Minutes – Executive Policy Committee – December 10, 2021

BUDGET REVIEW

Item No. 2 Councillors' Office Resources

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE DECISION:

On July 14, 2021, the Executive Policy Committee concurred in the recommendation of the Governance Committee of Council:

1. That the issue of funding for Councillor staff resources be referred to the 2022 Budget Review Process:

    A. That the current annual CWA operating budget be examined with a view to increasing funding per ward with an additional $45,000 per ward, bringing the per capita rate up to $2.55 per capita;

    B. That the City of Winnipeg provide pension and benefits to Councillor's office staff similar to all other major Canadian cities, and the Mayor's Office employees, with funding provided corporately.

    C. That the Governance Committee be directed to examine changing the CWA Policy to enact best practices such as splitting the budget into dedicated staffing and operations budget to ensure additional funding is directed into staffing that will serve citizens directly.

    D. That Councillors be provided access to Corporate Communications staff equivalent to 2 FTE's to serve all 15 Councillor's Offices to assist with communication needs directly back to citizens.

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

DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE DECISION:

On July 14, 2021, the Executive Policy Committee concurred in the recommendation of the Governance Committee of Council.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On July 13, 2021, the Governance Committee of Council passed the following motion:

WHEREAS the increased use of social media platforms (such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and others) is providing citizens a greater opportunity to become engaged with elected officials in municipal business and the decision-making process;

AND WHEREAS the COVID-19 pandemic provided citizens additional opportunities, through the use of Zoom and Teams to engage with elected officials in municipal business and the decision-making process, with the expectation to continue offering citizens the ability to participate remotely when the pandemic is over;

AND WHEREAS with the increased use of social media platforms and remote meeting opportunities, the number of citizens inquiries and expectation of timely responses and communication from elected officials is also increasing;

AND WHEREAS a cross jurisdictional review of other Canadian City Councils conducted by the Public Service (updated with 2020 figures) below found that Winnipeg City Councillors continue to receive the second lowest level of funding per capita of $1.66 to operate their offices and is the only jurisdiction that does not provide a pension for Councillor's staff;

DECISION MAKING HISTORY (continued):

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION (continued):

2020 Cross Jurisdictional Results					
City	**Office Budget**	**Staff Budget**	**Staff Pension**	**Per Capita**	**Average Ward Size**
Ottawa	$266,565		Yes	$6.36	41,922
Manitoba MLA	$89,923	$52,416	Yes	$5.81	23,869
Toronto	$51,005	$482,000	Yes	$4.88	109,263
Calgary	$280,900		City RRSP contributions up to 7.5% of base salary	$3.22	87,314
Edmonton	$176,984		Yes	$2.36	74,954
Winnipeg	$84,924		No	$1.66	51,126
Vancouver**	$47,522	$30,000	Yes	$1.23	63,149

**In addition to the office and staff budget above, the 10 Councillors in Vancouver share 5 Assistants who are city employees paid out of a $400,000.00 budget which equates to an additional value of $40,000 per Councillor and increases the value of each Councillor's budget to $117,522 with a per capita rating of $1.86

AND WHEREAS, each City of Winnipeg City Councillor currently receives an annual budget of $84,924 to cover costs associated with running an office (telephones, printing, constituency newsletters, websites, etc.) including the hiring of an assistant;

AND WHEREAS an extensive training process and investment occurs when an Executive Assistant is hired, there has been a high turnover rate among Council Office staff, with over 50% turnover among the Councillor's Executive Assistants since this term of Council began on October 24, 2018;

AND WHEREAS Councillor's Offices are one of the primary points of contact for citizens and inadequate resourcing of Councillor's Office staff results in reduced customer service, delays in responding to citizen concerns, inability for comprehensive policy research, and increased costly retraining;

DECISION MAKING HISTORY (continued):

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION (continued):

AND WHEREAS an increase of $45,000 per ward, dedicated exclusively to staff salaries that will serve citizens directly, will result in a per capita allocation for Winnipeg of $2.55, between the allocations for Edmonton and Calgary;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That the issue of funding for Councillor staff resources be referred to the 2022 Budget Review Process:

    A. That the current annual CWA operating budget be examined with a view to increasing funding per ward with an additional $45,000 per ward, bringing the per capita rate up to $2.55 per capita;

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