

Minutes – Council – November 23, 2023

STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

MOTIONS

Minute No. 41

Moved by Councillor Lukes,
Seconded by Councillor Browaty,

WHEREAS in accordance with the Fees and Charges By-law 196/2008, the Chief Financial Officer of the City of Winnipeg is authorized to increase annually any fee imposed by an amount equal to or less than the rate of inflation;

AND WHEREAS the annual inflation rate is defined as the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the previous calendar year;

AND WHEREAS the CPI for 2022 was 7.8% as per Statistics Canada Table 18-10-0005-01 which would equate to a 25-cent increase to the full cash fare;

AND WHEREAS the Chief Financial Officer for the City of Winnipeg has directed Winnipeg Transit to increase the cash fares for Winnipeg Transit by 10 cents effective January 1, 2024 to bring the full cash fare to \$3.25;

AND WHEREAS the average income of bus passengers in Winnipeg is \$36,360, which is significantly lower than the national average for transit users across other cities, according to Statistics Canada;

AND WHEREAS lower income Winnipeg residents are experiencing continuing inflationary pressures;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That effective January 1, 2024 the WINNPASS rates for both the monthly pass and e-cash rate be held to 2023 dollar amounts for 2024 (providing a discount rate of 51.72% off the full fare equivalent products).
2. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

The Speaker ruled automatic referral of the motion to the Standing Policy Committee on Public Works, in accordance with Rule 16.1 of the Procedure By-law.

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Standing Policy Committee on Public Works – Motions (continued):

Moved by Councillor Browaty:

That Rule 16(1) of the Procedure By-law be suspended to consider the motion moved by Councillor Lukes and seconded by Councillor Browaty, at this time.

Carried

In amendment,

Moved by Councillor Allard,
Seconded by Councillor Gilroy,

WHEREAS more people who choose riding the bus results in reductions in traffic;

AND WHEREAS Council voted to direct the transportation master plan to achieve a modal shift by 2030 of 50 percent;

AND WHEREAS in the May 26, 2022 Council Minutes, on page 6 of Item 1 of the Report of the Standing Policy Committee on Public Works dated May 4, 2022, the public service has indicated that should a reduction in fares be determined to be a policy that Council wishes to pursue, significant additional study would be needed, and it should only be undertaken in concert with the transition to the WTMP route network”;

AND WHEREAS transit has identified opportunities where the transit utility could increase revenues to transit by reducing fares and require a consultant assignment in order to present a plan to Council;

AND WHEREAS this confirms that transit is losing riders to due transit fares being too high;

AND WHEREAS increases in transit fares reduce demand, to the point where transit has confirmed in an administrative report that in some cases, the utility is losing money because the rates are too high;

AND WHEREAS there is a new provincial government that has demonstrated that it is interest in making life affordable for Manitobans, and Council should be ready to ask for transit fare reductions or free transit to Provincial and Federal Governments;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Motion 4 regarding maintaining 2024 transit rates at 2023 levels be amended as follows:

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Standing Policy Committee on Public Works – Motions (continued):

- Delete the first resolve and replace with the following:
 - “1. That WINNpass users have their fees adjusted to \$0, so that they may ride the bus for free;”
- Add the following resolves and renumber the remaining resolves accordingly:
 - “2. That the \$1.4 million that have been freed by the former government funding for net new road expenses for the Route 90 Road widening and the Chief Peguis extension, and that in the event that spending authorizations have already been given by Council on these new funds, that the funds required for the consultant study be funded by the mill rate stabilisation reserve fund;
 - 3. That the consultant report assignment that would assist Winnipeg Transit to consider the reduction of cash transit fares by approximately \$0.25 cents annually until such time as the cash fare reaches the optimal rate for the utility referenced in the May 26, 2022 Council Minutes, on page 6 of Item 1 of the Report of the Standing Policy Committee on Public Works dated May 4, 2022.
 - 4. That this consultant assignment explore the budget implications of having a free transit system.”

With the concurrence of the seconder, Councillor Gilroy, and with the permission of Council, Councillor Allard withdrew the above motion.

In amendment,

Moved by Councillor Gilroy,
Seconded by Councillor Allard,

WHEREAS the May 2023 report from the Provincial Government indicates that the cost of living increase was 3.4%;

AND WHEREAS the public service projects the WINNpass costs to be \$4.1 million in 2023;

AND WHEREAS WINNpass applicants need to meet the low-income cost of living threshold before being eligible and that inflation affects this population more than households with higher incomes;

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Standing Policy Committee on Public Works – Motions (continued):

AND WHEREAS the cost of reducing the projected cost of the WINNpass transit fares by the 3.4 % increase in the cost of living, would be \$139,400;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That WINNpass rates for both the monthly pass and e-cash be reduced by the cost of living increase, or 3.4%, effective January 1, 2024.
2. That the Low Income Transit Pass Council Policy be amended to reduce WINNpass rates by the cost of living increase for every year thereafter.
3. That the reduction in WINNpass rates be funded by the annual transit funding increase.

With the concurrence of the seconder, Councillor Allard, and with the permission of Council, Councillor Gilroy withdrew the above motion.

The motion for the adoption of the motion moved by Councillor Lukes and seconded by Councillor Browaty was put.

Councillor Allard called for the yeas and nays, which were as follows:

Yea: His Worship Mayor Gillingham, Councillors Browaty, Chambers, Dobson, Duncan, Eadie, Lukes, Mayes, Orlikow, Rollins, Santos, Schreyer, Sharma and Wyatt

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Nay: Councillors Allard and Gilroy.

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Carried