Minutes – Council – February 22, 2024

Minute No. 153
Report – Executive Policy Committee – February 13, 2024

Item No. 5 City of Winnipeg Charter Amendment – Ability to Pay

COUNCIL DECISION:

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

1. That the Council Motion of January 25, 2024, be received as information.

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DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

Moved by His Worship Mayor Gillingham,
That the recommendation of the Executive Policy Committee be adopted.

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

Yea: His Worship Mayor Gillingham, Councillors Browaty, Chambers, Dobson, Lukes, Santos, Sharma and Wyatt 8

Nay: Councillors Allard, Eadie, Gilroy, Mayes, Orlikow, Rollins and Schreyer 7

and the motion was declared carried.

The following persons submitted a communication in opposition to the matter:

- David Grant
- Vicki Poirier

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On February 13, 2024, the Executive Policy Committee recommended to Council:

1. That the Council Motion of January 25, 2024, be received as information.

David Grant submitted a communication with respect to the matter.

COUNCIL DECISION:

On January 25, 2024, Council ruled automatic referral of the following motion to the Executive Policy Committee:

Moved by Councillor Eadie,
Seconded by Councillor Gilroy,

WHEREAS a city-as-a-whole needs to work towards being a place where individuals give according to their abilities, and receive according to their needs in order for all those who live and visit to flourish;

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DECISION MAKING HISTORY (continued):

COUNCIL DECISION (continued):

AND WHEREAS a user's ability to pay can be measured in several different ways including income, property value, and affordable rent;

AND WHEREAS programs designed for individuals to come and plead poverty for reductions or waiving of fees are cumbersome and generally ineffective when considering systems wide need to consider the various levels of ability to pay, but the programs are used to deal with the inability of a user to pay their bills in arrears;

AND WHEREAS prior to 2012, all residential solid waste collection was funded by users' property taxes;

AND WHEREAS the vast majority of Winnipeggers buy homes based on their ability to pay, which is reflected in the market value assessment of the property;

AND WHEREAS flat fees make city services unsustainable for those with a lesser ability to pay, including renters who pay the lowest rents in areas of the city where the value of the properties are lesser than other areas of the city;

AND WHEREAS solid waste diversion services have been charged as a flat fee, depending on the type of residential property, since 2012, with a future curb side compost collection service being considered as a flat fee;

AND WHEREAS Legal Services reports that it is illegal to charge variable fees depending on ability to pay measurements such as the assessed value of a home as laid out in the City of Winnipeg Charter (excerpt attached as Appendix A);

AND WHEREAS section 210(1)(a) of the City of Winnipeg Charter states:

> 210(1) The city may, if authorized by council, establish
>
> (a) the method of calculating the prices, rates, fees, deposits or other charges, which may vary depending on the type of use or consumption, the quantity used or consumed, or the type of property in which use or consumption takes place; and

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DECISION MAKING HISTORY (continued):

COUNCIL DECISION (continued):

AND WHEREAS a potential amendment may be to add the text ", and the user's ability to pay" at the end of subsection 210(1)(a);

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Council request the Province of Manitoba to amend section 210(1)(a) of the City of Winnipeg Charter so that a user's ability to pay is also taken into consideration.