COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WINNIPEG
Thursday, February 22, 2024

The Council met at 9:42 a.m.

The Clerk advised the Speaker that a quorum was present.

The Speaker called the meeting to order.

In accordance with Rule 11.1 of the City of Winnipeg Procedure By-law No. 50/2007, the Speaker acknowledged that we are in Treaty One Territory, the home and traditional lands of the Anishinaabe (Ojibwe), Ininew (Cree), and Dakota peoples, and in the National Homeland of the Red River Métis. Our drinking water comes from Shoal Lake 40 First Nation, in Treaty Three Territory.

The opening prayer was read by Councillor Browaty.

ROLL CALL

Clerk: Madam Speaker Councillor Sharma, His Worship Mayor Gillingham, Councillors Allard, Browaty, Chambers, Dobson, Eadie, Gilroy, Lukes, Mayes, Orlikow, Rollins, Santos, Schreyer, and Wyatt.

INTRODUCTION AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Madam Speaker: Thank you. We have two pages returning to be with us here today. Please welcome Koeun Lee, of École Secondaire Oak Park High School who resides in the Charleswood-Tuxedo-Westwood ward and also Kosi Udeh of Collège St. Norbert Collegiate who resides in the St. Norbert-Seine…Seine River ward. Thank you for joining Council and for serving today. We'll now move on to morning announcements. Mr. Mayor, you have the floor.

Mayor Gillingham: Good morning Madam Speaker and good morning to my colleagues and to everyone who's joined us today. Thank you so much. I want to begin by congratulating the Kinsmen Club of Winnipeg who are celebrating their 100th anniversary this year. As many of us know, the Kinsmen have been essential in so many community driven projects over the century, including current work on the Toba Centre, Ronald McDonald House, the Bruce Oake Recovery Centre. And I had the honor of hosting the Kinsmen here at City Hall earlier this week where I, along with many council colleagues who had joined the meeting as well, presented the Mayor's Community Service Award to the Kinsmen to recognize their century of contributions, and to thank them for all that they have done and the ways they have contributed to the health and the welfare and the betterment of our city. Speaking of anniversaries, this year also marks the 100th anniversary of the Royal Canadian Air Force, another organization who have played such an important part, not only across our nation, but have been an instrumental part of our community as well. The RCAF has had a strong presence in Winnipeg from almost the start. And 17 Wing is actually one of the first air force bases in all of Canada. And to recognize this occasion Councillor Dobson, our military liaison, and I will be hosting a small celebratory event with the executive members of 17 Wing tomorrow evening. We're heading into the final weekend of Festival du Voyageur and so if you haven't gone already I encourage all my council colleagues to try to take a moment to attend. I had the chance to participate in a few different of Festival's events over the past weekend and it was a great time. The weather has been warm but it's been really ideal to be outside enjoying Festival so, again, credit to Breanne, the Executive Director there, and all the other team members at…at Festival for all the work that…that they do throughout the year to put on this great event and this great celebration, so. Encourage Winnipeggers to get out and enjoy the last few days at Festival...

Councillor Allard: Hé Ho!

Mayor Gillingham: Hé Ho! You beat me to it Councillor. Councillor Allard beat me to it, but that's it. It is Hé Ho. Thank you very much. Budget consultations. I just wanted to make a final note as is related to that. Since our last Council meeting the preliminary 2024 to 2027 Multiyear Balanced Budget has been released and our Standing Policy Committee meetings to review the budget will begin shortly. I'd encourage any members of the public to, maybe in the gallery or watching on livestream, to visit the City's website Winnipeg.ca/budget2024 for more information about the proposed budget and opportunities to share their feedback, either in person, in writing or by completing the consultation survey. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Next is Councillor Wyatt.

Councillor Wyatt: Madam Speaker, in the 1980s I was a high school student involved in the Global Peace Movement that grew out of a real and justified fear of a nuclear apocalypse. The global protests and pressure worked, or at least helped, the cause of peace. In 1987 the United States and Russia, at that time the Soviet Union, signed an Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, the INF Treaty. It was an arms control treaty that banned nuclear missiles that could reach up to 5,500 kilometers. Four years ago, this month, in February of 2019, the United States pulled out of the treaty citing Russia's failure to comply with the treaty. Russia pulled out of the treaty shortly thereafter. Two years ago, this very month, the Russians launched an unprovoked attack on Ukraine, a war that rages on to this day, threatening the potential for escalation that would involve nuclear weapons. One year ago, this very month, in February of 2023, the Russian president Putin announced his decision to pull Russia out of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, START. The START treaty was and is the last remaining nuclear arms control pact between Russia and the United States. In October of this year, of the last year, Russia pulled out of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, an agreement the Americans unfortunately never signed. And now, one week ago, Russia announced plans to launch an anti-satellite missile system. This would be a clear violation of the Outer Space Treaty signed in 1967 and has the signature of 119 nations including Russia, the USA and Canada. Mr. Mayor, members of Council, the world is going backwards and is on a very dangerous course. And most experts in this field believe we are witnessing the beginning of a new nuclear arms race, but one that is completely unprecedented, involving the United States, Russia, and China, as all 3 nations are now actively pursuing plans of expansion of so…of so-called enhancements of their respective nuclear weapons…

Madam Speaker: Thank you, Councillor Wyatt. If you could wrap up, thank you.

Councillor Wyatt: One more point, Madam Speaker. And less than a week ago there was the assassination of the respected and well known de facto official opposition leader of Russia, Alexei Navalny, who was being held in prison, in Russia, after he stepped off a plane after he was recovered from being attempted assassination of poisoning in Germany. They told him not to go back. He went back and the moment he stepped off the plane he was arrested. I would like, Madam Speaker, for us to rise to give a moment of silence to Alexei Navalny who, no doubt, was one of the most courageous figures in our time.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, Councillor Wyatt. As you know, a moment of silence is not during announcement period. Thank you for your remarks. I'd like to move on to the condolence motion…

Councillor Wyatt: I would still like a moment of silence, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: …that we have for…moved by Councillor Allard, seconded by Councillor Mayes. And it's a…Mr. Clerk, if you could please read it into the record. Moment of silence for Councillor Eveline…Evelyne Reese. Thank you.

MOTIONS

Moved by Councillor Allard,
Seconded by Councillor Mayes,

THAT Council place on record its profound sorrow at the death of former Councillor Evelyne Reese (Eveline Marie), which occurred on January 29, 2024.

Evelyne Reese served as Councillor in the Winakwa Ward, St. Boniface Community, from October 23, 1974 to October 26, 1977. Evelyne was re-elected as Councillor for the Langevin Ward from October 22, 1980 to October 22, 1986. Evelyne also served as Councillor in the Riel Community for the period October 25, 1989 to October 25, 1995.

This Council extends to her family, its deepest sympathy and condolences in their bereavement.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, and now please rise for a moment of silence.

MINUTES

Councillor Allard moves that the Minutes of the meeting held on January 25, 2024 be taken as read and confirmed.

Madam Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried. We'll move into delegations. I'd like to call forward Kelly Ryback who is appearing in person in support of Item 6 of the report of the Executive Policy Committee dated February 13th, 2024. It's regarding a Living Wage. Welcome.

DELEGATIONS

Kelly Ryback: Good morning. Thank you. Good morning Mayor and Council. Appreciate the opportunity to do this. I've lived on both sides of collective bargaining agreements. I had unionized staff and I was also a union member on the management side and contributed to and had to live through and make sure that we understood and then live by the collective bargaining agreements. Pay changes are usually done through a variety of means. One is through pay scale increments, which the City has in their collective agreement, through promotion, through collective bargaining, job reclassification or job performance. For the Council to consider to establish a living wage is really, actually, it's not in your lane. That's a provincial government and requires federal government. But I want to say that, of the 632 employees, and also try to mandate this through contractors and organizations that receive funding from the City, current living wage of $19.21 where the minimum wage is 15.30. Of those 632 employees some are summer students living at home. Some are young adults living at home. Some are retirees using this as a side hustle. Some are…whose partners make more than the living wage so the average salary in the home is above the living wage. In those cases the living wage discussion is not applicable. Of the remaining, just read how many people are actually the earner in a four-person home that is earning below the minimum wage, below the living wage. That's very short-lived. Secondly, there is a wage scale. I'll give you an example on page 123 of the collective bargaining agreement. This is 311 operators and I was a call centre manager for 12 years. Yes, the beginning wage of a CSR 1 is $16.48. But the second wage increment is above the living wage of 19.58. Again, it's short-lived. If you do this, then I would also expect that those people making 19.21 an hour and more, are going to grieve, saying I've been here for tenure, I have more responsibility. Why would a summer student be making 19.21 an hour? How many of those Winnipeg City employees would that apply to? Well, first, for every 1,000 grievances that's a cost of 3.64 million dollars additional cost to adjust the pay scale on those already making 19.21 or more. For that group of 632, make the assumption that 232 of them are seasonal working four or five months and the 400 are full-time. Just to do that for your existing 632, let's say the average increase is $2 an hour, conservatively, working full-time. That's an additional 1.7…$1,780,800 additional expense to the City of Winnipeg plus pension. Then, when you look at trying to enforce this through your suppliers and the organizations you fund, for every 100 employees that's (inaudible) to, using the same assumptions, there's an additional $364,000 to those organizations and companies that they're going to either pass on to the City, or the City is going to have to increase funding to the organizations. I sit on the Board of the Grant's Mill along with Councillor Dobson. We have three employees who work seasonally. We would require an additional $4,500 in funding to meet this requirement of the living wage. We don't have that money. Apply that to every museum, community club, city rink, and anything else that you provide funding to. You're going to have to increase funding. When you put all that together you could be looking at an additional cost of 10 million dollars annually. There's a lot of 10 million dollar requests in this city that are not getting done. Think of the other things you can do if you were inclined to increase this expense. You could do the warranted but unfunded transportation engineering improvement programs. You can improve the sidewalks that take three years to get looked at that are dangerous. Et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. It…this is beyond giving a living wage to 632 employees, of which most of them don't apply to the discussion. The City of Winnipeg has one of the healthiest pensions. The City of Winnipeg has benefits that don't exist in private enterprise. There are several that make it beyond the wages they're making. Plus, most of these jobs, within the second to fourth pay increment they're above 19.21. Also want to caution the City, back years ago you approved that the minimum pay to any City employee would be $15, above the minimum wage. By the time that was implemented the provincial government raised the minimum wage to $15.30. Again, it's not your lane. It's not necessary. And there…

Councillor Mayes: That's just not factually right. And I think I have a point of order. That increase, in fact, took effect on January 1st. The minimum wage increase to $15 took effect October 1st. So, no, it hadn't been overrun.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Thank you Councillor Mayes, you will have an opportunity to ask questions as well.

Kelly Ryback: .Thank you Mayes…Councillor Mayes. (Inaudible) in the collective agreement there is a wage adjustment of 1.4 million dollars allocated based on various jobs. You're already doing it. And, again, it's not your lane. It's not applicable. It's applicable to very few, who are likely seasonal. Just to finish off that you're going to hear from CUPE President Gord Delbridge following me, and I respect and admire that he's trying to do what he can for his membership. He's going to likely say about three things. One, he's going to say that this money's already allocated. I've already discussed this. It's being done. In fact, it might already be in place based on when it would start with the Committee and the collective agreement. He's going to say that the costs of living or what he submitted to EPC was $5,688 a month in expenses. Well that's far beyond what the Superintendent of Bankruptcy for the…Federally says that the costs of living for a family of 4 is $4,725, including Quebec and Ontario and B.C. Thirdly, he may say that, well, if you paid us better we

would have better performance. That's a very poor attitude, that people are not performing well because they believe they're not being paid enough. That culture needs to change in the City if that, in fact, exists. And by the way, I've seen $30 an hour employees perform poorly so it's not an indication of not being paid enough. But I encourage you, support the recommendation to receive as information and leave it at that. Thank you very much.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Questions? Councillor Schreyer.

Councillor Schreyer: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I do respect Mr. Ryback's, well, continued contributions here in delegation. Among a number of things, he's talked about, talked about the change in culture we need in terms of how much we…we need to make in order to…to do our jobs. Is Mr. Ryback aware the…the extent that how…how much certain aspects of the City budget have increased over others? As an example, how much construction costs have increased compared to labour costs? Would he like to talk about that, when it comes to keeping our budget in line in order for us to, you know…How much do we really need to pay…to pay in construction in order to have a sustainable…sustainable infrastructure and a sustainable future, as an example? Can he talk about the comparison between labour increases in our adult lifetime compared to construction costs? Capital costs?

Kelly Ryback: I'm not fully familiar with construction costs and how it applies to the City budget, Councillor Schreyer. I know you've raised that item several times. It does require an answer. But, it's not applicable really to the…this living wage discussion as I know construction workers make beyond 19.21 an hour.

Councillor Schreyer: Fair enough. But we did talk about, we did hear Mr. Ryback talk about, culture needs to change in terms of how much people need to make in order to do their jobs. Is he aware that the cost of construction, not construction workers' wages but the cost of construction of…in regards to the City budget, has increased somewhere around ten times higher rate than…than City workers' wages or general industrial workers' wages?

Kelly Ryback: Yeah, again, it's…I can't tell you exactly what construction costs are, but it…it is on the rise. And this would only add to it if…if there are, in fact, people earning that, below 19.21, it's going to go up even more because, you do a contract for construction and, if they have…they have minimum wage or slightly more employees, they're going to have to raise them to 19.21. Those costs are just going to increase even further. And it's going to be added on, too. The owners aren't going to absorb that cost. In any of your organizations that you're targeting as far as contractors are the ones that you're funding.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Next question. Councillor Mayes.

Councillor Mayes: I echo Councillor Schreyer. Thanks for your support on a number of initiatives here, running tracks to street names, to a number of things. But on this one I…I do have two questions, which is, you make an argument that's often made here about compression. If we raise the lowest, then everyone else will increase. Is…Isn't the provision you cite, to me, kind of makes Mr. Delbridge's point. That fact he's tabled it it's on our agenda…There's a million dollars set aside to have certain classifications increased. Yet, we don't then have further money set aside to deal with the compression that that would result. So, haven't the parties already agreed to selectively increase some of the wage rates without any allowance for provision for compression?

Kelly Ryback: There's $400,000 allocated to concrete finishers, foreperson series, trades classifications, wastewater treatment operators. Page 100 of the collective agreement. Page 102, 1 million dollars classified for 311 Customer Service Reps, instructor guards, recreation technicians. B and C, library workers, and any other classification mutually agreed to between the parties. Combined, 1.4 million dollars through the life of the agreement, in perpetuity. But at least that's 1.4 through the life of the agreement for the number of years it's currently in left. And that may already be done based on the committee that was formed to do this. However, as I believe the…the Mayor stated as this was in the news, it would cause, or could cause, that those making 19.21 an hour or more are going to seek further compensation because a summer student coming in making 19.21 an hour versus a five-year employee with much more responsibility is going to say, why are we paid equal? I think I get $23 an hour. You are opening a can of worms you may not put the lid back on. And, as I have said, for every 1,000 employees this is applicable to it's a 3.7 million dollars additional expense on a conservative $2 an hour increase.

Councillor Mayes: The weakness with that of, course, is that we actually just recently went through this, which was, we increased wages from 11.90 to $15 an hour, on the first of January, '22, I believe. Later…later in the year the Province increased the minimum wage. I'm aware of no grievances whatsoever that were filed between January 1st and October saying, wait, wait, I used to have a gap of a buck and a half over them and now I don't have any gap at all. So, rather extravagant costing you've given us, but recent history would suggest nobody grieved when we increased the rate to $15 an hour. There is no compression grievance that was made. So, I appreciate that that could happen. Someone could do

that. I don't know how they would found that under the collective agreement. But recent experience, little noted by many, but recent experience when we increased to $15 an hour, there were no grievances.

Kelly Ryback: Well, I guess if this goes through we'll have to wait and see, but that's a very dangerous area to think may or may not happen. But I also want to inform…We'll go back to the contractors, subcontractors, and the organizations you fund. Those are expenses going to be added on that are not included. As I said, just Grant's Mill with three employees, we need $4,500 for a four-month of the year operation. So size that out and add it in.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Next is Councillor Lukes.

Councillor Lukes: It's more of a did you know. And this is news to me, but did you know that I'm not made aware of any grievances that occur on anything? So, as far as I'm aware Councillors aren't made aware of any…any grievances that come forward. I've never, ever had anyone tell me there's a grievance on this or that. So, again, selective information around here maybe. I don't know. But, just, did you know?

Kelly Ryback: Understood. I also want to let you know that when I entered the workforce I was a junior employee making $15,000 a year when minimum wage was about $4.25. And I went through college and high school making $3 and $4 an hour. What I did, because I needed to…I wanted to earn more, I took a second job. To earn more, I…I had a second job when I had two kids and married, because that's what I chose to do. That…You have things in place in order to raise funds, but, I think you're going through a slippery slope and…and not knowing what could happen with regards to those employees who are making 19.21. But still, for the 632 employees it's over a million dollars beyond the collective agreement, and it could go beyond with, we say, with grievances or whatever, it could be very large. But it…Size out what it would be for your contractors, subcontractors and the organizations you fund because that's not included in the 632 employees. And it will be passed on to the City, or we request additional funding.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Councillor Allard, followed by Councillor Eadie.

Councillor Allard: Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker. Through you to the presenter, would the presenter not agree that lifting people out of poverty, giving them a living wage, would lead to a healthier society? One that has less addictions to methamphetamines, opioids, less homelessness, and also the potential reduction in costs in our emergency services? And would that not be worth it, to look at lifting people out of poverty in order for people to have a good life and not engage in…not end up engaging in these types of very unfortunate circumstance…circumstances? Thanks.

Madam Speaker: Thank you.

Kelly Ryback: Yeah. That's a possibility. I don't know how many that applies to of the 632 employees that are currently making under 19.21 but in the future will be making 19.21 and above just based on pay increments. But if there's examples of City employees of the 632 that fall into those categories, then there's other services available to them and there should be extra help.

Madam Speaker: Yes, second question.

Councillor Allard: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Through you to the presenter, I heard the presenter say something along the lines of not having information about other income holders and not necessarily being relevant to the household if the person is receiving a living wage or not. Would the presenter be supportive of, say, a living wage where there was a cost…a LICO test, a low income cut-off test, for that…for that worker in order to receive that wage?

Kelly Ryback: I'm sorry, can you ask him to clarify? I didn't quite get it…

Madam Speaker: Councillor Allard could you clarify the question please?

Councillor Allard: Yes. Thanks, Madam Speaker. Through you to the presenter, I'd like to know further to the presenter's comment of not knowing whether or not a living wage would bring a family out of poverty because there may or may not be other people in that household. Would the presenter support a living wage for those families where there is the…the threshold…where they meet the threshold of the low-income cutoff where many of our City services offer half fares, for example on the WINNpass?

Madam Speaker: Councillor Wyatt moves five-minute extension. All in favour? Contrary? Carried. Mr. Ryback.

Kelly Ryback: That's more of a case-by-case basis. But there's other ways that people can earn more money if it's applicable to one, so.

Madam Speaker: Yes. Final question.

Councillor Allard: Yes. When we…when we looked at case-by-case basis we find similarities of case-by-cases. I'm offering a very specific case of an employee whose household does not reach the low income cut-off. Therefore their family is poor. Would the presenter support giving that employee a wage where they can pay the rent and buy the groceries?

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Mr. Ryback.

Kelly Ryback: That's up to the employee to find the means to do it. It's not a…a City mandate. It shouldn't be a City mandate on…on that kind of case.

Madam Speaker: Next is Councillor Eadie.

Councillor Eadie: Yes, Madam Speaker. I'm wondering if the delegation knows that during, I believe it was the 2014 to '28 Council era, that there was, presented by all of the unions, that the level of grievances within the city had gone way up and none of them, as far as I know of, and I brought this forward to Council, I was asked to by the leaders of our collective bargaining units, and that they were mostly about inappropriate…Our…Not really…really related to I'm getting paid the same as a beginner? None of that was part of their thing. It was more grievance about other City issues. Other employment issues.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, Councillor Eadie. Mr. Ryback, your response.

Kelly Ryback: Was I aware of that at the time? 2014, 2018, specific to that? No.

Councillor Eadie: Madam Speaker, I'm wondering if the delegation knows, Madam Speaker, that people who are filing grievances, they usually contact City Councillors that they believe are labour friendly? They don't usually ask for assistance related to grievances when…from those they think are not really in support of labour.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Mr. Ryback.

Kelly Ryback: Okay. I…They count…Contacting labour friendly Councillors? If that's the case, that's the case. But I'm just…it's…it's an offer…it's…it's something to consider of what could be grieved based on the scope creep of increasing the bottom level to the…to the higher…to the higher number. And then the cost to organizations and contractors. But I can tell you that, you know, we can go to the other end of it too. There's 4,200 City employees earning over $75,000 a year. We can talk about people being paid very much more than the private enterprise. So, this needs to…if you're going to consider this this needs to be sized-out, covering all factions, and then take it further. If you can get commitment from the union that there won't be grievances, okay, that takes care of part of my argument. And I'm only reiterating what some Councillors and the Mayor have said during this process as…as a possibility.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Thank you. Next is Councillor Gilroy, followed by Councillor Wyatt.

Councillor Gilroy: And just, are…are you aware that the City is having major issues in retaining good staff? And part of it is due to a…having a fair living wage? To make sure that we have qualified 311 workers that want to come to work every day. To ensure that we have those phones being answered. To make sure that those people are not going home and using food banks and are hungry. That is critical. To make sure that our transit drivers, who face issues every single day, have a fair living wage. To ensure that we can get clerks to staff the positions that we need to be staffed here in Winnipeg. We have a major issue in the inner city where we can't get staff to work our pools within some of the inner city…inner city areas. This is a critical issue in terms of making sure that we fund appropriately staff to do the jobs that we are requiring to do. Many of the jobs nowadays, we're asking them to go more above and beyond. We're having issues, major issues, around poverty. Major issues around addictions. Major issues around mental health issues. And that we're needing to expect our staff to deliver on several fronts every single day…We have to make sure that we are paying a fair living wage to make sure that we actually keep those staff and keep them employed because they're dealing with really tough situations. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Councillor Wyatt moves five-minute extension. All in favour? Contrary? Carried. Mr. Ryback?

Kelly Ryback: Thank…thank you for your thoughts, Councillor Gilroy. Madam Chair, through you, but I…Madam Chair, the positions that Councillor Gilroy identified are already being addressed through this special wage allowance. It's already done through that means. Secondly, by their second wage increment they are above the living wage. Schedule's right

here. Page 123. As I said, 16.48 to start. A 311 operator. Second pay increment is 19.58 and that does not include the special wage allowance increment that's being…that's being put forward. It's already addressed.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Ryback.

Kelly Ryback: And I've managed…I've managed…I've managed call centre offices.

Madam Speaker: Mr. Ryback…The question's been answered. Is there a follow up question, Councillor Gilroy?

Councillor Gilroy: Yeah. Does the living change…Does the living wage change year to year? Does it?

Kelly Ryback: Everything changes to year to year.

Councillor Gilroy: Thank you. Thank you.

Kelly Ryback: That's why you have a collective agreement for multiple years that's included in the (inaudible). It's included. It's already (inaudible) there Councillor…

Madam Speaker: We have another question. Councillor Wyatt, you have the floor.

Councillor Wyatt: Thank you. Thank you for your presentation. Do you possibly see the hypocrisy in the fact that the very people who wrote the report to us who receive this as…as information are probably, right now, earning, four or five or six, maybe even seven times, the rate of the living wage?

Kelly Ryback: Who wrote the report (inaudible)…

Councillor Wyatt: Yeah. Who wrote the report that's telling us to receive the information probably have…are earning four or five or six or seven times the rate of the minimum wage. Do you not see the hypocrisy in that?

Kelly Ryback: I do see hypocrisy in that, Madam Chair, and the (inaudible) with the hypocrisy of the Councillors that put this forward who earn over $100,000 a year and did not attend the EPC meeting to discuss the motion they're putting forward. That's another hypocrisy.

Councillor Wyatt: But at least they had the courage to do it. And are you also aware that the City of Winnipeg is no longer, to Councillor Gilroy's point, the employer of choice? So the very positions that you mentioned, like, for example, lifeguards, that we're (inaudible), not just retention, but problems in a terms of attraction to those positions. Are you aware of that?

Kelly Ryback: That's possible. And it could also be attributed to other factors beyond…beyond the wage increase. It could be work demands. It could be leadership. There's several reasons why somebody leaves employment, not just wage.

Councillor Wyatt: Would be directly related to the…

Madam Speaker: Final question, Councillor Wyatt.

Councillor Wyatt: Could be directly related to the right wage. Are you okay with the fact that City workers today are having to use food banks in order to survive because they don't have a living wage? Are you okay with that?

Kelly Ryback: Well, that's a bigger issue beyond the City of Winnipeg. And I volunteer at Agape Table, on a regular basis contribute to Agape Table, and we see people who are the working poor. But again, how many…Of the 632, how many is this really applicable to and then not being addressed through special wage increase or wage increments as in the collective bargaining agreement? And again, I…right now, based on everything that's in play, you don't have enough information in order to go forward with this.

Madam Speaker: Okay, that concludes Question Period. Mr. Ryback, thank you for your presentation.

Kelly Ryback: Okay, thank you.

Madam Speaker: Our next speaker is Mr. Gord Delbridge, President, CUPE Local 500 in opposition to Item 6 of the Report of the Executive Policy Committee dated February 13th, 2024 regarding the living wage. Welcome.

Gord Delbridge: Thank you. Thank you, Mayor Gillingham and Council, for this opportunity to present before you on this very important initiative that, not only benefits the City workforce, but it benefits our city as a whole and contributes to the overall prosperity and well-being of our community. I'm here to discuss the merits of becoming a living wage employer. Currently, there are approximately 11 classifications within the City of Winnipeg that are not paid a living wage. Many of those classifications, as we've heard, we are having recruitment…recruitment and retention issues. We've seen just last year, many of our outdoor pools shut down because the service industry was paying better. And Winnipeggers depend on these services. And we should…If we're competing with the service industry that's paying better, because I think they got tips and…and so on, and we're not able to provide those services because we're not paying the…a wage to compete in this labour market right now, that's…that's a real concern. Many of these City staff are full-time and year-round employees. They're struggling to make ends meet and are having a hard time as they're trying to access food banks. It's becoming more and more difficult to access food banks now. We've got members in 311. Many e-mails that I've been getting from them saying can you please help? We're having a hard time trying to access food…food banks. We work full-time. The frontline service that Winnipeggers reach out to is 311 workers and they're going home at the end of the day wondering whether or not they're going to pay their rent late or buy…stop at the grocery store. And that's a concern. These are municipal employees. This shouldn't be happening. For anyone to suggest that the, you know, local (inaudible) jobs are only worked by…seasonally by kids living in their parents' basement for weekend beer money, this is unequivocally not true. And I…I could…many of these workers take, you know, great offense to that suggestion. The truth is, a majority of these workers work full-time, year-round, getting paid these low wages. And many of them, a majority of them, are women. (Inaudible) can refer to…I…I did give some handouts so if you can refer to page three of the Council Agenda…Agenda, October 29th, you'll see Administration's calculations on what it costs to implement a $15 an hour wage. And that started in January of '23. $350,000 to come up with the…another $2 an hour. There were no grievances. And there…there were no grievances. And that took into consideration compounding costs for that as well. We looked at our last round of collective bargaining. It's true, we did negotiate the $1,000,000 special wage adjustment, and that will assist with the cost of getting us closer to becoming a living wage employer. So, the…the cost will be minimal. It's not enough to get us there. And if you look at the, you know, the…that report, you can see Administration, they said in that report that contracted City services are primarily all paid a living wage already. It says right in that report there. You can read it yourself. Number five on the first…on…on page five. That first bullet states around between 2 and $300,000 because we're primarily in the construction industry. They're all paid more than the living wage. Maybe a few outside contractors that would require a top-up and wouldn't cost very much at all. We would not be the first municipal…municipality in Canada to implement the living wage policy. In the same EPC Agenda on page four of the City's Material Management, well, eight jurisdictions have a living wage. Last month our national research with CUPE found that across the country there are 19 municipalities that are classified as living wage employers across our nation. I'd also like to point out that in the City's own document, OurWinnipeg, page 25 section 3.13, Poverty Reduction, develop the criteria to achieve a living wage standard for employees of the City for those awarded contracts and subcontracts of the City. This was done and passed by Council May 26 of '22. The City of Winnipeg is the largest municipal…one of the largest municipal employers in Manitoba. We need to lead by example. We need to take the steps to become a living wage employer and lift people up and promote people to get the Winnipeg that we all want. 81 percent of Winnipeggers agree with the City of Winnipeg becoming a living wage employer. We did a Probe Research poll back in 2018. So, I'd…I'd like to ask you and…Do you stand with 19 of Winnipeggers that disagree, or do you stand with the 81 percent of Winnipeggers that want to see the City of Winnipeg become a living wage employer? Please lead by example. Lift these few people up out of poverty. Let's ensure that we've got the services provided here for Winnipeggers as they need to be. We've been running into problems, recruitment, retention issues. The cost is going to be minimal. At the very least…And you look at the documents that I presented before you. It's the ethical thing to do. It's the right thing to do. It's what Winnipeggers want. That's it for me. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Delbridge. Councillor Schreyer, followed by Councillor Wyatt.

Councillor Schreyer: Thank you, Madam Speaker. In the last decade, as I've been predicting year by year, in the last decade the City's budget has doubled. Almost doubled. I want to know if Mr. Delbridge can tell us if the City's wage-earning workers…if their wages have doubled in the last decade.

Gord Delbridge: This is a question that I know that has come before me many times before. We all know that it's certainly not the case. We're seeing, you know, in the last decade we're seeing, you know, 1 and 2 percent wage increases for…for City employees. We're seeing a lot of private contracts, they're going up. Well geez, we just looked at the recent garbage collection extension and talked about increase. We…we know where those increases are coming. They're not coming from the 1 or 2 percent of…of City employees.

Councillor Schreyer: And, Madam Speaker, it'd be considered misleading because the City's expanded and you've got some…some heavy capital…capital work to do with Water and Waste and things like that. I'll put it another way, Madam Speaker. In…in our…at a lifetime, majority of people in this room, including Mr. Delbridge, let's say in the last 30-year period, in my case I've been an adult a little longer than that, the cost of construction as it…as it affects the City's budget,

taxpayers, City budget, cost of construction has gone up over 20 times. Have the wages of City workers gone up 20 times in the last 30 years?

Gord Delbridge: Nowhere near. And you should maybe look at maybe a different level of service delivery. Maybe that…that might be more affordable. I know we're talking about that in the upcoming garbage collection contract. There's…With everything we're looking at, we could probably save Winnipeggers a lot of money.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Councillor Wyatt.

Councillor Wyatt: Mr. Delbridge, as you know Council has important procedures, rules. But despite those important procedures and rules, do you not think it's appropriate that council should have a moment of silence for Alexei Navalny?

Madam Speaker: Councillor Wyatt, that question's out of scope. Let's…let's stick to the Item before us. Next question?

Gord Delbridge: I do think it is very appropriate (inaudible)…

Madam Speaker: Next question please. Councillor Mayes.

Councillor Mayes: Just for clarity, based on some comments someone made earlier…You're present. You've been present for a number of years. The…Are you aware of any compression grievance that's ever been filed? Because you have a wage rate in the collective agreement. Now, our steps today would, well, you could alter the wage rates but, in the wake of the January 1st '23 increase to $15 an hour, I…I think you'd said there were no grievances resulting from that. I am…Compression is an issue that could come up in bargaining. There may be people in the next round at bargaining have said that the special wage adjustment million dollars has gone in but, in other words, are you aware of any compression wage grievance that's ever been filed or litigated?

Gord Delbridge: I've been president for almost ten years. I can tell you there has not been any.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Next is Councillor Allard, followed by Councillor Chambers.

Councillor Allard: Yes. For those of us who are less experienced in collective bargaining and are not labour lawyers would you, Madam Speaker, through you to the delegation, explain what wage compression is, what implications would be, and whether or not this might or may not be on the table were a living wage to be implemented?

Gord Delbridge: First off, I should explain to you that in senior classifications usually they're paid more. I can tell you that we'd have no grounds for grievance on increasing a senior classification to more. There'd be no grounds for that grievance. I mean, we could negotiate the terms of that. We'd be able to do that. We've negotiated a special wage adjustment. We can request that at any time. Many times the employers come to us, many times, and said that, hey listen, we need to top up wages in these certain areas because we're having recruitment and retention issues. That's happened in many classifications. Of course, you know, we're always open. We're willing to agree. This can be done at any time. You don't have to wait until bargaining. And often, when you're running into problems, you don't want to wait four or five years to make sure that you've got the…you've got some very critical positions that need to be filled. And if we're running into problems we need to address those problems. At any time.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Next is Councillor Chambers.

Councillor Chambers: Thank you, Mr. Delbridge, for your presentation this morning. You mentioned in your presentation that there were other jurisdictions that are…have already implemented the living wage?

Gord Delbridge: Yeah, there…I…I believe we found like 19 different municipalities across Canada that used the Living Wage Canada criteria to follow the same format. Every region, of course, is different. It's based on a formula that, you know, some jurisdictions may have low income bus passes or affordable housing. Then, as a result, the living wage is less. In the…In the event that you have more, or the cost are more to have bare bone living standards, then of course those costs go up. So we're different in Winnipeg than we are in Thompson. Vancouver's obviously different there.

Councillor Chambers: So with that, among those jurisdictions that you found, was Vancouver one of those jurisdictions that had implemented living wage? And are there other jurisdictions that are similar in size to Winnipeg that have implemented a living wage?

Gord Delbridge: There are many right across. And I think I may have submitted some material that outlines that. They can easily be found. I don't have it here in front of me right now. But I know that there are many other large jurisdictions that, right across Canada, Ontario, some east coast.

Councillor Chambers: So…so, last question. Were you aware that back in 2016 Vancouver…metro Vancouver did implement the living wage, then, in February of 2023, rescinded the living wage agreement that they had, stating cost was becoming too exorbitant?

Gord Delbridge: I am aware and…and, just as an FYI, they're looking at bringing it back in right now as we speak. When that was rescinded upon they elected a very right-wing Council, and so it makes sense why they did that. But, now they've elected some more progressive people on Council, looking at bringing it back.

Councillor Chambers: Well I think what they're looking at as opposed to a living wage is what's called a fair wage, which is a little bit different in terms of its calculation and impact on their budgets.

Gord Delbridge: And so in some municipalities they, you know, have different formats that they…that they do. The Living Wage Canada standard is the primarily the most, you know, one that's utilized. But there are some jurisdictions that come up with their own formula.

Madam Speaker: Any further questions for the delegation? Seeing none, Mr. Delbridge thank you for your presentation.

Gord Delbridge: Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Next is Mr. David Grant who's appearing before council in support of Item 1 and 2 of the report of the Executive Policy Committee dated February 13th, 2024, Item 4 the report of the Standing Policy Committee on Public Works dated January 30th, Item 7 of the report of the Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development dated February 1st. Also appearing in opposition on Item 3, 5, 6 and 10, and 13 of the report of the Executive Policy Committee dated February 13th, Item 1 and 2, report of the Standing Policy Committee on Water and Waste and the Environment dated February 5th, and Item 2 of the report of the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services dated February 6th. Item 1 of the Public Works dated January 30th, Item 7 of Property and Development Committee dated February 1st, Item 1, report of the Governance Committee dated February 8th. Mr. Grant, welcome.

David Grant: Thank you. Good morning and thanks…thanks to everyone for listening. Thanks also to the others who've taken the time to speak in delegation. That's an important function of City Hall, I think. On EPC 1, I strongly support this…the nomination of this meticulous City staffer to this important job. I've reported on some aspects about integrity and areas of improvement after the '22 election. Does the City have a complete lessons learned report of its own? Rhetorical question. On EPC 2, the Construction Officer, I strongly support the process and the folks involved in the search. I also strongly support the motion to set reporting standards. I recall the avoidable commotion in this chamber that resulted when a previous top City official failed to make timely and fulsome reports to Council. People were surprised, residents, et cetera. It was not a happy day. We cannot have this new person acting on their own to that extent. This happened years ago. Good reporting rules can prevent a repeat, and I'm glad they're…they're going to be considered. EPC 13, on rights. There've been many examples of the City violating rights of residents and employees in the past several years. Once again we have a lengthy report full of glowing, articulate wording, but without a single reference to any of these violations. Why is the HRC report silent on actual complaints to the Manitoba Rights Commission that involves City Hall? It was timely to hear from Councillor Lukes on not being informed about stuff. How many here are troubled that Council is not being provided with information on things such as labour grievances or the City violating human rights? Another rhetorical question. On Public Works 1, truck prices are rising, we hear, and deliveries may be late. Sadly, this is happening when the City funds have run low. There's no mention in this report of any consideration by staff of delaying delivery of your more mundane purchases. Why not? Obviously if you're looking for railway stuff and you have to…That's an interesting marketplace, but just walking in and buying a new pick up is not. I ask, what are the consequences of staff simply using a truck for a few more months? How old are the trucks that staff are so urgently replacing? This information was not provided…has not been provided by staff. Why are they not providing you, the Councillors, with the information that you need? On Public Works 4, I support the decisions of Public Works and EPC to receive as info. The folks wanting dry, clear sidewalks all winter already have better snow services than do folks living in the rest of the city. There are several streets on which hundreds of folks must walk because no sidewalk was ever built. If you want to be more fair, try moving those streets up from P3 to lowest level. And don't make any residential sidewalk a P1 if you want to be fair. I speak for many suburban residents when I deplore the motion before you. For years, we hear of those who have nice sidewalks that are plowed by the City. We hear complaints that the plow may leave a little snow on the sidewalk. And we've heard reasons why it can't go down. It caused it damage if you set them too low. These complaints ring hollow to those of us who must walk on the road because there is no sidewalk. And there's no plowing of that road either. Remember that if you again vote to spend more money on sidewalks as requested, you're insulting those whose plight you ignore. As was so ably

pointed out by the Public Works folks there is no published human right to a plowed bare sidewalk in the winter. Equity says plow the streets with folks…that folks are forced to walk on. Please abandon the bare pavement goal. On Property 7, I support this motion in support of solar panel installations on Winnipeg homes. Modern solar panels make twice as much power per square metre as those made ten years ago. Please add some words to make this motion better. Building on this motion, it would be useful for staff to document the actual cost to the City issuing a permit for solar panel installation at a city home. While staff are looking at ways in this motion to speed the permit process, they could also gather time and cross data. Knowing this would help with decisions at Council on reducing the cost of issuing such permits. They might decide in the future to reduce the homeowner's cost of going solar. In that way the City can partly offset the carbon costs of some of its arbitrary interferences with traffic flow. And that way the City does have a carbon goal. Anyway, moving on. On Service Item 2, Tree planting. I love trees. Many other folks love trees enough to buy and plant them. And we notice that the City is pretty much out of money. Please consider publishing a list of places to plant but not paying for the planting. When I was younger my job was to care for young City trees. City staff planted them in exactly the right place. They all lived. Some of the ones I was looking after were two or three years old. It is ironic that City taxpayers are forced to reduce spending on their own when they run out of money but that the City never fully defunds non-essential spending. It is good to hear media tell us the reductions in the City spending. And this Council is…has led the way. And I think taxpayers are thankful. Planting trees is not as essential as some folks say. Tree lovers can provide the funding. Most of us have nothing but fond memories of the million tree promises from City Hall a few years ago. Very few folks saw the evidence of taxpayer money being handed out with no actual live tree resulting. Anyone who used the FIPPA system to find out those trees…about those trees, those million trees, was sent the tree advocate's website. But then that…the tree advocate says that their records are not complete. So this proves that the City now has no record of who got paid for trees that do not now exist. This also suggests that some of the folks being handed money in your Item 2 were involved in previous programs. Have your staff done a comprehensive study of previous recipients? We know that no one knows where these trees were. Have the same people applied for money in 2024? Tree money for trees is now well documented. I love mature trees. Missing from all the pro-tree rhetoric are the less wonderful aspects of mature trees. They damage infrastructure, sidewalks, curbs, sewers, and basement walls. They damage lawns and gardens by dropping the water table and preventing life-giving sunlight. A tree borrows CO2 and emits a mix of CH4 and CO2. That mix warms much more than the CO2 borrowed from air by the trees. Trees are beautiful. But do not let anyone try to convince you that planting trees will save the planet. If you have any questions, I welcome them. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Questions? Councillor Wyatt, followed by Councillor Schreyer.

Councillor Wyatt: Now, Mr. Grant, thank you for your presentation. You suggest that we should produce a list of places that we should plant trees but that we shouldn't fund it. And are you aware of how wasteful that would…and silly that would be? You're calling for us to be efficient but you want us to produce a list of places that we should put trees but not fund it. That's what I heard you say. Is that correct?

David Grant: Sure.

Councillor Wyatt: Are you sure?

David Grant: Sure.

Councillor Wyatt: Are you sure that…

David Grant: Sure. Well, back when I was in the tree business in the City of Windsor, Ontario with…working for their Parks department there was no program of charitable groups being handed money to go plant a tree somewhere. The City decided, we're going to put trees along the edge of this park, and the City bought trees and they were planted. We…The labour force planted the trees and we watered them and fertilized them. We had trees growing on planters in the middle of roads. And that was funded by the City directly. And every one of those trees lived. I'm just deploring the fact that in the million tree era we handed money out and, in some cases, hundreds of seedlings were planted and they were all dead in months. And the problem right now is that we don't know where people are going to want to plant trees. It may be on private land. It may be the edge of some semi-private. But, yes, I don't consider it particularly wasteful to…for the City to designate, here's where we'd like some trees. And the idea of handing money out without any accountability, I see it as a problem, right? I think the current system may be a bit more accountable because people fill out a form saying, yes, I'm smart enough to plant a tree and I'll look after it. But we don't require a…a pin on the map of where you planted your hundred trees you were paid for. So that…that's a recurring problem. And thank you for raising the issue.

Madam Speaker: Second question, Councillor Wyatt.

Councillor Wyatt: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Mr. Grant, I listened very intently to your answer. So you're saying, basically, that previously you had a job that you actually made a living at for another municipality that actually actively

planted trees, and you benefited from that. Yet you're here today actually telling us not to pay for trees. Yet you made a living, is that correct, planting trees for another municipality?

David Grant: Yes, and that's what I'm suggesting. That if the City plants a tree…And they did. My next-door neighbour, the City cut down their mature tree and the City planted a tree next to…on the property next to mine. And the property across the street from me, they got 6-foot trees with little support sticks. The City located those, chose the location, and planted them. And those things have a good chance of becoming 20-foot, 100-foot high trees eventually. And yes, I think that's still a good idea. And it's not inherently inefficient for the City to plant a tree, because all the money spent results in live mature trees. And the current program may result in no tree at all.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Final question, Councillor Schreyer. I mean Councillor Wyatt.

Councillor Wyatt: But you're contradicting yourself, Mr. Grant. You're telling us not to plant trees and now you're telling us to plant trees. You're saying that it…I…I don't understand what you're saying. First you did a presentation, told us not to plant trees, produce a list that shouldn't have trees. Now you're saying that we should be planting trees in your answer that you just gave.

David Grant: Okay. I…I don't think there's a contradiction. I'm saying that the City should decide where trees should be planted and should pay either a contractor to plant…plant the tree or perhaps a charitable organization. But it should be in designated places. Places where a tree is needed. And I'm against the idea of just handing out money to…to organizations without ever being accountable for what happened to the money. And I'm saying that when I was, can't say in the business because I was a…a minimum wage worker at the time, but that the people working for the City who were doing that stuff were looking after trees that really did all live. And maybe the City only planted a couple hundred trees that year and not the 10,000 or 20,000 that we hear about in Winnipeg, but anyway. So I think there's no contradiction. I think the City should support that stuff and where a tree is needed, like on the property next to mine, I think the City is right to plant a tree there and look after it and make sure it's happy and healthy and lives. And I'm just against the program of, we don't want to use the term willy-nilly, but just of handing out money to anybody who says they'll plant a tree. Thanks.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Next question by Councillor Schreyer.

Councillor Schreyer: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Technically, well it's not official record, over the decades I've been involved in the environmental movement for over 30 years. Not by my definition, but it's on the public record from the late '80s, including here at City Hall, having no clue I'd be sitting in this chamber decades later and sort of putting pressure on City Councils back over 30 years ago on…on, happens to be, trees, trees in downtown. But, Madam Speaker, it…it…we can have all the enthusiasm we want for…for trees or any project, including an environmental project, but if it's not accountable, budget-wise, and otherwise, then we have to question our efforts and…and what we're trying to do. Madam Speaker, I want to thank David Grant once again for his contribution here today in delegation. I think part of the frustration, and this is a frustration that I share, Madam Speaker, is that we have all this amazing promotion and enthusiasm for promoting tree planting in the City. When it comes to the immediate aftermath of accounting for what happened, it is not done near…nearly with the same amount of diligence and enthusiasm. We need that enthusiasm and diligence when it comes to reporting on what we've done for the amount of money that taxpayers have paid for these…for…for these…for these tree planting projects. Would David Grant not agree that, when it comes down to trying to find out, after all the promotion and enthusiasm for tree planting, whether we get the same…the same diligence for accounting for the taxpayers' money on these projects? Would Mr. Grant agree with that?

David Grant: Yes, I…I would strongly agree with that. And I…my main objection to the current system of handing out money to a dozen or dozens of groups without any accountability is just that. That it's one thing to hand out money. Anyway, it's a matter of transparency and of accountability, as you pointed out, that if we're going to hand money out to plant trees but then, a year later or two years later, the City has no record, zero record, of where any tree was actually planted. And that's unfortunate. And that's something that should be accounted. And we could even have reports. I mean it's a…City Hall is a paperwork place. We could have reports on people got money and they…they were obliged to say where they planted and to provide a picture a year later of the little trees. That would be a very useful thing and that would provide a minimum level of accountability. And right now, as far as I can see, there was none in the million tree era and it doesn't look it's much better now. We qualify the people, but that's all. Thank you for raising that.

Councillor Schreyer: Yeah. Thank you, Mr. Grant. And in this case, among the various ways in which we've been spending taxpayers' money on trees, in this case, in regards to what Mr. Grant is here speaking on, now being Item No. 2 of the Standing Committee on Community Services, the Homegrown Grant Community Tree Planting Project, in this case, rather well itemized with, for the most part, it looks like grants being handed out for under 20,000, between 5 and $20,000 to various community groups that are very well identified in this case. I'm glad to see it's so well identified. Does Mr. Grant think that, perhaps in this case, there's a chance in this case, that we might have a reporting system from which

we can learn and the taxpayers can…can…can find out where their tax has been going regarding tree projects given…given the itemization, the limit and the specific itemization to which…to which community groups are receiving these funds?

David Grant: I…I would agree with you, Councillor Schreyer, that the lofty pedigree of the organizations doing this work, or are agreeing to do this work, implies that they will be more careful and that they will try really hard to plant some trees. But I don't see that there's a requirement to make a report. And I note, also, that if somebody is putting up a structure, piece of infrastructure for the City, a well-known construction company…

Madam Speaker: Mr. Grant. Mr. Grant, that concludes the Question Period under your presentation. Thank you for joining Council today. Thank you.

David Grant: Can I…Can't have 5 more minutes? Okay.

Madam Speaker: Next we'll hear from Vicki Poirier who's appearing in opposition to Item 5 of the Report of the Executive Policy Committee dated February 13th, Item 2 of the Report of the Standing Policy Committee on Water and Waste. Those two Items. Welcome, Vicki.

Vicki Poirier: Hello, bonjour, (inaudible). On the EPC 5, like many Winnipeggers my family grew up not having much money. To make the money my mom made last, we were very careful about not wasting water and everything else. We must all try really hard to not waste water. If you make water free you let some folks waste it. Lowering the water costs for some means more waste. As people learn this is happening more will do the same knowing someone else will pay for it. This is a huge mistake, in my opinion. If you worry about the cost of living, Winnipeg…Winnipeg…Don't force us to use new pointless services like composting. I already garden and compost. I do not need you to collect stuff from my curb. Water, too. I have always read my water meter and my mom read hers every time before bed. We never got crazy high water bills like I see on TV. Have any of you asked City staff why some bills are so high? If no readings are provided and meter readers are not allowed into the home, what action does the City take? How many homes are now years behind on proven water readings? There are three issues not mentioned on your agenda. One, some folks fail to read their water meetings when asked…meet…meter readings when asked. Water bills have risen and will be going up more soon. And water bills include charges for more than water. Huge bills have been sensational news items for years. Have your staff prepared…prepared an analysis of each headline case for you? How many are the customer's own fault for not filling out that card and calling in every suggested meter reading? And how many of those headline cases has the customer filled out your card every billing period? Are any of these huge bills purely due to your billing system? I trust your system and believe that those billing systems are not at fault. Water bill is a misleading term. The water we use is a small fraction of the amount billed. Water has essential uses. Most of the water bought by some residents is not put to good use. The City should be praised for educating us in how to save. When I was little the kids bathed together and we didn't water the lawn. I even remember my mom dressing us up in rain gear and sent us out with car wash brushes when it rained. If we did a good job, we'd get dessert before dinner. We were taught if it's brown flush it down, if it's yellow let it mellow. My mom would only shower every other day. More people could do the same thing. There are many ways people can lower their own water usage. Making someone else pay for it is not the solution. The other things on the water bill have far less tangible benefits to residents. Please consider not raising those amounts. Taxpayers should not be paying for those who abuse the system or more will follow suit. Please do not go down this slippery sloped path. Thank you. Merci. Miigwech.

Madam Speaker: Thank you for the presentation. Any questions? Councillor Eadie.

Councillor Eadie: Yes. Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate the delegation and I understand arguments but, Madam Speaker, I just want to know if…if the…if she's familiar with the reasoning behind the affordability change in the Charter. That it's more related to what's now being put on the water bill, which are your flat fee for garbage service, which used to be paid for in the City and still is on the regular garbage collection. It's paid for according to one's ability to pay through the…the kind of…the house they can afford to purchase given their cash flow. So, I'm just wondering if…if the delegation understands the difference between that and the Report No. 2 under Water and Waste.

Vicki Poirier: Yes, I…I understand that.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Any further questions? Seeing none, Vicki Poirier, thank you for your presentation today. And that concludes our delegations. We'll now move on to reports. Mr. Mayor, the Report of the Executive Policy Committee dated February 13th.

**REPORT OF THE
EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE
DATED FEBRUARY 13, 2024**

Mayor Gillingham: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I'd like to introduce the report and move adoption of Items…Consent Agenda Items 1 to 13.

Madam Speaker: Councillor Wyatt, Item 2. Chief Construction Officer. Councillor Eadie? City of Winnipeg Charter Amendment. Call the question on the remaining. Councillor Schreyer? Yes, Item 6 is going to be pulled. There is an amending motion, thank you. Councillor Schreyer, that's what you were going to say? Any others? Okay, I'll call the question on 1, 3, 4, 7 through 13. All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Item 2 – Establishment of a Chief Construction Officer

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Mr. Mayor, to introduce the item.

Mayor Gillingham: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'll wait to hear from my colleagues on this one. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Item 2 was stood down by Councillor Wyatt.

Councillor Wyatt: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I…I stood this Item down just to put some comments on the record. I think it's a…This was a major…This was a, I know, a commitment by the Mayor in his campaign. And…and so I wanted to stand it down so that he could also speak to the Item. And just to put some thoughts to the record as well. Hopefully the Chief Construction Officer, in my mind, as part of their job description, will include some very…I thought…I thought of seven points that…that hopefully they will, not just in terms of the ongoing work of overseeing construction projects, but in terms of, I guess I would call them more strategic issues affecting us, versus tactical. And that is, number one, something that we constantly struggle with, it seems, in the City, and that is to ensure that we get our tenders out early. That means, Madam Speaker, first call on the capital budgets and that we, ideally, get our tenders out early enough that we can secure better pricing. And…and that means working backwards from a tendered date to ensure that…that the tenders appear prior to other tenders appearing out there, whether it be from other levels of government or, namely, from the private sector, i.e. developers who build roads, that our tenders would be the first to be bid on. Secondly, and it speaks to one of the points I just made, that there is an opportunity, I believe, for the City of Winnipeg and the Province of Manitoba to coordinate tendering so that we're not necessarily competing against each other, which is what we do now, and that that coordination could result in savings, both to the City of Winnipeg and the Province of Manitoba. The third strategic issue that I hope the Chief Construction Officer will attend to or work towards is the issue of…of getting access to aggregate. Namely gravel. Aggregate is, other than labour, is a major component to the issue of construction and the rising cost of construction and road construction (inaudible). And the loss of our gravel pits a number of years ago, and we had purchased gravel pits and then they were sold, has had a major negative effect on the City of Winnipeg. And so accessing aggregate, I think there are some options that are available, should be one of the key issues that I hope the Chief Construction Officer works on. Number four, the fourth issue that I…is the need to drive the number of vendors in our…in the bidding process up. The previous government had set up a venture capital fund to try to encourage new business creation in the province. I think there are a lot of individuals of entrepreneurial background in our city who could potentially help us on this and to drive the amount of vendors up. And it ties into my point number five, that we should also be looking at attracting vendors from outside of our market, namely from other jurisdictions, to come into Manitoba. Especially if we can communicate and show that we are sustaining funding to infrastructure, namely capital projects, over a period of time that would allow them to make that leap and that investment into our…our market. This one, the next point is somewhat controversial which I know some members of Council don't share, but I do believe that on large scale construction projects it does make sense, when I say large scale I mean large capital-wise, dollar-wise, that P3 opportunities should be considered. Right now we are limited by a restriction within our policy with regard to P3s. We're kind of capped out now. I would support a change to that policy. And…and that P3s, we've known in the past, do transfer risk. Especially when it comes to complicated builds. One project that's coming up that we know we're going to have to deal with one way or the other, and it will be probably a somewhat…will be a complicated build, it's Arlington Bridge and the replacement of it. And so I see this as something that the Chief Construction Officer could be attending to. And then, finally, well, no actually, two more points. There's actually eight points. The…the second last point I want to raise is the need for us to expand our labour base. We, as a province, have done amazing job in terms of reaching out. For example, the Province has reached out to other jurisdictions for nurses, the Philippines, other countries. I believe there is opportunity to do that. That there are some very experienced construction workers in other countries that would be more than happy to immigrate here if the opportunity was presented to them. And that this would assist us in labour costs as that, other than aggregate, labour costs are the major issue driving costs of construction up. And then, finally, I think the overall goal of the Chief Construction Officer, and whether or not the Chief Construction Officer is successful in all of the above, in attending to them over a period of time, is whether or not our construction…the construction inflation begins to stabilize. Namely, comes in line with

the rate of inflation, which typically is 2 or 3 percent. Historically, the construction rate has been far beyond that. Double that, and even beyond that. Higher than that. I think the way to judge the success of the program that I just mentioned, that if this were to be adopted as part of the due diligence of this position, would be weighed against that success based on the very fact of whether or not in four, five, six years from now, we were to see a stabilization in the…in the…in the…in the inflation rate when it comes to our tenders and our contracts. Those are my comments, Madam Speaker. I look forward to the Mayor's comments as well. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Next speaker is Councillor Schreyer.

Councillor Schreyer: Thank you, Madam Speaker. First of all, I'm…I'm grateful to His Worship for giving me consideration to be on this…on this committee, part in by his confidence. I would make the point as well that…that any member of this Council, by their track record, would do a good job. We'd all learn something from this and we'd all have something to contribute. And that's the point. I believe we all have something to contribute when it comes to these issues. We've all kind of proven it one way or the other. Somewhere down the line, when we've shown our concern for…for…for costs, for increases and…and how things carry on…I think we've learned some…I wasn't involved. I wasn't elected at the time but, when it come…when it came to the Public Safety building, things like this, and I think that's has a lot to do with what we're doing here in terms of having a…having a Construction Officer in…in this case. Happens to be that Councillor Wyatt has mentioned quite a number of issues here which are very important. They're extremely important. And I would say it…what's about to happen isn't fully defined, in terms of this Committee and…and finding a Chief Construction Officer and the role and how that will evolve over the years. I think Councillor Wyatt just gave us a lot of food for thought. He's hoping, from what I…from what I understand, that the Chief Construction Officer will be involved in the points which…with…which he just made. Councillor Wyatt has made a number of points that are very long-term. And to the extent to which the Chief Construction Officer will be involved in these, rather than the specific aspects of any construction project, we'll see…we'll see…we'll see how that goes, and we'll see what that person can contribute in the short term, and then what that office may be able…be able to contribute in the long-term. Including in terms of changing, having an effect on the culture of accountability, and accounting for construction projects here. Councillor Wyatt mentioned a number of things. Justifiably there…there's sort of…I can say all…all over the map. Well they should be because there's a lot of dimensions to…to construction. I'll say…I'll say, many dimensions involved in…in…in his comments. One in terms of early tenders. It's a good point. I don't know what to say about that, but…but nonetheless something that has to be considered. There are virtues for early tendering. Councillor Wyatt's been a proponent of that since I've been elected to Council. (inaudible) early tenders, in terms of starting the…starting a year early in terms of getting the budget out there for…for construction projects, for street repair. I do recall access to aggregate. Oh my goodness, this is an excellent one. It's an excellent point for all of members of Council to deal with. Not just the members of this Committee regarding the Chief Construction Officer. This is a long-term systemic issue that we as a Council, we as City Hall, cannot ignore. The…the extent to which the Chief Construction Officer will be involved, I do not know. This is…this is bigger than any one individual and it's something that we absolutely cannot ignore. What Councillor Wyatt said is essentially the truth. He just mentioned some facts. Well he did make the point, however, and this is…it's important to make the point. He said the fact that when we sold off…the City sold off its own gravel quarry, that had detrimental impact on…on our City budget, taxpayers. And the fact is that, that issue I've raised here over the years, including while on the Finance Committee, and we cannot get an answer as to, this question I asked, I believe in my, 8 years ago started asking the question. When we sold off the quarry we were told to do so (inaudible) that City Hall should do…do this because it would save us money. And I've been asking the question, did we save money and, if so, how much? That…that has not been…been…been answered. But Councillor Wyatt brings up a point. If we are going to be fiscally responsible, fiscally accountable, if we're going to worry about the budget, this is something that we cannot ignore. It's very important that we deal, when it comes to our…our collective agreements, that we negotiate, and that we…we represent the taxpayer. We talked about this already this morning here. To what extent do we put that same amount of wisdom and resources and experience and commitment when it comes to dealing with our construction costs? I can't even give an…get an answer as to whether we saved money for when…when we sold off our gravel quarry. So I thank Councillor Wyatt for mentioning the point, access to aggregate. He's mentioned a couple of…number of. other issues. Now bear in mind, Madam Speaker, since being put on this list to be voted on today, as a member of the Committee regarding choosing of the Chief Construction Officer, this is the first time we've heard, on the record, a fellow Councillor…a fellow…fellow member of Council talk about his concerns and his…his hopes regarding this position. So, I'm grateful for Councillor Wyatt. He's bringing up some very serious issues that we can't ignore. Also the issue of competition in the market. It's an important issue. You know, how much time do I got? Oh, I got two minutes. You know, my…my dad's older brother, my…my…my uncle Tony, was one of the largest construction companies in…in Manitoba back in the day. Schreyer Construction helped build the Perimeter, the Trans-Canada Highway. But there's more competition back then. If you look at the costs of what Schreyer…Schreyer Construction accomplished back when it created…helping build the Perimeter, the Trans-Canada Highway northern development…Before my father was Premier. It had nothing to do with that. This is during the Duff Roblin era. You'd be amazed at the cost. Not only, sometimes 50 percent under budget. Oh, we do that now because we stack the budgets. Madam Speaker, we were capable of doing back in the day. And these people consider themselves impressive. Because they were. Because look what they did on behalf of the taxpayers of Winnipeggers and Manitobans and Canadians. Look what they got done, with less. Madam

Speaker, let's never forget that. When we forget that we just we're…we're saying we don't care about the taxpayers' construction budget. Madam Speaker, it's important. So the issue of competition is important because, my point is, we used to have more construction companies. Now we got less. Now there's a certain nature to what happens when you have less…less…less competition in the market. We can all talk about that. You don't need to hear from me. Everybody here can talk about that. So, Councillor Wyatt brings up another good point, competition in the market. Also access to construction and labour. He's mentioned labour costs are a big part of…of construction inflation. But I do want to make the point, it's not that construction workers' wages have been going up at the same rate as construction costs. As a matter of fact, the only reason they're…they're an important factor is because, as we've heard in this chamber from the President of the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association, it's because labour is one-third the cost. Because we're paying a lot of workers. It's not because their wages have going…going up at a rate similar to construction inflation. As a matter of fact, they've always been below the…the rate of construction inflation, thus keeping inflation down. I'll leave that…I'll leave that as words to the wise. And thank you to His Worship and to Councillor Wyatt.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Any further speakers on this item? Seeing none, Mr. Mayor to close.

Mayor Gillingham: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Through you, I want to thank Councillor Wyatt for his good comments and I want to thank Councillor Schreyer for his comments as well. Councillor Wyatt does touch on several of the issues that this construction…Chief Construction Officer will be looking to address in their role and in…in their work when they're hired. We do need to get through the budget first because the funds allocated to this FTE are required…required to pass the budget to…to get that happening, so that's why what we're looking at here today is an extension of up to 120 days to get all these things in place. I do also want to just take a moment to thank Councillors Mayes and Schreyer and Dobson who are going to serve on the…on the committee that will be part of…of the hiring and recommendation process. I want to point out a couple things that are in the…the motion before us as well though just…just to highlight the kind of how this individual would function. They'd have a reporting and accountability measures similar to those in place for statutory officers of council acknowledging that this Chief Construction Officer position is not a statutory officer. But really this is a unique position, I think probably the first opportunity we…we've taken to create a position such as this that would report publicly to the Mayor and Council to provide advice and leadership. This person's primary role would be, ultimately, to protect the taxpayers and the ratepayers of Winnipeg. We have billions of dollars in capital projects that we undertake or are about to undertake over the next several years. And we need someone to ensure that we do have best-in-class contracts, that we do…Are structured in such a ways, as…as Councillor Wyatt points out, that makes sure we've got adequate number of vendors so that we get good competition in the bidding process. We have started to work with the Province of Manitoba on some joint procurement where…where the opportunities lie. Sometimes the City of Winnipeg is procuring similar items as the Province of Manitoba. And so we have talked to the Province about finding ways. We talked about this in the last term of Council, finding ways where we can enter procurement together so that we can get a better price. And so I'm looking forward to this…this rolling out, this Chief Construction Officer ultimately getting identified, hired and put in place, just to further assist us and to provide advice to Council and…and that…that we can rely upon, certainly where needed. But thank you Councillors for their support in this 120-day extension.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. With that I'll call the question on Item 2. All in favour? Contrary? Carried. Mr. Clerk, next item.

Item 5 – City of Winnipeg Charter Amendment – Ability to Pay

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Mr. Mayor, your opportunity to introduce the item.

Mayor Gillingham: I'll wait to hear from my colleagues. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Councillor Eadie?

Councillor Eadie: Yes, thank you Madam Speaker. I rise and ask my colleagues to vote no against the Executive Policy Committee's recommendation to just receive this motion as information, Madam Speaker. So, today I'm going to be talking about why we want to say yes by saying no, colleagues. So, there's been some misunderstanding, Madam Speaker, from some of the public. And reading the whereases, it's a little bit more clear in terms of, there are other ways of determining one's ability to pay other than one's income. And what we need to understand here is this Charter amendment is allowing for a systemic (inaudible), not a reactionary, request like in Report number 2 under Water and Waste which is about…People have gotten to the point and they can't pay their bills, Madam Speaker. And then we have to look at, well, how do we support or how do we, you know, like, you have to have water to live, Madam Speaker. You have to have water to live. It is a human right under many of the…I can't remember what they call them at the U.N., worldwide. But I'm not really focused in on water consumption. There's a number of factors that would help determine whether or not which method you would apply. Like there is, first of all, well, just want to make sure it's clear, anything we do under the Charter, it's a systemic change versus what we're asking to be done and report to. So now, let's look at this. Now, the consumption

of water is…And I don't know how you can apply ability to pay on the consumption of water. That's how we pay for water, Madam Speaker. We pay for water based on how much we consume. And so, like, I don't know how you can apply one's ability to pay to that because what technically water usage, you know, it really doesn't have to do necessarily with an address, a property that exists. It's about the families who are living in there and how much they consume. Now, so, we heard from some delegations. They're…they're misunderstanding what we're talking about here. So, it's easy thing to do systemically to calculate what you would pay rather than paying a flat rate for…The reason I'm bringing this is we have paid for garbage, traditionally in this city, based on the value of our house. So the lower the value of your house, which, your value of your house is going to be lower if you don't have the cash flow to buy a more expensive house, it is related directly to one's ability to pay. You can't buy a house if you don't have a cash flow, the job, that's going to produce enough money for one to do that Madam Speaker. So, when we look at this and we see a, well there's a flat fee, well, what we did with the flat fee is, technically, we said the first thing we need, and nobody in this room can deny, nobody in this room can deny that the ability to pay is different for all Winnipeggers. The ability to pay is different, right? We…we know there's people who can't afford. We know that there's people who can't afford so much that they're homeless and our Mayor, thank god, is actually trying to get something happening with the Province to resolve that issue. Now, I digress. Again,. this is a systemic way to look at it. So, if you use the assessed value of a home…And it's not perfect, Madam Speaker. You can cite many different, you know, situations or whatever. But one thing about garbage and flat rates, just garbage, is if the address doesn't exist there's no garbage. There's no solid waste. And we're coming up with all these new programs that are really moving most of the solid waste off our property taxes, which is based, again, on the value of the house and it's an easy formula. We live in an age today. Don't tell me we don't have the…the bureaucrats. It's a simple calculation of…It's not like trying to keep on top of income. People move. So you have renters. So, this…this is good for renters too. Because I lived in a four-unit space. So I'm paying a flat fee now, right? It was in the property taxes and technically the…the landlord was paying for garbage, but when I moved in there, it's a rental unit and so now I, the renter, am paying for the garbage. And we know that people who rent, they can't…they move to the areas where they can afford to pay the rent. And guess what? People who have less of an ability to pay live in houses that are lower valued because the landlord can rent it to them for a lower thing, and yeah, there's a lot of repairs to do. We have that vacant derelict building problem in say William Whyte or Dufferin or Spence or West Alexander or wherever, Madam Speaker. The point is, is that that's where the cheaper rents are. That's where the people who have less of an ability to pay... Where my son lives, who can afford to pay for a really nice apartment with three bedrooms, eh? So, like, this is simple. We need to acknowledge the ability to pay. It…it doesn't matter what your political belief is. We all know that some people have less of an ability to pay than others. But we all know that everybody wants to enjoy, use, and, you know, save the environment with our new solid waste programs. We all want to participate in that, but we can only afford to participate to a certain level. And at the City level, we have a database, we have two databases. We got a database that says here's where the garbage carts are. We have a database that says here's the values of those properties. It's a simple…it's a simple computerized thing to do. Don't tell me in today's age that we can't use, I'm not going to call it, well, it's kind of big data. It's a methodology. We're not going to use the income database from the Province. We know that it costs them a lot of bureaucratic money to do things. What we're talking about is a systemic change that acknowledges and helps the people who have less…less money to pay, right? It helps them. It's not perfect, but it helps them, Madam Speaker. It helps them afford to live. And yeah, there's people struggling who can afford to own a $500,000 house. I'm not denying that, Madam Speaker. What I'm saying, though, is…is there's more of an ability to cover off cost. We don't want to go to consumption. We want to penalize families, go to consumption of use of solid waste and say, well, your kids are producing more garbage. We don't want you to have kids…If I could just get two minutes to conclude?

Madam Speaker: Councillor Schreyer moves extension of two minutes. All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Councillor Eadie: So…so…so, I…I just wanted to…to make that point. You can go to using consumption of solid waste, right? The amount of garbage in your…whatever type of solid waste you're producing. But then we're penalizing families. We want the city to grow right? We don't want the city not to grow. And one of the best ways for a city to grow is for us to have kids and raise them. So, consumption, I don't know, but, we can help…we can help Winnipeggers. Some will pay more. I know 'll pay more, Madam Speaker. That's fine. I…I can afford it. I'll leave it at that. I hope that you'll vote no against EPC's decision to just receive this as information. I think we have a Provincial Government who does acknowledge that the ability to pay exists everywhere and that there are methods we can use to ensure that everybody uses the services, that we're saving the environment or…or using services that we need to use on a day-to-day basis. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Any further speakers? Councillor Schreyer.

Councillor Schreyer: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'll be voting with Councillor Eadie against the…the proposed pass it as information. Basically, I…I mean, I understand why this is happening. But I…I think we need to keep a number of things on the table. We need to recognize a few things, such as what Councillor Eadie made the point of. Bear in mind, Winnipeggers have reduced their water consumption. We've reduced our water consumption, notably, something like 30 percent or something like this. We've actually had to increase people's water rates just to keep up with expenses. That's how much…that's one of the factors in which why we've had to increase our water rates per unit consumption. Because

we have reduced our consumption so much. So, it's kind of a penalty, unfortunately, on lower income families. Not only that, Madam Speaker. We use it as the…We use our water rates as a money maker, Madam Speaker. We been…we have 11 percent of our water rate is used to go into general coffers like it's a tax. So we've increased people's water rates as a tax, 11 percent of it. What we call a dividend. It's an institutionalized dividend…Because, well, we're the government. We can impose these things on taxpayers, or rate payers in this case, and say 11 percent of this will be profit. That's what a definition of a dividend is. You take the profit out and you can do what…what you like with it, within those parameters, as a dividend. Well we control that dividend. We say there'll be an 11 percent dividend. We impose that. We…we have. There's reasons for it. But bear in mind, Madam Speaker, we need to recognize that we've done that to lower income families who've already reduced their water consumption. They've already did what we've been asking them to do. Then we've raised their rates and then we raise them again to use part of that, their dividend, 11 percent of their water rate, to go into general revenue. That's what kind of situation we're in. That's new City Hall. Has it always been that way? No. Just in the last, well, not even 20 years. That's not a long time in politics. Because we're supposed to deal things. Deal…make…deal with the long term. Deal with the midterm. Not just midterm elections. Not just the by-elections. Not just the elections four years down the road. But we're supposed to deal with the long term. That's what politics is about. That's what society, is it not? We build things for the future. So, you know, a number…a few years ago we had the issue of COVID. I remember Mayor Bowman saying that…Councillor Orlikow was saying that people were freaking out. Certainly were. If you look back, certain aspects of that as it affected the City were unreal. Empty buses, lack of…lack of revenue there, as an example. Well many, many things, Madam Speaker, including sustainability of people's jobs and people's ability to keep their houses, pay their bills. Bear in mind Madam Speaker, some people are freaking out right now. Maybe it's a little more quiet. Always happens. There's always suffering in society. But if you look at the…the aspect of that to which we are directly involved with, our City budget, if we can't deal with our City budget and account for our City budget then who are we to deal with other people's problems in the private sector? Or individually? If we can't deal with our own budget, if we can't account for our own budget, we can't explain it, if we can't forecast…Well, I've been forecasting a year for years, Madam Speaker. Anyone can show me how my forecasts are wrong, please do so. Show me how I'm wrong. And if you can, I'll…I'll thank you. But it's a funny thing because COVID, in the end, after the fact, its…its effect on our…our City budget, it's just a small fraction, Madam Speaker, if you look over a period of a generation. Because there's already trends affecting people. Already affecting lower income families. And when it comes to ability to pay for water, Madam Speaker, the people already done their part for the most part. They've reduced their consumption. We've…we've increased their rates anyway. And then we put a dividend on them, Madam Speaker. And their mortgages have gone up. Their rents have gone up. Food's gone up. Their property taxes gone up. Their rates, fees, fines, levees have all gone up, Madam Speaker, at a rate higher than their wage increases or their income increases. That's a fact, Madam Speaker. So, as Councillor Eadie says, there's different ways of…of assessing people's income and everybody's in a different…everybody's ability to pay is different, Madam Speaker. Well, people are silently freaking out and, or not so silently, and I…and I thank…thank Vicki Poirier as well for her…her insights this morning in terms of the reality of what it's like for a family to…to pay their water bill. And, Madam Speaker, it's only getting harder. Okay so there you go. Another forecast, it's only going to get harder. Well, okay, is that a surprise to anybody? No. So therefore, anybody that agrees with me, they can explain how it's going to get harder to pay our water bills. Anybody that agrees it's going to get harder, they can explain, not just me. They can explain how it is. It is going to get harder for people to pay their water bills. You think it's tough now for people? Well it's only going to get worse. I know that people here that agree with me. Therefore, they can explain how that is the case. Therefore, now you're dealing with forecasting. Now maybe we can deal with that. My biggest fear always in politics, before I got elected and since, because it's the case that we deal with things in a…in a way that our response is reactionary. Madam Speaker, that's no way to go through…through…through politics. That's no way to go through public service or government. That's no way for a society to run, merely being reactionary. Madam Speaker, we are human beings. We have the capacity to see for the future and make forecasts, and to plan. That's what people do. We plan. That's what creates civilization and society. We plan. We plan into the future. We build into the future. We see into the future, as imperfectly as we do it. But that is how we built civilization. That's exactly how we did it. We planned. Madam Speaker, when you can't look 10 years into the future with all the resources we have here and see what our problems are, oh my goodness, Madam Speaker. We have that capacity. We project. We actually do it every year. Our administration does that. Before or after we had our four-year budget cycles, Madam Speaker, we projected. Let's use our ability to plan and to project to solve problems before they happen. Otherwise, we're just a reactionary government. And we're living by, what some would call, really good book by the way, a shock doctrine. Happens too often, Madam Speaker. We don't need that. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, Councillor Schreyer. Next is Councillor Gilroy.

Councillor Gilroy: Thank you Madam…

Madam Speaker: Pardon me, I've missed Councillor Mayes and we need to go back there. Councillor Mayes and Gilroy you did have your…have your hand up for a while.

Councillor Mayes: Thank you, Madam Speaker. On this one, I'm going to support Councillor Eadie, who will not be in the room to hear me saying nice things about him. He has been consistent on issues arising from ability to pay and trying to emphasize more putting expenditures on property taxes rather than on fees. The water is a bit of a difficult example because it's based on one's usage. It's not like the…the waste diversion fee, which is ill-named because it only really deals with recycling and the compost of yard waste and not with garbage. But, I would say Councillor Eadie's admirable consistency, but it is not entirely admirable, I would say, in that sometimes one has to make decisions and weigh competing priorities. I remember Councillor Gerbasi talked about in 2011, the vote in the meeting before I was elected, the vote to bring in the new garbage and recycle system based on a $50 a household flat fee. I think Councillor Gerbasi wrestled with that but felt the environmental benefits of bringing that program in outweighed the inequities of having a $50 flat fee against all households. Additionally, I've heard Councillor Gilroy, I…I would say to her credit, saying I want to bring in a compost program. I'm not going to ditch the whole thing, by insisting it has to be on the property taxes. I would certainly prefer that, but the higher priority is getting this program up and running. If I'm mis-stating it, luckily you (inaudible), but I'm trying to speak in praise of Councillor Gilroy on that. So, Councillor Eadie's motion, which I will support, is a rather elegant solution to a problem that's he's identified about the ability in the Charter for the City to charge differential fees to differential households. I'll…I'll…I…I agree with him, we should not just receive it as information. I think the bigger debate would be appropriate. We had a terrific debate, albeit behind closed doors, of the four members of the Water and Waste committee the other day talking about different fees. Possible compost fee. Possible new garbage fee. The existing and increasing waste diversion fee. Coupled with the Mayor, I think admirably, saying I made a commitment to a 3.5 percent property tax increase, that's what it's going to be. So, one has these competing priorities. So, should one simply stick to that number and then increase fees? Is that inequitable? Arguably, but if it's $2 a year? We had someone saying well I might lose my house because what 2 percent water increase. Probably not. That's $24 a year if you're consuming the average amount of water. I don't think that's going to cost you your house, with all due respect. But, there is an inequity built in if it's a flat fee, regardless of the income level or value of your home. When Councillor Fielding was here, used to…he…he would open his budgets with, we all know that property taxes are a regressive form of taxation. And I finally step…put up my hand and said, I didn't…I don't know that. In fact, I don't think that's even accurate. And he was using a regressive in a sort of it's outdated or backwards sense. No, as opposed to the tax sense. So, property taxes are not actually regressive. But it is a flat tax. We can only have one mill rate and that, I would suggest, might be the best place to have a debate in the months to come after the budget. Should we be asking the Province for the ability to impose different mill rates? Not a completely foreign concept. Land transfer tax based on the value of one's property increases as… It's a progressive system. Once the value of the property exceeds a certain amount that excess is charged to the higher rate. That sounds familiar, you say. Yes, that's the income tax system. It's a progressive thing. Not all of your income is taxed at the higher rate. Once you get over a certain threshold, that portion of the income over that amount is charged at the higher rate. So it's a progressive system. That would be an interesting model to look at in the City. Therefore, the property taxes payable over a certain threshold would start to increase by a certain percentage. But, it's all in the abstract. We do not have the ability to do that because we can't under the Charter. When one was a school trustee it was a fairly easy debate. You only had the one lever, really. It was property taxes. That's what you debated. You didn't have these other means of trying to raise revenue and you didn't really have much capital to worry about either, frankly, but, it's a more complicated budget hearing process here. So, I…I think Councillor Eadie is on to something here. I'm going to vote with him. But there's a bigger debate to be had too, I think, about, well, we…we've, to some extent, limited our own discretion by saying the property tax increase will be a certain amount. But Councillor…former Mayor Bowman and Mayor Gillingham both made those commitments in campaigns. One cannot fault them, I would say, for sticking to their commitments. So, what then to do? Is one left simply to assign these flat fees regardless of household income or household value, or is there some other way we can look at to try to reallocate some of the expenses? And again, sometimes the dollar amounts are really quite small. So, I don't think we should ditch the entire, to quote or paraphrase Councillor Gilroy, I don't think we should ditch the entire compost program, saying it has to be against the property tax or nothing. But at some point the fees, as they rise to perhaps 100, perhaps 200, perhaps 300 on waste diversion and garbage, that does start to be a concern when one thinks that, for the average household the 1 percent property tax increase is about $20 a year. So, for today, with Councillor Eadie, I do think a bigger debate should be coming. We should, I think, ask the Province about the ability to charge different mill rates on different properties. It's made even worse, of course, the inequity, because the apportion, we won't get too technical, but it's not the entire value of your property that's taxed. There's all the apportionment percentages that range from pipelines to golf courses to households. I'm sure if Tim Austin were here he'd be very excited to join this debate but perhaps we will come to that. We need, I think, a better debate about how the property tax works and is there some way we could make that more genuinely progressive rather than simply a flat mill rate. So for today, with Councillor Eadie. But I think this whole debate about fees and property taxes deserves a bigger, longer debate. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Next is Councillor Wyatt, followed by Councillor Gilroy.

Councillor Wyatt: Thank you, Madam Speaker, I rise. First of all, I believe Councillor Eadie and Councillor Gilroy's intent is positive and…and good. But I…I can't support the resolution. And I can't support the resolution simply, Madam Speaker, because I think it just goes…too far. This is…this is…this would set an extremely dangerous precedent for us if we started to judge or try to factor an individual's ability to pay. Where would it end? This is actually a form, Madam Speaker, of

what's called supply-side economics. We want to affect change by restricting the cost of doing business, that's supply-side economics. First is the debate we had earlier, which is demand-side economics, which is to say that we should be paying people more because of the cost of…of…of living. Now, we go down the road of the supply-side economics, Madam Speaker, where does it end? Where does it end? Do we say now, well, property taxes. We now have to determine whether people have the ability to pay their property taxes. Because that's where it's going to go. Once we develop a policy with regards to supply-side economics, namely the ability to pay, it will move from one issue, one fee, one charge, one tax to the next. We've got the foot in the door. We've got…we've wedged the door, now we're going to try to open the door. The ability to pay when it comes down to water. We're going to have to debate about the ability of paying when it comes to property taxes. Madam Speaker, if you want to go and see a city that has done this to itself, you can actually get on a discount airline flight and fly to Havana. Havana was once called the Pearl of the Caribbean. It was once called the Paris of the Caribbean. Right now Havana's run into the ground. My fellow travelers down there have run it into the ground by having the ability to pay apply to Havana. A beautiful city once is now…it…it could be almost knocked down. It's almost at that state. Other than Old Havana really put a little bit of money into it. But the rest, the city is a mess. I can tell you, Madam Speaker, where does it end? And it won't end. Now, we have applied, in the City, supply-side economics. We have done it. We've done it in terms of heritage buildings, for example. We have said, okay, we're going to give back your taxes. We're going to refund you so that you can fix the heritage buildings. So, we had a policy around that. And we have also done it, Madam Speaker, when it comes to economic development. We have encouraged…I remember one time this Council voted to give back property taxes for E.H. Price. So, in a sense, to allow for jobs and economic growth and creation, we have made exceptions on the supply-side…supply-side economics. But typically they're not done across the board. They're not done, kind of, for the whole society. They're not done…It…it's strategic, specific to either, would it be heritage, certain buildings or businesses that we see are important to the well-being and the future growth of our city. This, Madam Speaker, would open up the pandora's box. And though I have mentioned that I do understand the mover's intent, I can support and I will support the debate on the living wage, on demand-side economics, but I can't support going down this road because it's just…it would just never end. It would literally never end. And, we know what politicians are like. We all like it to be Christmas almost every day of the year and give everybody a gift. But, the reality is, we still also have bills to pay in terms of how the City functions and balances its budget. And we have to have a balanced budget. If we're concerned about this and the individual's ability to pay, as we should be, and I agree with the intent, as I have said, of the movers, we should be asking the provincial government, the new provincial government, unlike a previous NDP government which froze social assistance rates year after year after year, driving up the use of food banks to unprecedented levels in this province under the Doer government, that should stop under this government. We should be asking the federal government, Madam Speaker, to properly fund the CPP, the Canadian Pension Plan, which only The Globe and Mail reported about a week or so ago, that when you retire CPP is only going to cover about 30 percent of the average Canadian's living cost when they hit retirement. 30 percent. When it was created it was supposed to cover nearly 100 percent, other than the Old Age. Those are the things that we should be demanding. Because then we wouldn't have this debate around a living wage, if the other levels of government actually pulled up their socks and started to do their job. So those are my comments, Madam Speaker. And again, I want to thank the movers. I know their intent is honorable. But this would go down a path, Madam Speaker, that wouldn't end and it would start affecting all of our ability. Let's…let's have the discussion on living wage, which I'll support wholeheartedly, because I believe that's a responsibility of the City. Especially if we're on the last two points I made, CPP and social assistance. If we're asking them to do their job, we've got to do ours. So, thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Next speaker, Councillor Gilroy.

Councillor Gilroy: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I do want to thank…thank Councillor Eadie very much. He's been, always, since I've been elected he's been on this issue, and I think that he's been the strongest on this issue since I've been elected, and I want to thank him for…for working on this. I do believe in this motion. I don't believe we can…I don't agree with Councillor Wyatt, unfortunately, even though I…I do honour what he's saying. We can't really look at the economy in Havana and kind of suggest that it's…it's the ability to pay that…that's kind of dealing with their economy there. There are other cities in Europe that do actually have ability to pay that's actually quite successful. And I think that what…what concerns me is there was really no debate. We…we could have had this looked at. We could have had this come back and really look at what would that look like and then vote on it. So, we could have had, maybe, let's ask the Province to increase their…their, you know, their E.I. rates. We do have the concern over, you know, this much going into something else really isn't something I'm worried about because we do have E.I.A. We do have these other mechanisms that have…where that…that actual rate is and where it would trigger the ability to pay. And those are things that we would have control over. So, I guess I wish that what would have happened is that we would have maybe had the Administration go back and really look at, okay, what…what is within the City realms? What could we do and what could we ask the provincial government do? And really come back with something that makes sense. Unfortunately, with our tax system the way it is, we are looking at user fees. We are looking at changing how we are generating money. And that is looking at really changing the rates coming from our taxes into user fees on to garbage and water and those kinds of things. So we are changing that, and it…and it can have a real impact to families and their ability to pay. So, looking at what we can do to help minimize those when we're making those changes, I think, are critical as City Councillors in our job and our role

on how we're going to roll things out in the future. Of course, that we should be looking at this…This debate should not be happening right now. Unfortunately, it should have happened when the report came back that really looked at what options that we could have, and then have this debate. But we're here now. So I support Councillor Eadie. I know the changes that are…that are going to be coming forward if…if they're supported within this budget will be impacting people. And…and…and that's the reality. And there are some programs that I feel very strongly that we need to…to move forward with like our composting. And…and I don't think that that's…I think it's going to be cost neutral, but anyways, that's still up for the debate. But we do got to make sure that people have the opportunity to make sure that, when we are making those changes, we have mechanisms in there that have the ability for them to pay. And I think that that's what we were trying to…to do with this motion. And I do hope my Councillor colleagues think about doing this. This would really mean that we would be coming back with something and it would then be voted on. But we really don't have the facts in front of us to…to, you know, to justify whether or not this would work or not. So, it…it's unfortunate, but I do believe that the intent is making sure that we have a program looking at what we can do in terms of having the ability to pay. So, I do hope my Councillors support this. I think this is a good motion. I think that, in light of trying to keep to the Mayor's commitment of…of the tax increase and what we know is going to become some user fees in the future, this is…this is…this is something that we should be doing as a Council. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, Councillor Gilroy. Next is Councillor Allard.

Councillor Allard: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Through you to my Council colleagues, I will be joining Councillor Eadie in opposition of this for as information. I think…I think the reasons…the reasons I support…I'll speak French a little bit because, you know, it comes…comes out differently. ***French Spoken -***

Councillor Allard: So, I'll just summarize in English. I...I…I've heard many times in this chamber that we don't have the tools to do something in terms of means-testing for a specific program. However, we are doing it. We are doing it ad hoc. I…Like, we have the WINNpass. We phased it in. We have the…the WINNpass, well, proposed WINNpass be frozen this year. If we can make that City Council policy, we'd eventually have a…a, like basically a…almost we'd have a negligible fee for people who use Transit who meet the low-income cutoff. So, we have the low-income cutoff. We have partnerships with community organizations to make the certain determinations of whether or not someone has the ability to pay. But these are all ad hoc solutions and they sometimes work better than others. And sometimes, as…as it pertains to things like the consumption of water, for example, it becomes a…a tough egg to crack because there's all sorts of arrangements to pay for water, whether you're a tenant or you're owning the building or you're part of a condo corporation. But if we did have the ability to do true means-testing, like the Province and the federal government do, and if that power were somehow extended to us, I think it would allow us to continue down the vein that we're already down and…and have, not an ad hoc approach, but a…a systems approach…rational approach as a Council as it pertains to fees that need to be by…paid by some individuals who may not have the ability to pay. And I think there is…I know there are those people who do not have the ability to pay. I have met those people that don't have the ability to pay. When I worked for the Province of Manitoba I spoke with many people who live in Manitoba Housing. I spoke with many people who were on Employment and Income Assistance. And I can say without a shadow of a doubt that these people, in many cases, in almost any case that I've…that I've seen, they…they need…they need supports. They do make decisions between paying the rent and buying groceries. And if they try to get out of the Employment and Income Assistance program, for example, they get…they get any income clawed back. So, it's like they're…they're stuck. Even if they have the…the motivation to…to change their life, the system keeps them there. So, I think this is…this would be a…an incremental, meaningful thing for this Council to do. Every little bit…Every little bit helps. And I think if the top question on doors I was knocking on during the last campaign was why are there so many people in the streets? Why is there no housing? Well I think the answer is that government has…the…the federal government in the '70s changed the funding formula for housing and social programs from the E.P.F., it was called. I can't recall what the acronym stands for, but it was matching funds for housing, social programs. The Martineers brought C.H.S.T., Canadian Health and Social Transfers. And those were my school days, and I know there's been a couple renegotiations since then but, bottom line is, the government is not there as much as it should be in terms of social services, in terms of housing. And, in many cases, we end up having to spend considerable human resources. We need to assign considerable budgets to things like emergency services who…who are not necessarily the right people to be sending to calls. We need more. We need to lift people out of poverty. Winnipeg is the, I understand, from comparable cities, the…the child poverty capital of Canada. That's not something I think we should be proud of. And ability to pay, find groceries for a child, and not being able to buy groceries for a child, that…that contributes to…to child poverty. So, I think every incremental thing that we can do helps the homelessness and drug crisis that we're seeing today in the city. And I think we should've done what Ross said. I see it's recommended for information. So, in solidarity I will vote with my colleagues no on this report.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Councillor Eadie, will you move a motion to work past noon to finish this item?

Councillor Eadie: So moved.

Madam Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried. Next speaker? Seeing none, Mr. Mayor to close.

Mayor Gillingham: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Appreciate the debate as today, I…I will be supporting EPC's motion to receive this matter as information. And.I don't support the idea of…of moving towards raising this as an issue for a Charter change. There's many things that we're working on with…I'm working on with the Premier on behalf of the people of Winnipeg and behalf of this Council. At the top of my list in my discussions with the Premier in an upcoming meeting will be creating a new funding formula, long-term, for the City of Winnipeg that is predictable and growth-oriented. Second is discussing ICIP projects and the need for an increased contribution from provincial and federal governments to keep in line with the 40-33-27 funding formula that is…has been agreed upon and is the principle laid out in ICIP. Right now, with the estimated cost increases to our ICIP projects the City's going to be bearing a lot more of the burden. And that is it, frankly, in contravention and goes against the spirit of the federal government's ICIP policies and…and ICIP framework. So those, right now, are priority discussions for us for the people of Winnipeg. And so that's the focus that I have.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. With that, I'll call the question. All in favour? Call for recorded vote. All in favour of the recommendation coming out of EPC please rise.

A RECORDED VOTE was taken the result being as follows:

Yeas

His Worship Mayor Gillingham, Councillors Browaty, Chambers, Dobson, Lukes, Santos, Wyatt, Madam Speaker Councillor Sharma.

Nays

Councillors Allard, Eadie, Gilroy, Mayes, Orlikow, Rollins, and Schreyer.

City Clerk: The vote, Madam Speaker, Yeas 8, Nays 7.

Madam Speaker: That item is lost. Or, is carried, pardon me. Is carried. We shall now adjourn and reconvene at 1:15? 1:15? Thank you.

Reconvened meeting of
Winnipeg City Council of
Thursday, February 22, 2024, at 1:29 p.m.

Madam Speaker: Good afternoon. I'd like to reconvene our Council meeting of February 22nd, 2024. We are on Item 6 of the Report of the Executive Policy Committee, Living Wage. Mr. Mayor, to introduce the item. Or, Mr. Clerk, would you please read the item into the record.

Item 6 – Living Wage

Madam Speaker: Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Gillingham: Thank you, Madam Speaker. On this one, I think I made…My comments have been consistent. I voted to receive this matter as information. First of all, Council, on this floor, should not be determining wages. It is the role of collective bargaining to establish wages. That's where collective bargaining, the…I think all of us around this chamber respect…respect the rights that our employees have, through their unions, under the legislation, to collective bargaining. And it is there, through the collective bargaining process, that wages should be established. And I think that's where this discussion ultimately would be. There is going to be a compression cost. No, perhaps individual employees have not filed grievances but, inevitably in my mind, frankly, any labour negotiator worth their pay, if the base salary goes up and a part-time summer student is now making 4 or $5 an hour more than they were last summer, if I'm representing clerks and the…the…the wage difference was $10 and now it's $5 because we've raised the bar and the lowest wage, that I'm going to go on behalf of my clerks and say, they're valued at $10 more than a summer student working at a wading pool, or whatever the case would be. We need to maintain that and get back to that. And…and there would be compression. It could, frankly, be in the tens of millions of dollars of labour costs over the next several years. We have to look at that. We have to consider that, which is why I have voted to receive this as information. Thirdly, the…it's…it's…it's no slight on the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. I respect the work that they do. Often, you know, don't…don't agree philosophically with some of the things that they land on. But, with all due respect to them, they're really the only

entity that is establishing a living wage. Any academic that puts out a paper has peer reviews. The work is cross-checked by others to determine the validity of it and the strength of it. Where are the two or three others that are establishing living wages to see if this is actually the right number? What happens next year? If we adopt this, if we adopt the living wage, based on this one entity's definition, what happens next year when they readjust their calculations as a CCPA and say, you know what? The living wage has now gone up to $25 an hour, or $22 an hour. Are we back here 12 months from now, bypassing the collective bargaining process and reestablishing a new living wage? What happens if the wage goes down? If the living wage drops by 5 to $10, are we here saying, you know, we're going to reduce employees' wages? There's a lot to think about in this. It's not as simple as, you know, this will cost us nothing, which the delegate did not say today, but did say in EPC there'd be no costs to City of Winnipeg. Frankly, that doesn't pass the common-sense test. This matter needs to be one that is negotiated. That's where wages should be set.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Next is Councillor Allard. Your opportunity to speak to the item and your amending motion.

Councillor Allard: I think I'll leave it to my colleagues to speak. I think there may be a referral coming.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Councillor Browaty.

Councillor Browaty: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I'd like to move referral back to EPC. I believe I get 3 minutes to speak to…to this. Thank you. Again, this is a fairly big policy decision that we would be making here if we went forward with this today. I think it would be prudent for us to spend some time to look at numbers, to look at implications, and to just bore out everything that, you know, has been said and thought about here. So, I think at this time I'd like to move that referral motion.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. I'll call the question. All in favour? Contrary? Call for recorded vote. All in favour, please rise.

A RECORDED VOTE was taken the result being as follows:

Yeas

His Worship Mayor Gillingham, Councillors Allard, Browaty, Chambers, Dobson, Gilroy, Lukes, Orlikow, Santos, Schreyer and Madam Speaker Councillor Sharma.

Nays

Councillors Eadie, Mayes, Rollins and Wyatt.

City Clerk: The yeas, Madam Speaker, 11, and nays, 4.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. The referral carries. Next item, Mr. Clerk. That's…we're done with the committee reports, yes? Thank you. Mr. Mayor, by-laws.

Mayor Gillingham: One second, Madam Speaker, thank you.

Madam Speaker: Oh, just…just a moment, Mr. Mayor. We do have a…a motion. It's circulated. Motion 5. Okay, it's moved by Councillor Allard, seconded by Councillor Mayes, and it's an automatic referral to the Executive Policy Committee. Councillor Browaty.

Councillor Browaty: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'd like to move suspension of the rules to deal with this item here today.

Madam Speaker. The Item, I'd like to ask the clerk to read it into the record please.

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE
MOTIONS

Motion No. 1
Moved by Councillor Allard
Seconded by Councillor Gilroy

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Item 6 of the Report of the Executive Policy Committee dated February 13, 2024, be amended as follows:

- *Delete Recommendation 1 in its entirety and replace with the following:*

"1. That the Public Service be directed to review the Canadian Living Wage Framework and report back to Council annually with an updated living wage figure beginning in September 2024.

2. That the Winnipeg Public Service be directed to take the necessary steps to implement: a living wage requirement for: A. City of Winnipeg employees effective January 1, 2025. B. Contractors and subcontractors providing city services in all new and renewed contracts effective January 1, 2025. C. Organizations receiving City funding effective January 1, 2025.

3. That the Proper Officers of the City do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing."

Motion No. 5
Moved by Councillor Allard,
Seconded by Councillor Mayes,

BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That the eligibility criteria for the Land Dedication Reserve Fund be waived for the Cool Streets Winnipeg 2024 Pedestrian Bridge Project.

2. That funding in the amount of $28,500.00, from the Riel and East Kildonan-Transcona Land Dedication Reserves, funded as follows:

- *$8,500 from the St. Boniface Ward allocation*
- *$8,500 from the St. Norbert-Seine River Ward Ward allocation*
- *$3,000 from the St. Vital Ward allocation*
- *$8,500 from the North Kildonan Ward allocation*

be approved to the Centre Culturel Franco-Manitobain (CCFM), to assist with the cost of the Cool Streets Winnipeg 2024 Pedestrian Bridge Project (as part of Winnipeg 150 & CCFM 50th), subject to the following condition:

A. Approval of final plans and specifications for the project by the City of Winnipeg.

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

Madam Speaker: I'll call the question on suspension of the rules. All in favor? Motion 5, circulated in hard copy. That was just read out. All in favour of suspension? Contrary? Nay. I've heard some nays here as well. Is there an urgency to this item here today? We have Councillor Allard to introduce your motion.

Councillor Allard: Thank you. So, this is to get the funding out the door for the Cool Streets Project. It's…it's almost…it's almost a…Should I continue, Madam Speaker?

Madam Speaker: Yes. Councillor Allard has the floor.

Councillor Allard: It's odd for me not to be the one who's causing the disturbance.

Madam Speaker: You did your share this morning. You were speaking to Councillor Rollins across the aisle.

Councillor Allard: Okay, thank you. Well this is the Cool Streets Project that's becoming almost a program, but still a project. So, the applicant is asking for the funds that have been all approved by the area Councillors that…whose wards are represented in this motion. It's…it's urgent in the sense that they want to have the funding allocated and confirmed, and that helps them go find more funding and…and get their project…well, going. This is new to ask for suspension of the rules. In the past, it was considered to be eligible with land dedication reserve criteria. For some reason that position changed for the public service. And so normally this would be delegated authority. Public service deemed it not capital, at some point, and more of a…more of a program. And so that's why the suspension of the rules is required, otherwise this would have been done through delegated authority. So, hoping to get support on this. It's a good program. It's art on bridges and across the city. It's been seen city-wide and, for any…for any of you who have been approached by the organizer, I highly recommend participating because it brings a little bit of colour to…to a city that's sometimes a little gray. So, that's my pitch. Thanks.

Madam Speaker: Next speaker. Councillor Browaty.

Councillor Browaty: Sorry. Thank you very, very much for considering the…the suspension of the rules today. It does seem like this organization has had a little bit of friction and delays with the department. Because of that I thought last minute to throw this up here just to suspend the rules and deal with it immediately. I apologize to…to do it this way and not having a chance to speak to you ahead of time. So, they do some really nice work. Bunn's Creek Centennial Park is a gem in North Kildonan. We have three pedestrian bridges and it's really been a big talking point in the area of people getting to…to view these beautiful bridges every year. So, I'll leave it at that.

Madam Speaker: Any further speakers on the item? Any further…any further speakers on the item? Councillor Wyatt.

Councillor Wyatt: He closed…Councillor Allard closes on the item. I believe he allowed to close, yeah…Can you explain to us what the project scope consists of? What is this about? It really doesn't…I under…I don't understand what's being done on the bridge for 228…I know it's not a lot of…It's 28,500. Can you explain to us the scope of what this involves, or what are we doing here exactly, Councillor Allard, for this money? It'd be nice to know what we're voting on, that's all. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, Councillor Wyatt. Councillor Mayes, next speaker, and then Councillor Eadie.

Councillor Mayes: I'll try and answer the question since it's not Question Period. The initiative has been going for several years. It started off, I think, just with Councillor Allard. Then Councillor Allard and me. I think then with perhaps Lukes. Certainly Councillor Chambers has been in for several years. You know, it's…You sometimes use the old photos when you're putting it out then you realize somebody…And Browaty's now in, so we got to get an updated photo. So, it's basically a painting of (inaudible) pedestrian bridges, across the Seine River and in Councillor Browaty's ward across another water body which I am not aware of, that this group has been painting. They do aerial photos of them. It's, as Councillor Allard said, it's an attempt to do some public art to brighten up these spaces. Some of the number of the ones over the Seine have been done. So it's, I don't know, it's got to be year six or seven for this initiative, I think. It's generally come through Riel. I think we've always had to waive the criteria because it's not capital. So we haven't been able to do it through the delegated authority. This year there's some urgency so, rather than wait until having this exact same debate in late March, we're trying to get it through here, as Councillor Browaty said, by waiving the rules. I'm in for less than the others. The cost of this has escalated over the years. But in any event, it's ward funding being used as the ward Councillors choose. The issue here is we can't do it by the delegated authority because, here, it's not a capital expense per se. Hopefully that helps. You're painting on the surface of the bridge. Public art…without breaking the budget.

Madam Speaker: Next is Councillor Chambers.

Councillor Chambers: For the…for the record, I just sent each member of Council a link to Cool Streets. Again, it is public art. It's…three bridges in Councillor Browaty's ward, some bridges in Councillor Allard's ward, same in mine, same in Councillor Mayes'. So, again, it's a…it's a really cool project. It's a really neat project. Brings people out to appreciate, you know, art in public spaces. And one of my recommendations this year to this group will be to paint something that reflects Winnipeg's 150th anniversary. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Next is Councillor Schreyer.

Councillor Schreyer: **French Spoken**

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Next is Councillor Eadie. No? Any further speakers? Seeing none, Councillor Allard to close.

Councillor Allard: Thank you, Madam Speaker. So, there have been questions about what this is for. The reason it was moved from capital to non-capital is because it was deemed that these installations, you know, are not 30-year investments. Paint tends to fade. So the money is for things like paint, stipends for artists that choose to participate, but it is a labour of love, I think. The scope of the work with the approved funding so far, in terms of the Councillors that have indicated the level of support that they were willing to bring to the table, is 8 bridges and the entrance at CCFM, so that's the 340 Provencher Boulevard, the French Cultural Centre. And if any other City Councillor wants to join in the fray, I highly recommend this project as it's really popular, it's really nice, and…it would be amazing if this became a program one day and not an annual motion that we bring to Council, so. Thanks for your consideration.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Thank you. With that, I'll call the question. All in favour? Contrary? Carried. Now on to by-laws, Mr. Mayor.

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE
CONSIDERATION OF BY-LAWS – 1ST READING ONLY

Mayor Gillingham: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I move that the following by-laws be read a first time. By-law No. 19/2024, By-law No. 22/2024.

Madam Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Clerk: By-law Numbers 19/2024 and 22/2024.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Mr. Mayor.

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE
CONSIDERATION OF BY-LAWS – 2ND AND 3RD READINGS

Mayor Gillingham: Madam Speaker, I move that the following by-laws be read a second time. By-law No. 152/2022 and By-law No. 18/2023.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Mr. Mayor, I'll ask you to read it into the record once more…

Mayor Gillingham: Certainly.

Madam Speaker: …and we'll have the vote. Thank you.

Mayor Gillingham: I move the following by-laws be read a second time. By-law No. 152/2022 and By-law No. 18/2023.

Madam Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Clerk: By-law Numbers 152/2022 and 18/2023.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Gillingham: I move that By-laws 152/2022 and 18/2023 be read a third time, and that the same be passed in order to be signed and sealed.

Madam Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried. Mr. Deputy City Clerk, if you could tell Councillor Wyatt he can come back to the chamber, thank you. Thank you. Mr. Mayor.

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE
CONSIDERATION OF BY-LAWS – THREE READINGS

Mayor Gillingham: I move that the following by-laws be read a first time. By-law No. 13/2024, By-law No. 24/2024, By-law No. 25/2024.

Madam Speaker: Be read a first time. All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Clerk: By-law Numbers 13/2024, 24/2024, and 25/2024.

Madam Speaker: Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Gillingham: Madam Speaker, I move that By-laws No. 13/2024, 24/2024 and 25/2024 be read a second time.

Madam Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Clerk: By-laws No. 13/2024, 24/2024, and 25/2024.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Gillingham: I move that the rule be suspended and By-laws No. 13/2024, 24/2024, and 25/2024 be read a third time and that the same be passed in order to be signed and sealed.

Madam Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE
QUESTION PERIOD

Madam Speaker: On to Question Period for the Mayor. Councillor Wyatt.

Councillor Wyatt: Madam Speaker. Mr. Mayor, in 2003 the City of Winnipeg became a signatory to the international organization called Mayors for Peace. The organization was first called for when, in 1982 at the second UN Special Session on Disarmament held at the UN headquarters in New York, then Mayor Takeshi Araki of Hiroshima called for cities throughout the world to transcend national borders and join in solidarity to work toward…together to press for nuclear abolition. The organization's mission statement says the following, I'll read part of it…The purposes of the Mayors for Peace are to contribute to the attainment of lasting world peace by arousing concern among citizens of the world for the total abolition of nuclear weapons. As of February 1st of this year, a total of 8,363 cities and their mayors have joined this international organization, in 166 countries, including Winnipeg. My first question is, would you be prepared to consider, Mr. Mayor, real and tangible actions for peace, namely, by working with members of Council to facilitate at least one or two initiatives a year that would promote nuclear disarmament and world peace?

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Gillingham: Madam Speaker, thank you. Through you I want to thank, first of all the Councillor for the question, and for giving me a bit of a heads-up on it to consider it as well. So thank you. The answer is yes, I'd be willing to certainly take a look at this. First of all, I'd like the chance to review it. But I would be glad to review it and then…and then discuss this with the Councillor or Councillors.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Second question, Councillor Wyatt.

Councillor Wyatt: Yes. My second question is, courtesy of my office, would you be prepared to accept this binder I'm now forwarding to you, by the Clerk, that contains information printed off from the Mayors for Peace website? Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Gillingham: Thank you, Madam Speaker. In my former life I conducted a lot of weddings. And there are moments in the ceremony that…It feels very ceremonial here that I'm having flashbacks. Yes, Madam Speaker, I do receive this binder.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Thank you.

Councillor Wyatt: Say the next line now…Oh, okay.

Madam Speaker: Final question.

Councillor Wyatt: My third and final question is, after your office has reviewed this information, and considering the recent annual statement issued by the Bulletin of the Atomic Energy of Scientists…

Madam Speaker: Right into the question, please.

Councillor Wyatt: …Right, who annually set the doomsday clock, it's now 90 seconds to midnight, would your staff…Which was at the January 23rd this year. Would your staff be prepared to meet with me to discuss ideas or initiatives in our city that would promote nuclear disarmament and world peace that could be planned and facilitated in this year, 2024, and also in 2025 and 2026?

Mayor Gillingham: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I…I will, in all seriousness, review…review the binder. My staff will review the binder as well, and then for certainly be in touch with the Councillor. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Any further questions? Seeing none, let's move on to the Standing Policy Committee on Water and Waste and the Environment.

REPORT OF THE
STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON WATER, WASTE AND ENVIRONMENT
DATED FEBRUARY 5, 2024

Madam Speaker: Councillor Mayes, the report dated February 5th.

Councillor Mayes: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I will introduce…Move the Consent Agenda Items 1 and 2.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Councillor Eadie. Number 2, Water Bill Protection. I'll call the question on Item 1. All in favour? Contrary? Carried. Mr. Clerk.

Item 2 – Water Bill Protection

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Councillor Mayes to introduce the item.

Councillor Mayes: I'll wait to hear from Councillor Eadie.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Councillor Eadie.

Councillor Eadie: Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker. This report comes up from Water and Waste, which sounded supportive towards a motion from Monsieur Allard and myself. People start…were talking about paying the water bill on a different thing that was, like, a little bit not related. But…So I'm going to speak to a couple of things here, Madam Speaker. So, first of all, the reason we need this here is…is that there are people who can't pay their water bill. And their water bills have been increasing because this Council, since I was elected in 2010, has decided to put things like flat garbage fees on to the water bill. That's in addition to our continual raising of the water rates, because we need to do that, Madam Speaker. There's no doubt. We have to pay for all this work. We're…we're hearing about this Fort Garry Bridge and the awful sewage leak into the Red River. Not a good thing, we all acknowledge that. We all acknowledge that there's a lot of money and it's…it's contrary to what I heard on the radio the other day. All the underground sewage stuff, CSO separation, anything to do with water treatment and the water flushing down through the waste is created by people, but it's paid for through the water bill, Madam Speaker. Not off our property taxes. So, just want to clarify that. So, property taxes, if it were, it's based on a somewhat progressive…There are some regressive aspects to property tax. The mill rate itself is not flat because it's applied against lower-valued properties and higher-valued properties and each of those pays a different dollar value, which is what we're talking about when we start talking about protection and trying to protect people. Now, so, when we look at that, systemically, we are putting more pressure on the people who are unable to pay their bills through flat fees. We can make it a little easier on people who don't have a lot of money, but this Council decided not to. It's not opening the flood gates. It's talking about protecting people or trying to make things affordable for them. And we

all know that I have more of an ability to pay than somebody I was just talking to on the street, lives over at the McLaren. I have more money, I can pay more. That person has less money, can't pay as much. But it's something that we acknowledge. Now, we have a system that doesn't reflect ability to pay, so what we have is, everybody pays the same amount for their water. And, yeah, we can reduce consumption and so on and so forth. That's fine. I know we do. I know lots of people who do. We have a certain kind of washing machine that doesn't use a lot of water. So, the point I'm trying to make, Madam Speaker, about protecting…And they're going to do a report and look into all this stuff. Now, Employment and Income Assistance has almost nothing to do with the people who are trying to afford to live, who are renting and they're paying their rent, and they're trying to make ends meet. And there's lots of them out there renting, but then there's lots of them living in these undervalued houses. And they're trying to raise families with less money, so they are consuming more water. That's fine. But, when we start doing these flat fee things, Madam Speaker, what ends up happening is, we are causing…You want to solve the problem of poverty and homelessness and all this kind of stuff? Well, you'll never solve it if you don't have your systems acknowledged. There's a problem with ability to pay. Now raising the EIA would…is…is helpful, absolutely. But, if you're on EIA, apparently, supposedly, they give you enough money to pay the rent. I don't know, can't say for sure, but it's rent geared to income for most of those people. Rent geared to income, that the dollar value is much lower. That's fine, whatever. You can talk about that all you want, but I'm talking about the people who are trying to make ends meet, who are on the edge, and then…I want this motion to go. We took away the once in a lifetime thing and…Let me give you an example of something. Somebody, you know…Everybody should take responsibility, yeah. So, just happened recently to my EA. A grandma is starting to suffer from Alzheimer's. Living in their own suite or in their own house. Can't find a place for them to live. What happens? Forgot…Turn the bathtub on, didn't turn it off for hours and hours and hours. How much water got used? You're going to blame that woman? Does she have the money to pay what the bill's going to be? People had to go there and clean it up, Madam Speaker. You know, we have those issues. These issues happen all the time. And yes, if we introduce these smart meters or wi-fi meters, I think that's really good. It'll helps resolve a lot of issues. However, and…We should start installing them where people can least afford to pay, like William Whyte neighbourhood or the Dufferin neighbourhood or wherever. Spence neighbourhood, wherever. This is where we should start to try to protect people, because sometimes people misread or whatever happens. It's not that they don't want to pay their bills. They can't pay their bills and there's not enough protection. We took away one of the most important protections for, say, a…a woman living with Alzheimer's. Maybe they turned on their garden hose, forgot about it, I don't know, whatever. Like, these things happen in life, Madam Speaker. And we have to acknowledge this. So, this report is about trying to provide. When they say, well we'll give you $150 to pay a bill that's 2000-something dollars, like, we need to make sure that we look at that. What is…what is…what is the cutoff for people who might get the Salvation Army program? That's very important. But this is dealing with the symptoms of people's ability to pay. It's not dealing with it systemically. And so, when people start tying in arguments that aren't relative, it's kind of frustrating. And, just so you know, at Water and Waste, on the ability to pay, I've had that discussion at Water and Waste. Quite extensively. They have the ability to do it. They know they do, but they told me the Charter doesn't allow it, Madam Speaker. I don't know where people miss the point, what I've been talking about for 14 years. We have to acknowledge that there are people who have lesser of an ability to pay. They want to pay, but they have lesser of an ability. And there are people who have a great ability to pay. And even during COVID we had people making money, hands over fist, that live in the city. Right? Remember that? Okay. It wasn't like everybody got hit. But a lot of people did, especially those workers who work in restaurants, who get paid the lower wages, who would really need to have a living wage. So, anyway, I'll leave it. I'm voting for the report. It looks like there's further study going into this. But, I still believe there needs to be better protection for those. Not saying that they shouldn't be paying, that's not what we're…

Madam Speaker: Councillor Schreyer moves extension. One minute, all in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Councillor Eadie: So…so, let's remember that. And I hope the public remembers that because, like, I think people are missing the whole point of what I've been trying to do, trying to help people who can least afford to pay a flat fee. That represents everybody pays a flat fee. It's not fair. It's not fair. And it's not opening the flood gates to put it in this. And just putting it in the Charter doesn't mean that Council voted to go ahead and do it that way, because the Charter just says how the City can go about calculating it. That's all it says. Anyway, I'll leave it at that. I want to see what comes out of what Water and Waste has to report back about trying to protect people because, remember, water is a right of everyone in this world to consume. It's a right.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, Councillor Eadie. Any further speakers? Councillor Schreyer.

Councillor Schreyer: Thanks, Madam Speaker. It's kind of related to Item 5 of the EPC agenda regarding ability to pay. That's what it comes down to. How do we have safeguards? Councillor Eadie made the point that the Charter doesn't allow us, at this point, to…to do what they say they can do in terms of, I don't remember what the administration says, what's technically feasible in terms of these discriminating judgments as to…as to ability to pay. The issue here, though, I find ironic. I understand that that's the case, Madam Speaker. But, bear in mind, it is ironic to me that the Charter allows us to use water rates as a tax. And what I mean by a tax is using direct flat fee rates and then putting it into the general revenue, which is where our property tax is going, Madam Speaker. So, isn't it interesting? Our Charter allows us to use

our water rates as a tax. What kind of tax? Straight flat fee, not based on the value of our properties, not based on our income tax, not based on sales tax. It's based on our…our consumption of water. Which we've been reducing anyway over the decades, which…which we've been reducing. Almost every single family in Winnipeg has reduced their water consumption. As well as the fact, you consider, Madam Speaker, that's kind of like a tax on the poor, isn't it? Isn't that a tax on the poor when you're using your water rates? Which people need to do. It's on our interest that people use water. It's on our interest that people reduce their water consumption. They have, but we've increased their rates, and then we've added an 11 percent increase so their water rates…To use…To put into general revenues like a tax. Rather than taxing us on our…on our greater ability to pay, we're putting that, essentially the tax, on our…on our…on our water use, which has reduced anyway. Madam Speaker, how long are we going to go like this? Is it surprising that these issues of ability to pay, trying to protect people from the effects of using water as a tax, raising our…raising our rates anyway? What do you think is going to come of this in a year from now? In five years from now, at this rate? So, Madam Speaker, against…once again, I'll be voting with Councillor Eadie. And bear in mind, Madam Speaker, when we're using water as a…as a substitute for tax, don't be surprised that people are going to be in this…this situation. People that have reduced their water consumption over the last decade, over the last generation…How far can we go like this?

Madam Speaker: Thank you, Councillor Schreyer. Next speaker, Councillor Wyatt.

Councillor Wyatt: Unlike the previous motion, Madam Speaker, that was brought forward by Councillor Eadie, but this one is seconded by Councillor Eadie, this…this motion does not refer to developing a…an…a policy called ability to pay. Though Councillor Eadie spoke to it in his speech referring to ability to pay, if you read the motion before us or actually what the committee has voted on, it doesn't say subject to a policy of ability to pay, which could have far-ranging, far-reaching consequences, for all of our fees and charges and taxes that we levy, if we were to develop a policy of ability to pay on one item, start applying it to other items. And that was the concern I expressed on the last item that we discussed in terms of this matter. In light of the fact that this does not have these far-ranging implications policy-wise, that I'm prepared to support the recommendation coming from the committee. And I would cite this, Madam Speaker, that it's not that long ago when this Council did have a policy of a…of a water rate reduction for certain users that was targeted. That was actually, ironically, a special rate structure put in place for industry who were heavy users of water, who were massive consumers of water, largely in the…the animal rendering business, which at the time…I think it was the time of Mayor Thompson when Schneider's and the City put out massive economic development grants for them to build a plant out on Panet Road that never lasted. And millions were given away. But also, at the time a structure was put in place with the water rate department which actually lowered the rates and gave a credit. I…I can't recall if it was a credit or…or it just was a lower rate. I think it was a lower rate structure for their usage of water, compared to every other citizen, business in Winnipeg. So the question, then, has to be asked. If you can do it for them, why couldn't you maybe consider something else in terms of what's being raised here? And I think it's a legitimate question. It's not involving an issue regarding developing over-arching policy of ability to pay policy, which would have an impact across our board in terms of our…all of our charges and fees and taxes. This has been very specific. The recommendation is to report back by September 9th of 2024, and explore…explore ways. Maybe the one of the ways to…to come up with a new right rate structure would be look at maybe having a hybrid system. You know, maybe it's not just…Maybe 80 percent or 90 percent of the bill is based on usage, but maybe we look at the assessment base. Because there's no doubt in my mind, I bet you if you looked at the assessment base, the higher user…the higher assessors tend to be the higher users of water. Even on a per capita basis. And if that were the case, maybe that would help create a more equitable billing system across the board, one that's not necessarily targeted for a group, but rather, one that does take it…take in consideration, and it would be a…a shifting of the bill, if you like, away from lower-assessed homes to the higher assessed homes on a…on a fair ratio basis, as I just explained. So, maybe that's something to look at versus a…a direct grant or credit targeted based on assessment or low income. Those are just some thoughts, Madam Speaker. So, I will be happy to support the resolution that EPC concurred in as well. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Any further speakers? Seeing none, Councillor Mayes to close.

Councillor Mayes: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Well, as Pat Benatar once said, love is a battlefield, and in many ways our water rates and our policy around them is also a battlefield. Some fog to clear first. The…the flat waste diversion fee is not assigned to your water bill. It appears on a piece of paper or virtually that is your water bill, but it's not part of your water bill. I know this because all hell broke loose back in 2012 when the people Councillor Chambers now have, south of the Perimeter, none of them were on City water or sewer. All got a bill saying, for the first time, welcome to the system. Here, pay your $50 a year. It was an unpleasant period. In any event, it's not added to…added to your water bill, right? It's a separate flat fee. That's its problem. It's a flat fee. I think we're kind of conflating two different debates here. Also, we heard the mill rate isn't flat. Nope. No, the mill rate is flat. It's incidence. It's the revenue it generates from any given property is not flat because it's a multiplier. See my earlier comments. We should be able to post a couple of different multipliers, progressively increasing as one's property value increases. I think that would be a good innovation for this provincial government to…to give us that ability to…to do that. Third…third issue. It's…it's not a tax. In honour of Mike Jack who's here today, who endured that whole debate around the impact fee…It wasn't a tax. If it had been found to be

a fee, we'd be hundreds of millions…tens of millions of dollars ahead. It was found to be a tax because of the way we proposed to spend it. So, the…the wording does kind of matter here. So, we're not talking about a tax. Councillor Schreyer does land a punch or two, though, when he says, well, yeah, but there's the dividend. That's carving out 11 percent of revenue and shifting it over to the property tax side. That is probably the best argument that can be made about the way in which we bill water right now and…and sewer. Of course, as we've said here many times, that's the equivalent of about a 6 percent additional property tax increase, though. If you suddenly pull that out of the revenue for the property tax side, and I've heard Councillor Santos and others say well my residents don't particularly want higher taxes…So to suddenly come in and say, good news, water bill lower but 9 and a half percent property tax increase, I…I don't sense a groundswell for that. So, nevertheless, good point by Councillor Schreyer. Your…if you have a utility, why are you collecting money out of it and then shifting it over to the property tax side. So, the debate here, really…I's a good proposal from our staff. Thank you to Director Shanks, who rather diplomatically said yes, there's this motion. The motion talks about people facing very large water bills. And you're saying, you…you do remember you tasked us with coming back with a report under the Anti-Poverty Strategy, which, frankly, I had forgotten and I think the others on the committee had. Maybe not all of them. So that report will be coming back in September. It's broader than just…you know, if you…if you face a $20,000 bill and like, lose your house, what can we do? It's a broader approach. It talks about…support the low-income residents who experience challenges in paying for water services. Possible options, payment plans, subsidies, collaborations with social services. So, good work by the Director there spotting that. We'll get the report back. We can have that debate. It is a…a bigger debate. I…Councillor Eadie said people…people forget what I've been trying to accomplish here. Not…not at all, I don't think. I think Councillor Eadie's done a remarkably good job at highlighting the…Inequities is a strong word. The difficulties with the flat rate of fees. But I don't think Water's necessarily the best place to have that debate. As Councillor Wyatt has said and what the delegates who were here at Council themselves said in calling for us to freeze water rates for 4 years. They at the material they gave us was higher income households tend to use more water. Bigger properties, more likely to have a pool. So, it's…it's a somewhat complicated relation. You're not paying a flat rate, you're playing according to your usage. However, everybody needs to use water, so that's why this will be a good report to try and say, okay, for low-income households what…what can be done? So, I think a number of themes that were swirling around earlier are still in front of us. I think we should have those debates about fees versus property taxes. I'm not sure water rates are the best place to have that debate. A final note, the people who appeared and said, you know, we want a four-year freeze…We have huge environmental obligations. We have huge environmental projects we want to do that aren't tied to Provincial and Federal mandates. We…we need to do some of these. We are, luckily, I think, now at the end of one of the biggest sewage spills in the past 20 years in the City of Winnipeg. We have some major environmental challenges in front of us. Saying I'm in favour of freezing the rates, it…You can do that. It's a free…It's a free country, but you have to say, we got to get the money to do these projects somewhere. As I said when we debated it, we…we are not likely coming back with lower water rates. We are likely coming back with higher water rates. The good news to accompany that is, though, we will be hopefully doing a faster work on the CSO, faster work on North End Project 3, maybe faster work on other initiatives as well. But, these…these initiatives come at a cost. How much do we want to pay? Councillor Dobson actually spoke really well on this series at meeting saying, well, that's…that is something we'll have to ask the public about. That is something we'll have to measure. How fast do we want to go on these? We will have to have that debate. But, for today, I would support what…what the committee came up with and…and what EPC approved last week. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, Councillor Mayes. With that, I'll call the question, Item 2. All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON WATER, WASTE AND ENVIRONMENT
MOTIONS

Madam Speaker: We have Motion 2 that's been circulated. Moved by Councillor Allard, seconded by Councillor Gilroy. It's regarding climate impacts. Just a moment. Yes, climate impacts of widening Kenaston Boulevard. It'll be an automatic referral.

Motion No. 2
Moved by Councillor Allard,
Seconded by Councillor Gilroy,

WHEREAS the proposed 2024-2027 Multi-Year Budget is still planning a $558 million widening of Kenaston Boulevard, which is a single road widening project that's greater than the cost of the $514 million six-year capital forecast for the entire local street renewal budget;

AND WHEREAS the renewal of streets may be beneficial to climate action including the construction of active transportation facilities, road safety enhancement, as well as improvement to the bus service with better roads, without

expanding the road network;

AND WHEREAS net-new additions to the road network are known to induce demand for personal vehicle travel;

AND WHEREAS personal vehicle travel is responsible for about half of the greenhouse gas emissions in Winnipeg, according to the last climate inventory report of Council;

AND WHEREAS Council has previously directed the public service to create a Transportation Master Plan that would incorporate a modal shift from single passenger personal vehicle travel to other modes of travel by 50% by 2030;

AND WHEREAS the City of Winnipeg adopted a Climate Action Plan with goals to 2030;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Winnipeg Public Service be directed to report back to the Climate Action and Resilience Committee on the following:

1. *The direct climate impacts of the widening of Kenaston Boulevard (Route 90 Improvements).*

2. *A summary of other municipal infrastructure improvements that would be comparable in size, scope and resources to the widening of Kenaston Boulevard (Route 90 Improvements), and would support the City's climate action goals.*

Councillor Mayes: Fine for today. I would like some clarification on…My impression from the first meeting of the Climate Action Committee was the matters could be referred, and I…I've told other Councillors matters…motions could come from here, Council, to that Climate Action Committee. The Clerk has indicated he does not share that view of the situation, which is fine for today, but, we have some time here. We should try and sort this out. Can…can people write this sort of motion and have it go straight to the Climate Action?

Madam Speaker: Thank you. For today, it's going to Water and Waste. We can certainly look at that offline. Typically, motions are directed to the Standing Committees and then go on to various other committees, but we'll certainly look at that. Thank you, Councillor Mayes. Next is Motion 4, circulated in hard copy. Moved by Councillor Wyatt, seconded by Councillor Allard. I understand it's going to be withdrawn.

Motion No. 4
Moved by Councillor Wyatt,
Seconded by Councillor Allard,

WHEREAS the City of Winnipeg is once again experiencing a so-called 'accidental' or 'unexpected' break in our Wastewater Distribution System that's dumping raw sewage into a river;

AND WHEREAS the present raw sewage discharge has dumped over 2 million litres of raw sewage into the Red River and is still flowing as of this Council Meeting;

AND WHEREAS the City is too often experiencing such 'accidental' discharges of raw sewage into one of our rivers, rivers which ultimately flow into Lake Winnipeg and therefore negatively affecting the health of this important body of water, not to mention the communities that rely on Lake Winnipeg for their livelihoods;

AND WHEREAS the Province of Manitoba regulates and licenses the City of Winnipeg and has the authority to issue severe fines on the City of Winnipeg for clear and irresponsible environmental violations;

AND WHEREAS due to the continual incompetence of the City, and complete disrespect and disregard for the environment, the City must now be subjected to clear, active, and irrevocable Province of Manitoba Penalties, as only such penalties, namely fines, will act as a deterrent to future sewage discharge accidents;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City of Winnipeg call on the Province of Manitoba to immediately fine the City the equivalent of $4 a litre for every litre of raw sewage accidentally dumped into a river, from a preventable source, namely a broken pipe or broken valve or a piece of broken sewage system infrastructure;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Province of Manitoba direct all revenues achieved from paid penalties and/or fines against the City of Winnipeg, toward assisting with conservation efforts to clean and save Lake Winnipeg, and/or to the communities that are being affected by needless pollution caused by the City.

Councillor Wyatt: Yeah, because Legal came back with some suggestions. We made a change.

Madam Speaker: Okay.

Councillor Wyatt: And…so it's now Motion 6. So, I'm withdrawing 4.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Okay, so Councillor Wyatt is requesting Motion 4 to be withdrawn and with the concurrence of the seconder. Councillor Allard, do you agree?

Councillor Allard: Yes.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Motion 4 is being withdrawn. Replaced with Motion 6. All in favour? Contrary? Carried. Motion 6, moved by Councillor Wyatt, seconded by Councillor…Councillor Allard, and it's regarding Wastewater Distribution Systems. Also an automatic referral to the Standing Committee.

Motion No. 6
Moved by Councillor Wyatt,
Seconded by Councillor Allard,

WHEREAS the City of Winnipeg is once again experiencing a so-called 'accidental' or 'unexpected' break in our Wastewater Distribution System that's dumping raw sewage into a river;

AND WHEREAS the present raw sewage discharge has dumped over 228 million litres of raw sewage into the Red River and is still flowing as of this Council Meeting;

AND WHEREAS the City is too often experiencing such 'accidental' discharges of raw sewage into one of our rivers, rivers which ultimately flow into Lake Winnipeg and therefore negatively affecting the health of this important body of water, not to mention the communities that rely on Lake Winnipeg for their livelihoods;

AND WHEREAS the Province of Manitoba regulates and licenses the City of Winnipeg and has the authority to issue severe fines on the City of Winnipeg for clear and irresponsible environmental violations;

AND WHEREAS due to the continual incompetence of the City, and complete disrespect and disregard for the environment, the City must now be subjected to clear, active, and irrevocable Province of Manitoba Penalties, as only such penalties, namely fines, will act as a deterrent to future sewage discharge accidents;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City of Winnipeg request the Province of Manitoba to:

A. Immediately fine the City the equivalent of $4 a litre for every litre of raw sewage accidentally dumped into a river, from a preventable source, namely a broken pipe or broken valve or a piece of broken sewage system infrastructure;

B. Direct all revenues achieved from paid penalties and/or fines against the City of Winnipeg, toward assisting with conservation efforts to clean and save Lake Winnipeg, and/or to the communities that are being affected by needless pollution caused by the City.

STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON WATER, WASTE AND ENVIRONMENT
QUESTION PERIOD

Madam Speaker: We have no by-laws under this committee. Onto Question Period for the Chair, for Councillor Mayes. Any questions? Councillor Wyatt.

Councillor Wyatt: Councillor Mayes referred to the…the spill that's occurring. Can you give us an update on the status of it?

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Councillor Mayes.

Councillor Mayes: As of 10:30 last night, which is the last update I got from staff, the second pump was working. The bypass was working. As of a few days ago, the traffic issues had been resolved and the lanes were all open again, much

to the relief of Councillor Chambers, Lukes and myself. Probably others. So, the traffic issues are resolved. The more important sewage issues, the bypass pumps now seem to be working. We thought that was the case a few days ago. One of them had a problem, both still working. I know the Mayor has had meetings on this and has indicated the importance of having pumps that are operational all the time. It…is one of the…it…if the numbers that are reported are accurate, I believe it's the biggest spill in roughly 20 years in the city. It is…I'm going to be summarized in a sense of this is not the 100-year-old pipe problem. This is not a CSO problem. This is not a North End Sewage Treatment Plant problem. This is a pipe that was failing our monitoring efforts, which are funded through the budget, the waterway section of the budget. The…that problem was spotted in November. Steps are being made to get the bypass going so that that pipe could be fixed. Unfortunately, this…and I…I think it had another week gone by, probably wouldn't have been a story. But, I know it didn't go by. The second pipe gave way, perhaps due to the increased runoff and the increased flow through it. Then, thus, this enormous spill. Staff working now, and I think have it…have it under control.

Councillor Wyatt: It was the bypass pipe that broke or gave way. Well that's the way I read it in the media. But anyway, having said all that, when we had a problem with our bridges, and we had a…a number of years ago, when a bridge was potentially going to fail we had to go in. We were forced to inspect all of our bridges and we had to do it rapidly. We had to close some down while the inspection was going on. This is probably about 10, 15, 20 years ago. Is the Committee or has them…are you aware of any instructions to the Public Service to do a full inspection of all the pipes, valves, sewer infrastructure near, about, or under a river, that could potentially leak into a river? Is the Department going to undertake a full inspection, including engaging a third-parties if necessary, to ensure to the best of their ability that this cannot happen again, as we did with our bridges?

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Councillor Mayes.

Councillor Mayes: I'm not sure if all of that's inspected. There is certainly an ongoing monitoring function that's part of the capital budget. The waterway's part of that. It's worth noting that the…the redundancy that we need in the future, or we could have used here so that all the…the flow didn't have to continue on through this point, that's the Southwest Interceptor. Former Mayor Bowman, I think, first put that in the budget. Then-Councillor Gillingham would've been Chair of Finance at the time. So, the Southwest Interceptor, big project, close to 100 million, that's underway. That will be completed. Several years from now, but that will be completed. That will help with growth in the Southwest, but also offer a…a point of redundancy for flow going to the…through to the South End Plant so we don't have this type of situation again. We've indicated in the budget, we've had issues with the D'Arcy Lift Station, which is the one right by this leak. Former Minister Klein, to his credit, put some money toward upgrades at…at the…the D'arcy Lift Station last June or July. So, yeah. I mean, the ongoing inspections continue. It would be unfair to say that we've done nothing. In fact, I would suggest, as I have on the floor in the past, the former…former Mayor Bowman is…you know, the sewage…the greatest sewage Mayor in the city's history, was my somewhat facetious line. But, it…it's true. I mean, what do…We got going, finally, on North End Project 1 and North End Project 2. Additionally, we've gone from 30 million a year to 45 on CSO. I'd like to see us go to 60, or at least keep going at 45. Stand by on that. We'll see where that discussion goes with the Province. So yeah, there…there's certainly been financial commitment around sewer made in the last six years, more so than in previous years. I don't know what it would take, but I can certainly ask about the…it…does this trigger the need for a more short term… Your bridge analogy's not bad, frankly. So yeah, I…I can certainly ask the staff.

Councillor Wyatt: And I realize, Madam Speaker, I'm asking for something which is a bit of a…I don't know how you would explain it. A change in thinking, and that is, a bridge collapsing could potentially kill people. A sewer…a sewage break into the Red River, maybe not killing humans, but killing fish and all the living things there. And so, the question has to be, is that worth the investment and the time? And I would think it is, to say can we get this going right away? Can we get inspections going right away? Of all these pipes, so as to ensure that this doesn't happen again. And how soon could that be reported back to members of Council whether we could do that or not and, if so, when?

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Councillor Mayes.

Councillor Mayes: In 2012, I said to Councillor Wyatt, you know, I feel like I haven't been in Transcona since the '80s, which really wasn't much of an embellishment since I hadn't lived in Winnipeg for a long period in…in those years. Well, you're coming with me then. And, if I find myself 10 days later, driving around. I think occasionally on the sidewalks, as Councillor Wyatt was driving around his ward and he's pointing out various things to me. We're going to punch this through here. I got the play structure there. He stops his…he had this…it was the best thing I've ever seen. You can't see it because it's the sewer work. I can't remember where it was. It was in Councillor Wyatt's ward. And his point was, you can do these great sewage projects which will benefit the lives of your constituents and reduce basement flooding and help the environment, and no one notices. No one really…it's…you know, the running track is so much more visible. Why wouldn't you do that? But he…he had a point, which was these are massively beneficial, we need to keep funding them. So I…I think, in light of that spirit, yeah, it…it is worth the investment. It isn't always headline-making. The trouble is, we tend to debate this stuff when we have these leaks. I have said in interviews, I hope that…My goal is never to do another

CSO interview after some point. But that…I…I'm sure my career will not go that long. So, I think Councillor Wyatt was right, back in 2012. We need to keep investing in these services. You can't always see them, the public doesn't always recognize them, but they're vitally important to…to our standard of living and to the environment.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Next question, Councillor Rollins.

Councillor Rollins: Madam Speaker, on the same topic. In the…in…in media, it was wildly reported that we didn't need additional funds with respect to the effluent that was leaking into the river. I would like the Chair to comment that. Especially comment on that, Madam Speaker, in light of, you know, the budget that we have before us. In light of the ISIP grants that are needed for this file and the inflationary costs that Mayor, in…in…in his opening statements today, and priorities that he's laid out with the Premier, has added context that aren't keeping pace with the principles associated with the ISIP grant. Madam Speaker, wondering if the Chair could comment on…on what's in the public domain and clarify, for the record, what was meant from the Public Service that we saw…If he…if he has that, or speak for himself with respect to the resources we need to get the job done to protect the river from seeing and protect Winnipeggers from seeing the incidence that we just saw under the Fort Garry Bridge.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Councillor Mayes.

Councillor Mayes: Yeah, it's a bit of… three different things going on in here. We certainly need Federal and Provincial help by North End. We've had that, to the credit of federal government, former provincial government. Hopefully we will continue to get more. That's a good point by Councillor Rollins, and…and the Mayor has been clear in writing to the Premier and the Prime Minister saying, it's a three-way deal here. If costs go up, you… you've got to keep…keep your shares up, not simply let us take all of the overage. We'll see where that goes. The second item is Combined Sewer. This is not a combined sewer issue here. We will have those issues, surely a couple per year, probably for the next several years at least. We could use financial assistance there, too. Or perhaps we can work out something with the Province where they give us a greater share in the North End and we must go it alone on…on CSO. This is a third thing, right? This is…I thought this was being funded under our annual 20 million dollars for sewer mains. The old…always the big three in the water capital budget. Sort of saying, Water and Waste capital budget, right? There's CSO. There's water main renewal. There's sewer main renewal. Director Shanks said, no, actually this…this was work we detected through our…through the…the waterway crossing. Thank you, budget. Hundreds of thousands of dollars allocated to…to inspect these pipes, and a fault was found. So, I think he's right in saying we didn't…we…we had the money to fix it. Maybe more money toward monitoring would help. We'd find it earlier. But still, we'll…we'll need to fix these things, and we were moving to fix it when the second pipe blew. So, I don't think it's a crisis of funding. Perhaps we can look at the sewer main budget, but again, that…that wouldn't have solved this problem. So, we certainly…Again, 50 percent increase in the annual CSO budget for four years, that's in our capital budget. So, that's worth mentioning again. So, yeah, the Mayor is certainly trying to plead our case to the federal and provincial government to try and get more help. Not so much on this…this site…this kind of thing, but if we get help on those other areas we can certainly, I think, focus more on this kind of pipe that isn't part of the North End or CSO. Hopefully that addresses the question.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Any further questions? Seeing none, let's move on to the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services.

REPORT OF THE STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY SERVICES DATED FEBRUARY 6, 2024

Madam Speaker: Councillor Browaty will take the…the Committee today. It's a report dated February 6th.

Councillor Browaty. Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'd like to move the report, Items 1 and 2.

Madam Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY SERVICES
MOTIONS

Madam Speaker: We have Motion 3 under this committee, moved by Councillor Gilroy, seconded by Councillor Chambers, and it's regarding a cleanup of all parks, playgrounds and tot lots. It'll be an automatic referral to the Standing Committee. And now on to Question Period. Councillor Browaty to take questions for Councillor Duncan. Seeing none, next is Standing Policy Committee on Public Works.

Motion No. 3
Moved by Councillor Gilroy,
Seconded by Councillor Chambers,

WHEREAS within the defined higher needs areas of the City, community members and daycares have been finding weapons (knives, machetes, etc) and discarded needles littered around city parks, playgrounds and tot lots, which is creating an unsafe environment for children;

AND WHEREAS discarded needles are a bio hazard and can cause injury to people who find them;

AND WHEREAS parks, playgrounds and tot lots are valuable community assets and are essential to the health and well-being of all Winnipeggers;

AND WHEREAS the proactive cleanup of any needle debris and weapons in City of Winnipeg parks, playgrounds and tot lots will alleviate the strain on 311 and the concerns around safety from residents and children using the parks;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Public Service be directed to report back to the Standing Policy Committee in 60 days on the following:

1. *Creation of a policy for the proactive cleanup of needle debris and weapons, prioritising all parks, playgrounds and tot lots located within a 1km radius of a daycare within the higher needs areas of the City.*

2. *Potential partnerships with community organizations that may have the infrastructure and capacity to assist.*

3. *Options for provincial funding to help offset the cleanup costs.*

REPORT OF THE
STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS
DATED JANUARY 30, 2024

Madam Speaker: Councillor Lukes.

Councillor Lukes: Sure. I'd like to move Items 1 through 4, please.

Madam Speaker: All in favour? 4 is pulled. I'll call the question on 1 through 3. All in favour? Contrary? Carried. Mr. Clerk.

Item 4 – Snow Clearing and Ice Control Policy

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Councillor Lukes to introduce the Item.

Councillor Lukes: I'll wait to hear from Councillor.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Councillor Eadie.

Councillor Eadie: Yes, thanks Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I'd first like to begin by apologizing to Johnny. Anyway, Madam Speaker, I just wanted to speak to this. Like...We live in a winter city. We do have people who use wheelchairs and walkers and so on. And, you know, I appreciate that everybody would love to have the perfect sidewalk to walk on all year round. The reality in this motion…It's a good motion, don't get me wrong. And it…it attempts to deal with the…the problem of the windrows that are created on the sidewalk…by sidewalk paths. But, you know, Winnipeggers have adapted. There are wheelchairs that…that you can change the tires in the winter and they have good traction. They can go through

some level of snow. I think there are walkers with bigger wheels that you can attach if you have the ability to walk…walk those longer distances. We do have snow programs that, if you need to use Transit Plus in the winter, they can clear the pathway from your front door out to the sidewalk or out…out to the road, the curb, where Transit Plus would pick you up for those who, you know, would use a walker and…and can't go a long distance. There's a number of things we do to make things accessible. I do agree. I mean, we could plow residential sidewalks when levels of snow…Like, the road and the sidewalk are quite different, Madam Speaker. Motor vehicles can…And if you didn't put your winter tires on, as people say, too bad, so sad. But really motor vehicles can traverse over a fair amount of snow versus a pedestrian, whether they're using mobility equipment or…or what have you. It's really the windrows that are the problem for anybody using mobile device…mobility devices. Madam Speaker, you know, it would be nice to say, you know, we have a snow policy. The road…the residential roads get plowed when 10 centimeters of snow have collected. Or we could do that, you know, with various different ways. But the…the residential, the P3 sidewalks, you know, maybe we say we plow those at…when we get 5 centimeters of snow accumulated or whatever. And we know that there's no absolute perfection in any one winter because all the conditions change. Like, people were crying, Madam Speaker, for sanding. And our person that's the head of Snow and Ice Control accurately pointed out that, well, if you put sand down while it's melting, when it ices up at night the sand's not there anymore to help your traction. Which is true. I mean, I…I found that as I was walking on the sidewalks this winter, at certain points. So, there's all kinds of different issues that have to be dealt with. But, like, we'd love to see 100 percent the snow removal. I'd…I'd actually like to see all the windrows at…at curbs blocking…blocking drivers' views at all intersections, whether they're regional or whatever they are, doesn't matter. But the reality is, it doesn't get done. The reality is, we don't…Like, for example, on Selkirk Avenue we really should…it's…there's some narrow sidewalk rights of way. It should be removed immediately, the windrows that are created. And get rid of that snow because there's nowhere to store it, Madam Speaker. And then there is no sidewalk to really utilize. And that…that's frustrating on streets, like in Elmwood you have Johnson. If you don't…The sidewalks are so narrow there, Madam Speaker. Like, there's no…You can't store the snow there. You got to move it. So, there's all kinds of conditions. But to achieve…I…I don't think that the City can really afford, and I think there is an undue hardship in trying to say that we're going to come up with all…Like, we're talking lots of money, Madam Speaker. And the new sidewalk equipment that we do have, it's only enough to get done what…what was originally planned. You'd need to get a lot more sidewalk plows, or whatever you call that equipment, in order to do it at the same time every P1 gets done. And it's accurately pointed out, sometimes it takes up to 36 hours. But, there's also a timing thing. Like, when the roads are being plowed, that's when the windrows are there. I don't know if you want to penalize them. They can come back and clean them up, but the idea is to get the roads clear so that it's not dangerous for driving, which can also put pedestrians in danger. The…So sometimes doing the sidewalks, maybe you should wait, and then when…when…because if they come back and…and clear the snow again there's going to be windrows, and then how much are those contracts going to cost? Like, I…Like, anyway, there's so much that would have to be calculated and figured out. Now we have asked, Madam Speaker, with the new transit frequent transit system coming up, where there's transfer points. We have asked them to come up with a better snow clearing policy for the actual bus stops, but also the intersections which people have to cross and walk in order to get there to make sure those windrows are not there and are cleaned up. And there's going to be an extra cost related to that, Madam Speaker. And…and it'll be an added cost to make sure that the bus stop are cleared properly so that you're not sliding down a good chunk of ice out onto the curb and into the street, which, in some winters has happened to others, and almost to myself. Almost slid underneath the bus…underneath the bus as I was trying to get on because I was sliding down the ice. So, there's all kinds of things that can happen, Madam Speaker. So, I just wanted to…I don't know, you know, it's an ongoing dialogue for City of Winnipeg. We live in the snow thing, and I hear of human rights, but, like... like, if you don't want snow, I guess you got to move, Madam Speaker, to somewhere where it doesn't snow. Like, I…I don't know. Like, I don't know what else to say. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. I do want to advise Council that the live stream is out currently. There's an issue with the internet provider. We are recording, however, so it will be uploaded after. Next speaker. Any further speakers on this item? Councillor Lukes, back to you.

Councillor Lukes: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. And I want to thank, through you, I want to thank Councillor Eadie for his very respectful discussion about the challenges that we have on snow and ice removal. I also want to thank Councillor Eadie for…I don't think he's been on the Public Works Committee. I don't think he's Chair of the Public Works Committee. But I want to thank him for his understanding of the complexities involved in removing snow in a winter city. Often at Committee meetings there are robust discussions on issues. Often the discussions cover the issue at hand, but also many other issues related to the primary topic or the motion. And this really happens very frequently when we discuss any kind of snow removal. Whether the issue is on roads, on medians, on boulevards, on back lanes, private lanes, at transit stops, or on pathways or even sidewalks. The science of snow removal is all encompassing. All types of snow removal is interconnected and linked together. Nothing is a stand-alone when it comes to snow removal. Therefore, when we have these…these robust discussions, regardless of the title of the motion or the many points, there are many points made. At this last Public Works meeting a very robust discussion on snow removal occurred with the Committee and the department. Again, it was a very good discussion. But what followed afterwards is, what I would say, was extremely reprehensible and irresponsible behavior. To see a colleague take a statement and completely reframe it into a complete

misrepresentation is appalling. Actually, no. It's very, very sad. And very representative of an unhealthy, imbalanced perspective. For a colleague to have to reach that level to reframe and misrepresent a statement in order to have members of the public then, in-turn, stroke their ego by saying how right they are and how out of touch and completely…and completely out of touch their colleague is…Some people have said that's politics. I say that behavior is pathetic. Madam Speaker, I am the mother of three boys. Teenage…No, they're not teenagers anymore, they're 21 years old. They live at home. Fortunately, we have space. But still, that's a very passionate environment. I tell them, don't fight with each other. You've got the whole world to fight with. Go out and fight with the world. Don't fight with each other. Work together to make a better space, a better family life. Madam Speaker, there has never been a Council more supportive of working to improve snow removal on roads, on transit stops, on streets and sidewalks. I just wish there was more respect from the work we all put into this to everyone. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, Councillor Lukes. With that, the question on Item 4. All in favour? Contrary? Carried. That's noted. Next, we'll move on to by-laws. By-laws, Councillor Lukes.

STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS
CONSIDERATION OF BY-LAWS – THREE READINGS

Councillor Lukes: I'd like to move that the following by-laws be read a first time. By-law No. 11, 12, 15 and 16/2024.

Madam Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Clerk: By-laws numbered 11/2024, 12/2024, 15/2024 and 16/2024.

Madam Speaker: Councillor Lukes.

Councillor Lukes: Okay, I'd like to move that By-laws numbered 11/2024, 12/2024, 15/2024 and 16/2024 be read a second time.

Madam Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Clerk: By-laws numbered 11/2024, 12/2024, 15/2024 and 16/2024.

Councillor Lukes: Alright.

Madam Speaker: All in favour? Or, pardon me. Councillor Lukes.

Councillor Lukes. Okay. I'd like to move that the rules be suspended and By-laws No. 11/2024, 12/2024, 15/2024 and 16/2024 be read a third time and that same be passed in order to be signed and sealed.

Madam Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried. Questions for our chair? for Councillor Lukes? Seeing none, next committee. Standing Policy Committee on Finance. Chair, Councillor Browaty.

REPORT OF THE
STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
DATED FEBRUARY 5, 2024

Councillor Browaty: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'd like to introduce the Report of February 5th, 2024, and move Reports 1 and 2 as consent.

Madam Speaker: Number 2 is pulled, Debt…Debt Management Policy Update. I'll call the question on 1. All in favour? Contrary? Carried. Mr. Clerk.

Item 2 – Debt Management Policy Update

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Mr. Chair.

Councillor Browaty: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'll wait to hear the questions and comments of my colleagues.

Madam Speaker: Councillor Eadie.

Councillor Eadie: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I stood this down. I'm voting for this, but let me just start off by this review, Madam Speaker. As I think all of us know, we talked about doing a…the debt policy and so on, by-law review, Madam Speaker, the financial management portion as well, Madam Speaker, in our strategic priorities action plan. And I wanted to thank…Actually, I'm amazed. I think our CFO has done a…a wonderful job since she came into the office, and…Can't remember quite what year, I think it's five years ago. And really appreciated the work that she's done, and she's led a lot of great initiatives and her and her team did a great job in reviewing the debt strategies across various cities and looking across the country, engaging in the right dialogue with the bond rating agencies such as Moody's, where they gave us some information. There's some changes that are coming, that you can read in this report, that I agree with, and…Well, I…I'm not going to disagree with upping the…Changing from 90 percent of operating funding to 100 percent of operating funding. I think that's really important, and I think that's good and…and I know that our CFO is working with the Mayor's office and others in the CAO, and I understand limitations. But I am disappointed because I know, Madam Speaker, and…Oh, the change. Like, the A, 30-year debt. That's the kind of debt we need to have when we're replacing a bridge. Or we're…or we're building a…building a new…what hopefully will be a freeway for trade, as well as for moving people around the city for work purposes, and, you know, why, I'm not opposed to widening Kenaston and…and those kind of things. So, but these are huge projects, and they would…they do last a very long time, and 30-year debt, from my perspective, is…is a good way. And there is provision, of course. If you end up…you don't have enough cash and you can't buy a bus, the length of debenture for that kind of a purchase with debt is more appropriately…whatever, 15 years or whatever…whatever that is, if you have to use debt for that kind of thing. What a lot of…this isn't like the late 1990s or the early 2000s. We don't have a lot of cash, because we haven't…well, I'll say it. We haven't made the right revenue decisions, from my perspective. Others would say I'm wrong, but I'm saying no, I'm not wrong, because we know what the problem is now. And, you know, we're hoping for that new deal working with the new provincial government for a formula that sees our share in the growth. But we're still going to have to depend on property taxes. Every city in this country is still depending on property taxes. And why? It's the most stablest type of taxation because, yeah, the market values do fluctuate up and down, but they continue to exist. People need a place to live, and it's the most stable of revenue sources. Really, it is. So…And that's why the people who came way before us decided that property taxes was the way to fund City goods and services. Madam Speaker, I digress a bit. This is what I think are good changes to our financial management plan. I don't know that saying you're going to…Well, a full review every term, I think, is really important to follow with the four-year budget cycle. However, the 100 percent...you know, Moody said we could go to 110 percent. And, with all this stuff we have flying at us right now, Madam Speaker, we are going to have to, like…the reality is, we're going to have to take on more debt. Like…unless the other levels of government come up with all of the extra cash we need, which I highly doubt, we're going to need to pay for things. And then paying off the debt is by the water bill payers and the property taxpayers, right? Like, that's…that's how it works. Well, we could use other revenue sources because your debt is based on 100 percent of revenues which could be also the money that comes in from the Province for operating, and it is for operating. So, there you have it. Anyway, again, I'd like to thank Catherine Kloepfer for all the work she's done. She's leaving us May 31st, I believe, and I just wanted to say I have had the opportunity to work directly with our CFO over her term and really appreciate all the work that she does. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, Councillor Eadie. Next speaker? Seeing none, back to you, Councillor Browaty.

Councillor Browaty: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I thank Councillor Eadie for his questions…or his comments. In particular, those about our recently…our now departing CFO. Certainly want to thank her for her time and commitment to the City. It's been an absolute pleasure and will leave a big hole to fill. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. I'll call the vote on Item 2. All in favour? Contrary? Carried. Okay. We'll now have Question Period under this committee. Any questions for the Chair or Councillor Browaty? Okay, seeing none, next is the Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development. Madam Chair, Councillor Rollins.

**REPORT OF THE
STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON PROPERTY AND DEVELOPMENT
DATED FEBRUARY 1, 2024**

Councillor Rollins: Yes, Madam Speaker. Thank you. I would like to move Items 1 to 8 inclusive.

Madam Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

**STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON PROPERTY AND DEVELOPMENT
CONSIDERATION OF BY-LAWS – 1ST READING ONLY**

Councillor Rollins: I'd like to move that the following By-laws be read a first time.

Madam Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Councillor Rollins: By-law No. 20/24, By-law No. 21/2024.

Madam Speaker: Yes. All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Clerk: By-laws numbered 20/2024 and 21/2024.

**STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON PROPERTY AND DEVELOPMENT
CONSIDERATION OF BY-LAWS – 2ND AND 3RD READINGS**

Councillor Rollins: Thank you. I move that the following by-laws be read a second time. By-law No. 53/2023, By-law No. 95/2023 and By-law No. 97/2023.

Madam Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Clerk: By-laws numbered 53/2023, 95/2023 and 97/2023.

Councillor Rollins: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I move that By-laws No. 53/2023, 95/2023 and 97/2023 be read a third time and that same be passed in order to be signed and sealed.

Madam Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

**STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON PROPERTY AND DEVELOPMENT
CONSIDERATION OF BY-LAWS – THREE READINGS**

Councillor Rollins: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'd like to move the following by-laws be read a first time. By-law No. 14/2024, By-law No.18/2024, By-law No. 23/2024.

Madam Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Clerk: By-laws numbered 14/2024, 18/2024 and 23/2024.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Councillor Rollins.

Councillor Rollins: Thank you. I'd like to move that By-laws 14/2024, 18/2024 and 23/2024 be read a second time.

Madam Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Clerk: By-laws numbered 14/2024, 18/2024 and 23/2024.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Councillor Rollins.

Councillor Rollins: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I move that the rule be suspended and By-laws No. 14/2024, 18/2024, and 23/2024 be read a third time and that same be passed in order to be signed and sealed.

Madam Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried. Okay. We'll have Question Period under this committee. Councillor Mayes.

STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON PROPERTY AND DEVELOPMENT
QUESTION PERIOD

Councillor Mayes: Thank you, Madam Speaker. On May 27, 2009, Councillor Orlikow's second meeting as a Councillor, as it turns out. After Councillor Rollins and I volunteered for him. May 27, 2009, there was a vote of Council, on a property known as 25 Fort Street. This has had a long voyage through many committees. The now defunct Downtown Committee, Property Committee delegated out. This was the part of the Friends of Upper Fort Garry of old historical Fort Garry site. Could Councillor Rollins, at perhaps the next meeting or at some point, give us an update? This was, I see my fiery comments in 2015, how we all agreed to a two-year extension, but certainly no more than that. Here we are, 9 years later. The provision voted on by Council on DMIS, May 27, 2009, includes a whole provision about how if the project isn't done within five years, the land would revert back to the City. I can't find the definition of the project anywhere, unhelpfully. So, I don't need it today, obviously, but if Councillor Rollins can give us an update about where things stand on this file, where the land currently is, lots of legal issues here, lots of history, lots of money. One of the reports, 100,000 a year in revenue from the parking lot. Where do things…Can we get an update please, on where things stand and…and the road from here?

Madam Speaker: Thank you.

Councillor Rollins: Madam Speaker, through you to Councillor Mayes, quid pro quo, I do want a fiery rendition replayed, because, as you know, Madam Speaker, I wasn't here in 2010. I will continue though, Madam Speaker, because I don't think we have a provision for fiery renditions and a question to the question. So, an answer to the question. For sure, in the Fort Rouge-East Fort Garry ward, at the northeast corner of Assiniboine Avenue and Fort Street, you find the historic Fort Garry Place in the Fort Garry Park, Madam Speaker. And because there are Friends of the Lower Fort Garry, you know, I deal with this parcel a bit, about once or twice a term, Madam Speaker. Now, I do understand that there have been, over time, a lot of interests, including some, you know, multi-tiered government action on the site, Madam Speaker. To which sometimes, like we deal with from time to time at this Council, where we're dealing with contiguous properties, between Province and City, City and School Board, for instance, we have a bit of a shared understanding in the City. So, things grow up over time for various reasons, and right now, there is a status with respect to a…a conditional use and variance that has expired, to operate a gravel lot on the west of the park. There has been a few parties, like I said, to the agreement, Madam Speaker, complicating matters, but the Public Service continues to look at options, whether it's a re-application for the conditional use or variance, to shut down a parking operation on this site, or the Public Service to, you know, consider conditional use and variances that might be coming to my Standing Policy Committee, Madam Speaker. So, there's, you know, there's a few, like I said, there's a few Friends of the Upper Fort Garry and I expect to…to hear from them. I expect to hear…hear through, perhaps, the Standing Policy Committee on them. And I absolutely always expect to deal with this Item and this property every term, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, Councillor Rollins. Councillor Mayes, second question.

Councillor Mayes: Yeah, and it is certainly Councillor Rollins' ward. If we could though, at some point, get an update. I mean, I…The matter has been extended and re-extended, over and over again. Nothing against the people who volunteered as Friends of Upper Fort Garry back there, 15 years ago or more. But, at some point, we've got land there, or do we? I mean, this is a bit unclear from the way things were written up, to me at least, in 2009. So, if we could get a report back to…to Council, perhaps from the CAO, or others, or Legal, or…head of Legal Services, just where things stand with the Friends. If…if the gravel lot is still operating, where's the revenue going? If it's…

Madam Speaker: Thank you, Councillor Mayes, long question.

Councillor Mayes: Yes.

Madam Speaker: Thank you.

Councillor Rollins: Madam Speaker, just…Councillor Mayes is absolutely correct, right. There was a…there was a park where this property was obligated to transfer the land to the Province, which I understand they did. The Province, however, wasn't necessarily party to agreements between the City and Friends of Fort Garry. So, super complicated. I'm sending the status, as…as I know it, through the department to Councillor Mayes, Madam Speaker, and I…I do expect I will continue to talk about this property.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, that concludes Question Period under this committee. Next is the Governance Committee of Council.

REPORT OF THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL DATED FEBRUARY 8, 2024

Madam Speaker: Councillor Eadie, if you could move the reports on my behalf.

Councillor Eadie: Yes, thank you. I'd like to introduce the Governance Consent Agenda Items 1 and 2.

Madam Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL CONSIDERATION OF BY-LAWS – THREE READINGS

Councillor Eadie: Okay, Madam…Madam Speaker, by-laws. I move that By-law No. 10/2024 be read a first time.

Madam Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Clerk: By-law No. 10/2024.

Councillor Eadie: Okay, I'd like to move that By-law 10/2024 be read a second time.

Madam Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Clerk: By-law No. 10/2024.

Councillor Eadie: I'd like to move that the rule be suspended and that same…hold it, sorry. I move that the rule be suspended and By-law No. 10/2024 be read a third time and that same be passed in order…in order to be signed...to be signed, yeah.

Madam Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried. That concludes our agenda for today. Councillor Schreyer will you move adjournment.

Councillor Schreyer: So moved.

Madam Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried. Roll call please, Mr. Clerk.

ROLL CALL

Clerk: Madam Speaker Councillor Sharma, His Worship Mayor Gillingham, councillors Allard, Browaty, Chambers, Dobson, Eadie, Gilroy, Lukes, Mayes, Orlikow, Rollins, Santos and Schreyer.

Council adjourned at 3:00 p.m.