether 50 percent plus one is a sufficient score to deem the result the decisive will of the people.

2. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

and submitted the matter to Council.
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DECISION MAKING HISTORY (continued):

COUNCIL DECISION:

On February 25, 2021, Council ruled automatic referral of the following motion to the Executive Policy Committee:

Moved by Councillor Nason,
Seconded by Councillor Gillingham,

WHEREAS placing referendum and plebiscite questions on the ballot provide the public an opportunity to have a direct say on policy matters important to the community;

AND WHEREAS the City of Winnipeg does not have established policy to guide the use of referendum/plebiscite question(s);

AND WHEREAS Winnipeg City Council and the residents of Winnipeg could benefit from a policy surrounding the use of these democratic tools;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Winnipeg Public Service conduct a cross jurisdictional analysis and report back to Council within 180 days with recommendations on a policy to guide the use of referendums/plebiscites, and the report also include the following:

1. Criteria for when a referendum/plebiscite should be triggered;

2. What types of matters should or can appear as a referendum/plebiscite;

3. Rules related to advertising, promotion, messaging, and spending limits for respective positions;

4. Determination of the effective/correct wording of the referendum/plebiscite question to ensure a fair and accurate answer;

5. Whether the results are binding;

6. Whether 50 percent plus one is a sufficient score to deem the result the decisive will of the people.