To: Standing Policy Committee Community Services March 17, 2024
Date: March 11, 2024
From: District 1 – City Centre Community Centre Board (CCCCB), Chairperson: Bill Jost

Subject: Preliminary Budget Concerns for the City of Winnipeg's Municipal Accommodations Community Centre Maintenance Funding

On behalf of District 1 (CCCC Board), we are writing to share our concern in the apparent decrease to Municipal Accommodations – Community Centre Budget year over year. (Page 189)

The 63 Winnipeg community centres, run by a board of community member volunteers (many with full-time jobs and families) rely on Municipal Accommodations (MA) department to provide their expertise with regards to repairs and maintenance. The Universal Funding Agreement indicates the City's role is with management (coordination and financial) of major infrastructure repairs. However, community centres hear there isn't enough funding for major repairs, and that staff shortages cause delays.

Further, Municipal Accommodations visits centres to complete annual inspections, but centres have not received their inspection reports, which include a list of deficiencies, in at least the last two years. These reports help centres monitor items that need to be repaired. It is hard to do preventative maintenance when we do not know what needs to be taken care of before it breaks down, as well, if we're unaware of a potential major repair, it's hard to budget for it if we're not aware. Again, we rely on the expertise of Municipal Accommodations to supply this information.

Two examples of major issues:

Centre A: has a faulty HVAC system that was installed approximately 12 years ago by the City. The unit continuously fails, and it has been repaired several times; they have been told the system is the wrong size. The Centre has been advised to replace the unit, which will mean a shutdown, and loss of revenue. The centre has also been advised by Municipal Accommodations to apply for the Renovation Grant, but then was told that it could not be covered by the Renovation Grant.

Centre B: a sewer pipe has broken under a community centre and is leaking sewage into the basement. This requires clean up daily and they have been told that it requires breaking up of the concreate basement floor from one side to the other and replacing the pipe. To break up the floor requires temporary moving of supplies from the mechanical room, as well as navigating gas pipes. Municipal Accommodations advised this was not considered a major repair and that the centre should apply for the Renovation grant. A number of years ago another centre had a sewer pipe break and Municipal Accommodations came and fixed it at no cost to the community centre.

Concerns of shortage of funding and staff are shared by other Community Centres across the City; the challenge will continue as the infrastructure continues to age. For this reason, our district board felt it was imperative to bring these challenges to your attention and flag our concern for the apparent decreasing budget for Municipal Accommodations.

Our District board would appreciate this area being reviewed before Council's final approval of the next multi-year budget.

Thank you for your consideration.