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March 11th, 2024

Mayor Scott Gillingham
Executive Policy Committee Members

VIA Submission to City Clerk's Office

Re.: Item 9, Living Wage, Executive Policy Committee, March 12th, 2024.

Dear Mayor Gillingham and Executive Policy Committee Members:

Please accept this submission on the need for the City of Winnipeg to become a living wage employer. As per the "Winnipeg Without Poverty: Calling on the City to Lead" report published in 2018. It recommends that the City of Winnipeg should:

"Adopt a living wage policy that would commit to: i. Paying direct employees a living wage according to accepted national living wage standards and in partnership with key community stakeholders. ii. Working with local living wage advocates to determine which City contracted and subcontracted services must be paid a living wage. Following this process, ensure future contracts in those service areas include a legally binding clause requiring contracted service workers, including those working for subcontracted companies, to be paid the living wage for Winnipeg.

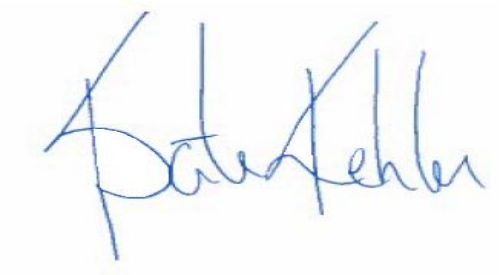
However, an essential exception must be made when it comes to Community Grants. The reality is that the not-for-profit and charitable sectors are often not funded sufficiently to be living wage employers themselves. The City of Winnipeg supplies, through Community Grants, both large and small amounts to various struggling organizations that assist Mayor and Council to work towards meeting the City's Charter responsibility to look after the health and well-being of the city's inhabitants. To place a living wage requirement on these organizations would further put their operations at risk.

The City itself, though, and its for-profit contractors can and should do better. It is unacceptable that the City of Winnipeg currently pays below a living wage in certain job classifications. As one of the largest employers in Manitoba, the City should lead by example and commit to paying your employees a living wage, calculated by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives – Manitoba office at $19.21 an hour in 2023.

The Living Wage, as published annually by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, upholds the research standard set by the Canadian Living Wage Framework. This calculation is based on data from Statistics Canada and the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation. It is done by two economists with doctorate degrees and is peer-reviewed. Further research has also demonstrated that by paying a living wage, employers lift the economy as employees have more funds to spend on essential needs.

The City of Winnipeg should be an employer of choice. Wages that may force some employees to use food banks and other charitable organizations to survive should be an anathema. Many municipalities across Canada, large and small, have committed to being living wage employers. It is time for Winnipeg to join this movement.

Sincerely,



Executive Director