COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WINNIPEG
Wednesday, March 20, 2024

The Council met at 9:50 a.m.

The Clerk advised the Speaker that a quorum was present.

The Speaker called the meeting to order.

MOTIONS

Madam Speaker: We have a motion before us to allow a member of Council to participate remotely in today's meeting. Madam Clerk, would you please read that into the record?

Moved by Councillor Sharma,
Seconded by Councillor Eadie,

That in accordance with Section 9.1(9) of the Procedure By-law 50/2007 Councillor Chambers be allowed to participate remotely in today's meeting of Council.

Madam Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried. Welcome, Councillor Chambers. We'll now have the opening prayer. Please rise if you're able.

Councillor Schreyer: Shouldn't we (inaudible) Councillor Orlikow?

Madam Speaker: That will come shortly. Thank you. Please rise for prayer by Councillor Chambers.

The opening prayer was read by Councillor Chambers.

Madam Speaker: We have a leave of absence motion, moved by the Mayor and seconded by Councillor Duncan. Madam Clerk, would you read that into the record? It's for Councillor Orlikow.

Moved by Mayor Gillingham,
Seconded by Councillor Duncan,

THAT Councillor Orlikow be granted a leave of absence from today's meeting due to a personal family matter.

Madam Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Madam Speaker: I'd like to take a moment to recognize former Premier Greg Selinger who is in the gallery today with us. Welcome, former Premier. And former Councillor, yes indeed. Madam Clerk, will you read the notice for today's meeting into the record, please?

ROLL CALL

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

Madam Speaker: Thank you Madam Clerk, and the notice, please.

Pursuant to Section 79(1) of The City of Winnipeg Charter, a Special Meeting of Council has been called for Wednesday, March 20, 2024 at 9:30 a.m. to consider the following matters:

REPORT OF THE WINNIPEG POLICE BOARD DATED MARCH 8, 2024
1. Winnipeg Police Board – Preliminary 2024-2027 Multi-Year Operating and Capital Budget Recommendation

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE DATED MARCH 19, 2024
1. Executive Policy Committee – Final Recommendation – Preliminary 2024-2027 Multi-Year Operating and Capital Budgets

2. 2024 Mill Rates for the Education Support Levy and Special Levy, and the corresponding by-laws.

Pursuant to the requirements of The City of Winnipeg Charter, no other subject or matter other than outlined in this notice shall be considered at the meeting.

INTRODUCTION AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Madam Speaker: Thank you, Madam Clerk. It's my pleasure to welcome our pages for today's meeting. Please welcome Koeun Lee of École secondaire Oak Park High School, who resides in the Charleswood Tuxedo-Westwood Ward and Kosi Udeh of Collège St. Norbert Collegiate, who resides in the St. Norbert-Seine River Ward. Thank you again for joining Council and serving today.

DELEGATIONS

Madam Speaker: We'll move right into delegations. We previously had four delegations registered to speak on the 24-27 Multi-Year Operating and Capital Budgets, two in support and two in opposition. We've been advised Jessica Miller, Chief Executive Officer with the Humane Society has chosen not to appear today. Councillor Eadie, I understand you wish to suspend the rules to hear three additional delegations.

Councillor Eadie: Yes, Madam Speaker. I'd like to move a motion to suspend the rules to do hear following people for five minutes without questions. Peter Martin who's in support of the budget, Sandra Dupuis who's in opposition and Teresa Cwik who is in opposition, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: All in favour of the additional delegations, five minutes, no questions? All in favour? Contrary. Carried. Our first delegation is Mr. Chris Lorenc, President and CEO of the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association. He's in support of the Report of the Executive Policy Committee dated March 19, 2024. Welcome.

Chris Lorenc: Thank you Madam Speaker, Mr. Mayor, members of Council, senior administration. I want to first begin by thanking you for the 40 plus meetings, the countless phone calls, the informal meetings, discussions, the reports, the clarifications to read, digest, respond to more documents than people can imagine. The result of that effort is a budget compromise and an attempt to address many more challenges this and every major urban city faces that the current access to fiscal revenues allowed. This not unlike any previous budget has resulted, they all do, in reaction, complaints, pressure, last minute appeals. That is how this sausage called the budget is made. It isn't pretty, but at the end of the day, it does its best to serve the interests of the public, whose interests you are trustees of. You have my presentations to which are attached to the submissions made to Public Works and to Executive Policy Committee. They are consistent in their approach. We obviously recommend them to you for your consideration going forward. And they repeat our support for the budget. I don't propose to read what I have already submitted. I wish to speak above the presentations and appeal to you to look at the bigger picture, a broader view of what are the required next steps emerging from this budget. So that the next and the next and the next budget begins to taste just a little bit better. So that it may fill the voids. This one may not have successfully addressed. All of this not with standing your individual and collective best efforts. I am going to address two directions you have heard not just from the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association, but other stakeholders interested in enabling the city long-term to benefit by necessary financial strength and flexibility with which to address the challenges Winnipeg faces today and no doubt in the years to come. I first refer to the absolute need for a chief economic development officer created with a seniority equivalent to the CFO and COO reporting through the CAO to a standing policy committee with responsibilities for policies designed to grow Winnipeg's economy. It is only with a growing economy that you can concurrently deal with the myriad of social issues plaguing this and every major urban centre, homelessness, addictions, mental health, violence and crime, housing shortages, safety. Mayor Gillingham and Councillor Chambers initiated the creation of the Manager of Economic Development position, development position for which we are grateful. They saw and understood the need. They lobbied colleagues. We have the position of that. That position for the first time acknowledged the importance of examining City budgets through an economic lens. The time has now arrived to accept that raising the role and profile to that of a chief economic development officer is required to focus on the bigger goal. Raising sufficient revenues to both address social issues and make Winnipeg a magnet for new residents, businesses and enterprise. the fact is the goal of an economic growth need to champion in the executive officers to ensure that focus is central to the big decisions administrative and political about how the City delivers services, shapes budgets and addresses fiscal challenges. Imagine, if you will, where CentrePort South lands could be today if the city had had a chief economic development officer years ago. Imagine how much further that development would be today. It is a credit to then councillor and now Mayor Scott Gillingham to have pushed politically for the City to commit investment of $20 million to

extend sewer and water to CentrePort South and persuade then Premier Stefanson to (inaudible) not just the 20 million provincial share, but the $20 million share from the federal government as well. Imagine how that task might have been accelerated with the chief economic development officer charged with advancing and recommending strategies to leverage investment to support growing the economy. Imagine if the special planning district which oversees all land use planning applications in CentrePort North, all within the RM of Rosser and universally lauded for its efficiency, clarity, timeliness and predictability of process was harnessed and extended to CentrePort South. Imagine, the level of extra provincial investment in value add manufacturing, import, export, high paying jobs and taxes that would have by now benefited the City, the Province and Federal Government. The latter two being the primary beneficiaries of all economic development. As the Mayor often says, it's the federal and provincial governments which benefit from the very first dollar in any development cities on the other hand have to wait. I urge you to recognize the indispensable link between economic growth revenue generation and concurrent capacity to fund quality of life programming. I urge you to frame the Chief Economic Development Officer position to be an economic growth champion within senior administration reporting to the elected branch to advance policies and approaches that support growth. This individual would have primary responsibility to ensure the focus on economic growth is embedded in all financial planning, all land development, all discussions of taxation and expenditure. It would be resourced with necessary policy and research support to make sure all executives and elected officials are fully aware of the foundational role the economy plays in providing not just the cash necessary to current services but to the goals of raising Winnipeg status as a major Canadian metropolis. I ask you to recognize that how that then gives you greater flexibility and urgency to your call upon Broadway to begin discussions about a new fiscal deal, to allow Winnipeg and all municipalities to embrace growths through an economic partnership. A new sharing of and access to revenues, a redefined fenestra and reshaped sharing of service delivery responsibilities. You cannot go to the province cap in hand, please, sir, more, as victim seeking more revenues if you do not at the same time demonstrate an internal structure and approach that promotes policies to grow our economy in partnership. To those who say this is impossible, I cite Nelson Mandela who said, "It always seems impossible until it is done." it is time for fundamental change to get us on the road to become a great city. I urge you as a former member of this chamber, as a spokesperson for industry and as a citizen to usher in change so that when you choose to leave office, you leave a legacy, not a regret but of potential and inspiration for future councils and more importantly, future Winnipeggers. That is my appeal to each and everyone of you. Thank you.

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

Councillor Wyatt: Yes. Thanks Chris for the presentation. You know, one time City of Winnipeg used to have our construction division. Previous council decided to get rid of that. One time, we had our own asphalt plan. Previous council decided to get rid of that. One time, we had our own gavel pit. Previous council decided to get rid of that. We're now at the mercy of your member when it comes to bidding on contracts. Last year, we had bids that came in 26, 27, 28% higher in terms of inflationary numbers of construction for regional roads alone. Putting that aside, putting all that aside on a regular given year, we have anywhere 5 to 6% construction inflation. My question is this: what is your industry doing to address the ongoing issue of construction inflation? Because no matter how much we put side for our regional roads or local route, we are not catching up because of the construction inflation that your members are eating up. What is being done by your industry to address this, please?

Madam Speaker: Thank you. All questions in responses will come through the chair. Mr. Lorenc.

Chris Lorenc: Madam Chair, first of all, we are not eating up inflation. We are afflicted by inflation as is virtually every segment of the economy. Your fuel prices went up the same as our fuel prices. Your cost of labor went up just the same way as the cost of labor went up in our industry. So inflation is not something that we have created and we have inflicted on the City or the Province to benefit the bottom line of our operators. As for costs, I invite you to have conversations with Councillor Lukes and Councillor Chambers, Luc Lewandoski and Jim Berezowsky and Brad Neirinck, and the plethora of industry people who had meeting after meeting after meeting to review how we can make the spec designs for road based materials more competitive. How can we…how we can ensure that tendering is early not late in the season so that we can in fact harness the competitive energies of the industry to benefit with competitive pricing to suggest somehow that you are at the mercy of industry is nonsense.

Madam Speaker: Second question.

Councillor Wyatt: With all due respect Mr. Lorenc, we are at the mercy of your members and I'm not talking about the existing price of fuel that's been going up. I'm talking about regular years where we have 5, 6% construction inflation. You have a rate of inflation three times the rate of normal inflation. And yet, your industry is doing absolutely nothing to address it. Year after year, we've been complaining about this. We put more money for regional road and local roads. Your industry keeps eating that road and money up through your inflationary cost increases three times a rate. What is going to be done about it by your industry?

Madam Speaker: Second question.

Chris Lorenc: Madam Speaker, the question has been asked and it has been answered fully.

Madam Speaker: Final question, Councillor Wyatt.

Councillor Wyatt: Final question. Have you set up a pep sub-committee in your industry to address (inaudible) the construction plate? Have you at least done that?

Madam Speaker: It's a final question.

Chris Lorenc: Madam Speaker, I alluded to the plethora of meetings that our industry has had…may I answer? That our industry has had with Councillor Llukes, Councillor Sharma, the Mayor's office, senior administration to address the very issue of costs and how better to manage costs. So yes, we exercised all kind of effort and all manner of advice to the City on you how prices can be more competitive than they are. It's a two-way street. It's a partnership. It's not one party to the player, Councillor.

Madam Speaker: Councillor Schreyer, followed by Councillor Allard.

Councillor Schreyer: No one is being there for construction industry more than the taxpayer. Madam Speaker, we've heard that it's due to labor and gas that has cost construction inflation. In the last generation, cost of labor has approximately doubled, the cost of gas has even tripled. Are we here to…are we here…are we to understand that the cost of construction is only double or triple in the last generation? I know that is not true at all. Is that what we're hearing today on the Council floor?

Madam Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Lorenc.

Chris Lorenc: Madam Speaker. I'm not sure what the question was in the comment. I can only repeat…

Councillor Schreyer: I can repeat the question.

Madam Speaker: You could restate the question. Thank you.

Councillor Schreyer: We just heard that the reasons we are given for construction inflation are labor and gasoline in the last 30 years labor costs haven't even tripled, gas hasn't even really tripled. Are we there for implying if those are the reasons we're given and those costs haven't even tripled in the last 30 years. Are we…are we saying, therefore, the construction costs haven't even tripled in the last 30 years? I know they've gone up about 15 times, they've gone up five to 10 times higher than increases in gasoline or labor or the income of taxpayers. Why are we having such a discrepancy between these two, Mr. Lorenc and (inaudible)?

Madam Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Lorenc.

Chris Lorenc: Madam Speaker, throwing numbers out without any basis doesn't really help the discussion. I repeat, I repeat that our industry over many years has had many meetings with standing policy committee chairs, finance officials, CAO, with groupings of individuals representing all of those parties to find and discover ways and means of assuring at the close of tender bid opportunities, the City is the beneficiary of the most competitive cost. We are taxpayers as well. yes, we own businesses, we employ people, we provide them with gainful employment. We pressure the Province of Manitoba as an example every three years to update the construction industry wages at minimum wage to ensure that the minimum rates of pay are attractive to attract train and retain people in our industry. We are not an island unto oneself. We are influenced by what happens, not just in the Manitoba market, but in the market in this country, on the continent and the globe. We don't control what happens with manufacturers who can't supply rubber. We don't control what happens when rail can't deliver. We don't control circumstances that afflict the world economy through episodes like COVID. We are constantly looking at ways and means by which we can be a partner in the competitive bidding process with and for the City of Winnipeg because we are taxpayers. At the end of the day, we are taxpayers.

Madam Speaker: Second question, Councillor Schreyer.

Councillor Schreyer: Representing the taxpayers that are trying to help will do a lot for the construction industry. I don't know who does more for the construction industry than the taxpayers of Winnipeg and Manitoba and Canada. The issue here is once again, I'm offering statistics based on what Mr. Lorenc is offering. And then I'm told we shouldn't be talking about those, but I'm referring to what he talked about. It's his statistic. He said labour. He said…

Madam Speaker: Thank you. The question, Councillor Schreyer.

Councillor Schreyer: Well, last…this time, last year Mr. Lorenc said that my quote, Councillor Schreyer 's statistics are completely inaccurate. They were…he's the one that said it. I didn't say that. I never said his were completely inaccurate. Since he bothered to throw that out there, can you explain that to us?

Chris Lorenc: Madam Speaker, in April of 2023, we had about a two-hour meeting in the West Committee Room that was hosted by Councillor Lukes, attended by Councillor Chambers, Luc Lewandoski, Brian Kelcey, Jim Berezowsky, Brad Neirinck, Kevin Brown, Dennis Cruz, Tony Teixeira, Catherine Mitchell and myself, we were examining what was happening to the prices at that point in time in the market. And we brought to that discussion for that two-hour long discussion, concrete suggestions for Public Works to consider to alleviate and minimize risk, to reduce the cost of risk which we then have to add to our bid prices, and the result of that was that there were a number of recommendations that we brought to the table that were implemented that resulted in significant price reduction. So please don't suggest because you are not informed when you do. Please do not suggest that we are not interested in competitive bidding or somehow not interested in ensuring that the City gets best value for the dollar it has available regardless of its area of investment.

Councillor Schreyer: Madam Speaker, I think I just have been called uninformed. Can someone tell me, can Mr. Lorenc tell me how I'm not informed. Have I said something that's not informed, and none of these people that he mentioned have ever told me and I'm uninformed. They never said I was incorrect. None of the city councillors mentioned, ever said that I'm wrong. How is it that I'm uninformed? What did I say that's so uninformed and what did I say that's so inaccurate as I represent these taxpayers?

Madam Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Lorenc.

Councillor Schreyer: Inflation in their lifetime when it comes to the City budget. Is that uninformed? No, that is the truth. You're welcome.

Chris Lorenc: Madam Speaker, to a…to Councillor, you are uninformed if you are unaware of the fact that we get half the level scope and frequency of meetings at which the issues of costs have been identified, discussed, recommendations presented and implemented to benefit competitive bidding.

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

Councillor Schreyer: To my question, he is talking about something to which I'm not involved. I never questioned that meeting. I never said the meeting was inaccurate. Why is every fringe from that meeting when he…what I'm talking about, what I'm talking about, why is referring to a meeting that doesn't contradict…

Madam Speaker: That concludes question period under this delegation. Councillor Schreyer, I believe the delegation has heard you, and you should continue this conversations offline.

Chris Lorenc: Thank you very much and good morning.

Madam Speaker: That concludes the questions for this delegation. Okay, next we have David Pensato, Executive Director of the Exchange District BIZ. If you want an extension, it had to be called for, and I did not hear that. And the delegation is back now in the gallery. David Pensato.

Councillor Allard: May I call to suspend the rules to extend the delegation?

Madam Speaker: The delegation's left the podium. David Pensato. David Pensato, is he with us, Mr. Clerk?

Councillor Allard: Am I not in order, Madam Speaker? Am I not in order, Madam Speaker?

Madam Speaker: We concluded that delegation, yes, Councillor Allard.

Councillor Allard: Can I suspend the rules anytime in order to make that determination by Council on whether or not there should be changes to the addendum.

Madam Speaker: The time has passed. It was…

Councillor Allard: I understand…I am…

Madam Speaker: It wasn't called for. Okay. David Pensato, Mr. Clerk. Is he here?

Councillor Allard: Mr. Clerk. Am I out of order?

Madam Speaker: Pardon me? Okay, he is not present.

Councillor Allard: Madam Speaker, can we take the time and hear more delegation?

Madam Speaker: Your wish is to suspend the rules?

Councillor Allard: Yes.

Madam Speaker: And the delegation is not in…I don't see the delegation in the gallery as I said. He's left the podium. Now, moving on. Mr. Clerk, the next delegation is? Okay, we don't have the next delegation here, David Pensato. Don't see him present. Following that, Barry Karlenzig, President of Pride Winnipeg. He's in opposition to the Report of the Executive Policy Committee dated March 19, 2024. Barry is here in person with us. Good morning.

Barry Karlenzig: Good morning. Thank you everyone for allowing me to be here today. I will admit I am nervous. I've been with Pride for 14 years. This is the first time I ever approached Council. But I do also want to send a special thank you to Councillor Rollins and Councillor Santos for the tremendous work they've been doing to uplift 2SLGBTQI+ community in their wards, and also within Winnipeg as a whole. Pride Winnipeg is here today to speak against the budget as we have seen cuts to major services that affect the 2SLGBTQI+ community as a whole. Seeing cuts like Big Brothers Big Sisters of Winnipeg will affect programs like PRISM which supports so much within our queer community. Seeing cuts to the Winnipeg Art Gallery, Winnipeg Art Foundation. There's different pieces there that supports so much of our queer community. And also something that we have…Pride Winnipeg have been working with Council for five and a half years now is to re-do a grant program that Council brings up multiple times within the budgets. Pride Winnipeg was lucky to be an award winner of that grant for ten years. That grant is a $3,500 grant against our $35,000 playgrounds versus the Winnipeg or the Santa Claus Parade that is fully funded by the City of Winnipeg. On an economic impact in 2022, Pride Winnipeg hosted the second ever Fierté Canada Pride, the national pride assembly in Winnipeg. That weekend brought in almost $2 million into revenue into this downtown court in a matter of seven days, to which we received partial funding from Tourism Winnipeg which we thank very much was with part of the grant. But as we have seen the costs increase year over year over year for the downtown core, we challenge Council to look at those things within the budget. We understand that the balance of the budget is important, and we support balancing the budget. But when we see things like increasing to areas of Winnipeg Police Services as an example for 31% cost increase versus Winnipeg Fire and Paramedic that is a 4% increase. We're not seeing equality there because those services, the queer community has been loud and strong that we do not have support within those services that are getting the higher parts of the budget. There needs to be more support there for our community as a whole. We're not asking for the City of Winnipeg to fund our entire parade festival. We're not asking the Council to fund the entire Sikh parade tat is going on, but there's multiple parades that bring so much light and diversity into this city council and into this downtown core that are not being adequately funded by Council, and something that we do want to challenge day in and out where we need more funding as these organizations grow. 14 years ago when I joined pride Winnipeg we were still in memorial park having 7,000 people attend. Last year, we had over 90,000 people attend our festival in two days at The Forks. We are the largest festival in the downtown core. We're the second largest festival in this province. And we are loud and proud, and it is something that we are in opposition of the budget as it is because we see that core social services are being removed. And those core social services need funding to expand and create more diversity. The City of Winnipeg has noted that on their 150th anniversary, they are about diversity, inclusion and equity. And unfortunately, in that budget we are not seeing that. So that is why I am here today opposing the budget as presented.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Onto questions. Councillor Mayes, followed by Councillor Schreyer.

Councillor Mayes: Thank you for the presentation. I am puzzled…troubled by the claim that we are cutting funding to the WAG. The Council did have a million dollar grant for WAG in each and five years to help with the Qaumajuq project that has long since expired. Winnipeg Arts Council continues to get money from Council, in fact, greater amount this year. If you go to the WAG AGM, since I do, they talk about money from the City. It's really money from the Arts Council. It's from the City through the Arts Council to be fair to the Arts Council. There is a new fund $502,000 I believe coming from the Mayor's office that assuming the WAG being a group of WAG 40-year history and some infrastructure and (inaudible) their own building, we would be able to apply for that. So is this a programming that was…that was the edge group I think or another group was here talked about a program they do and…I'm just not clear of why you're saying we're cutting funding for WAG?

Barry Karlenzig: There is…there is programming that is cut and that's part of funding that are run through the Winnipeg Art Council, so I do apologize Councillor Mayes, I did misspeak, it's Winnipeg Art Council that has received less funding that has resulted in programs that are being pushed.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Any further questions, Councillor Mayes? Second question.

Councillor Mayes: I don't…the Arts Council money hasn't been decreased. The public art piece, I'll give you that, not the operating grant. It's actually (inaudible).

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Councillor Schreyer.

Councillor Schreyer: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Over the years, being supportive of the activities of Pride Winnipeg, in this case pleased to see very (inaudible) here today to speak in terms what our many issues of lack of congruity in terms of the budget. A couple of things mentioned. But the big one of course, the…because we're raising every tax fees, final levy essentially every single year. We're raising taxes, depleting our reserves. But we're cutting under (inaudible) cutting services in this budget even though we raised every tax, levy, fine, fee and rate. We are getting rid of pools, we're closing close libraries on Sundays. This is where we are at. We've been talking about this. I've been predicting this eight, nine years ago. It's all happening. But the reason why I was saying was…primarily because we're…most of our increases in taxes and cutting services is to abet construction inflation. Has anyone here of those that give you the support that you deserve sat with you to explain where our tax increases are going and why we are taking money out of services?

Barry Karlenzig: They have, and to add to your piece, Councillor. Using an example that was publicly posted in 2022 when we hosted Canada Pride. Our parade route in 2019, the cost from the City was just under $8,000. After the pandemic, the original route or the original quote that came into the Pride Winnipeg after the event was $47,000. And we were told inflation. So we went line by line through that line, and ended up finding out that Public Service which was Parking Authority was charging us, everybody was charging us, and they claimed inflation. And when we sat down with Council at that time and asked what was the inflation? They couldn't answer it. They couldn't answer that 40% increase. We saw of 7% inflation. As a non-profit, we budget confidently at 7% inflation every year knowing that we hope it never gets that high. But at a 40% inflation increase in one year? Nobody could answer to us when we asked.

Councillor Schreyer: Fair enough. Thank you for that. COVID is blamed for a lot where I'd say you don't need accounts for the last generation for closer to 5% of necessity for budgeting for budget increases. So thank you for that. That's another reason. I have been trying to get the same information. could we work together trying to find out where the real inflation rates are coming from as it affects operational costs? Why do we want to give less money to important projects such as what we've done before including closing pools and libraries?

Barry Karlenzig: I am happy to sit down with Council at any time. I am still…my term expires in 2025, the Board of Pride decides to extend my term, I will be around a little longer, but happy to sit down with Councillor at any time.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Councillor Rollins.

Councillor Rollins: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Today, a point was made with respect to the total value. I have two questions today, Madam Speaker, the total value that Pride brings into the downtown. Could that figure be repeated for the record, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Barry.

Barry Karlenzig: So for Canada Pride, it was just shy of 2 million over that festival year. This past year, what we've seen is just shy of a million in the 2023 year.

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

Councillor Rollins: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, Council should have a better relationship with festivals that bring in revenue to the downtown and make adjustments to permits to permits that impact showcase festivals like Pride. Madam Speaker, the question is to illustrate the point the downtown councillors will convene to pay for pride this fiscal year. Would that please the speaker?

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Barry.

Barry Karlenzig: It would.

Madam Speaker: Any further questions for our delegation? Seeing none. We appreciate your presence today. One question. Councillor Chambers remotely.

Councillor Chambers: Thank you. Thank you for your presentation this morning. In terms of inflationary cost, was it reflective of wages that the different city department services had supplied?

Barry Karlenzig: So the resource that we received in 2022 when we challenged the increase was we were provided from Winnipeg, the City of Winnipeg services for street closures, signage, stuff like that. We were shown that there was over 100 hours of supervisor hours on the Sunday of over time for them to set up barricade an hour before the event and an hour after, but we were charged nine hours of overtime times 100 hours. So the part…just the street closure, just the actual signage to close the street was 9,000 versus the years in the past that had been 2,000, 1,700, things like that. There's been years in the past where we worked with Winnipeg Transit, where Winnipeg Transit said that we were affecting their closure of…their delay in buses. We were being charged for that because of a delay at University of Manitoba by five minutes because of Pride parade. So we worked with Council to try and say, you have to be equitable to everyone you can. Winnipeg transit, you can't come to us and say because of the down…because of the Pride parade delay, your bus route is five minutes late at the other end of the city is now our responsibility to pay for.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Second question, Councillor Chambers.

Councillor Chambers: In a creation of this festival (inaudible), do you sit down with City staff and go over all of the elements of the festival and come up with a cost estimate of what the festival would cost from the City services side?

Barry Karlenzig: Yes, so every year in October, November, we submit a special events questionnaire to City services which is run by I believe by Kenny Boyce and Scott Stewart. We then have a meeting. They do give us a random…they do give us an estimated quote. So in 2022, the estimated quote was $14-15,000. Then we ended up with a $40,000 bill. That's what caused a lot of this was. We understand quotes can be…go up a bit, not almost triple. This year, I will give special shout out to Kenny Boyce and Scott Stewart. We're working due diligently giving us the costing sitting down with different departments. We also recognize that during COVID, there was a large amount of retirement. So a lot of new staff, not understanding how things were budgeted or costed differently. So we are working due diligently with special events right now.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Seeing no further questions. Barry, thank you for your presentation today.

Barry Karlenzig: Thank you.

Madam Speaker: We'll have last three delegations which we suspended rules for. Mr. Peter Martin, if I could please call you forward. He's in support of the EPC Committee final recommendation on the budget. Following that, we'll hear from Sandra Dupuis and Teresa Cwik. There'll be five minutes on the clock. Welcome, Mr. Martin.

Peter Martin: Thank you, Madam Speaker, Mr. Mayor, City Councillors. I…last time I was here, I had hearing aid problems, so I'm fixed now. I'm expected to go…I don't have to hear you folks talk to me. So thank you. Is it five or 15 minutes?

Madam Speaker: Five minutes.

Peter Martin: Five minutes. Okay, just…I had to check, yeah. I'm a…I always had to confirm, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: You're very sharp. You're very sharp.

Peter Martin: Thank you for the opportunity. I know you hear a lot of people over the year approach the podium to ask for stuff, and some are successful, some are not. And I wonder how many return to the podium when they're successful to say thank you. I'm here today for that singular purpose to say thank you. About a year ago, when I found out the veterans free plots in Brookside and Transcona program was canceled. My first reaction was I guess that's it. Who can fight city hall? It's the decision that was made. And I'm of the (inaudible) belief, it doesn't matter whether you think can or you think can't, you are absolutely right. So I thought you know what, I'm going to do something about this. So I marshalled my troops, not literally but the ones at in my veterans association I deal with, I've got them send letters to the Mayor's office, to others trying to figure out, can we reinstate this program. It's not very expensive. It's a token of appreciation for those that served. And I spoke at Council, I poke at EPC and at committee, and finally at one of the meetings Councillor Eadie made a motion, second by Councillor Wyatt and we reinstate free plots for veterans in Brookside and Transcona. And I think it was the Mayor who suggested we're going to take it to the budget review process with inclusion of budget perhaps. And now, I hear it's back, it's in the budget for the next four years. It's not a lot of money, but it means a lot to veterans.

And I'll make it clear. This project was never about saying we're going to help veterans that can afford to pay for a plot. There were places where veterans and their families can attain money. This is about saying to all veterans, we the City of Winnipeg appreciate your service, appreciate what you have done and the least we can do if you want is offer you a free plot in Brookside or Transcona Field of Honour. Okay, that's the least we can do for you if you so like. So I felt yeah, this is a great opportunity to do that. And I thought also that we have freedom in this country as a result of all of the veterans over the years, freedom of expression, freedom of speech. How many places where you can get up in front of the community and city council and express your (inaudible) views openly and with respect with our fear of repercussions. We need you to appreciate what we have in this country. So I took that as an opportunity to use the freedom for you to attain and to have that you don't hear and speak from the heart and why I want to do this and then receiving the full support of Council was really appreciated. And I will be inviting all of council in November. I run the No Soul Left Alone Program in Manitoba. I bring over 1,000 students to Transcona and Brookside cemetery to stand at a headstone of a veteran and place a poppy on the grave. I will be inviting all councillors. It's only a half hour ceremony. If you stood in the Cemetery Field Honour, and watch the eyes and sincerity of those students as they honour those veterans buried in the grave, they will maybe open your eyes and realize the next generation is a good generation. They care, and our job is to continue appreciating that fact. So thank you for putting that into the budget. I realize it hasn't been approved fully yet, and very helpful, and hopeful that it will be approved then. And if you are in Transcona, stop by the cemetery. We'll be standing by the cemetery, you'll see the Buhler Recreation Park which I know, some of you haven't been to. We have a lot of good stuff in Transcona. So attend and see some of the things we have, but thank you for doing this, thank you for putting that back in the budget, and veterans appreciate it. And now I will put the word out that the City truly really cares about veterans in a tangible way, and symbolic tangible way and it's appreciated. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Martin. Next speaker is Sandra Dupuis in opposition to the Executive Policy Committee, final recommendations on the budget.

Sandra Dupuis: Hi, good morning. Thanks for letting me speak again on behalf of I guess opposition to your budget for Happyland Pool. Some of you who weren't here the other day don't know what is happening at Happyland. So since 2017, the City's policy has suppressed our attendance records by pulling our lifeguards and sending them to paying pools, keeping our pool closed every weekend for a year, why I don't know. We've made it…it's perfectly clear there's evidence in media that shows time and time again. Since 2017, this has happened. So it makes our pool look like we have low attendance which is absolutely nonsense. Secondly, we presented a petition with 2329 names, constituents of the city who want our pool open and enjoy it. This all seems to be…being, I don't know falling on deaf ears or ignored or something. We had letters and presentations from many residents showing the City going against their own planning process. I don't know if you guys have acknowledged that, but you're going against your own planning by doing this. I thought when both Windsor Park and Happyland said, we do not want that big fancy aquatic pool in our area anywhere in St. Boniface. Although we'd love one, our children can't afford it and our parents can't afford it, we can't afford to go there. So I'm not sure why you'd want to put one in our area when we can't use it. We understand there should be money coming to the City for the crews from Canada Packers site that could definitely used to put 82,000 little dollars into saving Happyland Park. I don't get it. I can't understand why you can't come up with $82,000 for us. Our area pays taxes. Surely, there must be some money for us somewhere for 82,000 in the big scheme of picture 82,000. Really? I thought this was overlooked when they said we would lose our pool and everybody was going to get a splash pool. We weren't getting one. So perhaps you forgot to give us a splash pad in the exchange for that splash pad, we will just take the $82,000 to run our pool for one more season if that would be okay. We would appreciate that. Lastly, I guess we are super-disappointed in the flawed broken process that's going on here. And I'll ask again to please consider keeping Happyland pool open for one more season, which is eight weeks and give us a chance to raise money which we really shouldn't have to do, but we're willing to do it, I guess, if that is what it takes to save Happyland Park. I guess we would try to find funds from other organizations and maybe GoFundMe, but I'm pretty sure we can come up with the 82,000, (inaudible) we shouldn't have to, but we will. And I guess that's about it. I really wish you could find the $82,000 for us for one season in the budget. And I ask…I don't know if everybody can support that. That would be greatly appreciated. A fancy pool is not necessary for us, just a simple 82,000 for a season. That's all we want. Thanks so much.

Madam Speaker: Sandra Dupuis, thank you for your presentation. Final delegation is Teresa Cwik in opposition to the Executive Policy final recommendations on the budget. Welcome to you.

Teresa Cwik: Thank you. I guess I'm back again. We were the residents in my south, we were shocked and devastated at the news of the pool closure at Happyland Park. But I would like to ask you to keep the pool open or one more year while we do our best to find ways to fund the operation of the pool. We have potential plans and discussions with organizations that are willing to help us if you would just give us a chance. St. Boniface seems to always be the first to lose when it comes to cutbacks. This will be the second if not third pool lost in St. Boniface. The residents would like to know why the City is so set on closing the pool. Attendance was not…it was depressed because the City closed the pool on weekends and they took away our lifeguards. There were lifeguards available. The City just didn't hire them. They went to the YMCA. The 82,000 needed to keep this pool open is such a small amount when you are spending millions on splash

pads that don't even serve all people of the city. And then you'll receive…you will be receiving money from the Province. Then there is money saved from the Parking Authority move that I heard and if we don't do the demolition, we could have a little bit of money for that. So why can't we use any of this money? Because I'm sure we could find something. The 82,000 is equivalent of one person's salary. So we are going to lose the pool for the price of one person's salary. Why? It's unbelievable and not reasonable to close the pool for this small amount. If the pool goes, our whole area will have nothing. The children, teenagers, seniors, disabled people will have nothing. Bonivital, it's gong to be closed. So the area already has close to nothing. And now, we're going to taking away everything from them. Even the businesses will be affected because if the pool is closed, there will be people not shopping in the businesses. We don't have tennis courts, baseball fields, walking paths and private swimming pools. The pool has been running for over 60 years. And now the City all of a sudden can no longer afford it. Why? Where is the money being spent? Maybe we should go back to having the City do the work like all the construction. Our city used to run much better. We used to have good garbage pickup and grass cutting and everything seemed to be running better, and we had money for everything. So why was the City not putting aside money for this pool especially after they shut the Norwood Pool? We pay our taxes every year, and they are going up. So why is there no money for this? And please don't say we have too many pools because the city should actually have more pools that are accessible to the residents. So we do not have too many pools. We are asking you're your support to save the Happyland Park Pool. We're asking that you have some compassion for the residents in this area and save the pool for just one more year as this is a devastating blow to the community. Please…I'm asking to, to please find it in your hearts to extend for one more year. This is not a win for St. Boniface and it never will be. There must be a way to keep it open for one more year. Please let the residents enjoy the pool one last time. Give us that at least one time. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, Teresa Cwik. Have a great day. This concludes delegations. We'll now move onto items on the agenda. First, Madam Clerk, Report of the Winnipeg Police Board.

REPORT OF THE WINNIPEG POLICE BOARD
DATED MARCH 8, 2024

Item 1 - Winnipeg Police Board – Preliminary 2024-2027 Multi-Year Operating and Capital Budget Recommendation

Madam Speaker: Thank you, Councillor Chambers. Will you introduce Item 1 and move it to be received as information?

Councillor Chambers: Yes. So, I'd like to move the Winnipeg Policy Board Preliminary 2024-2027 Multi-Year Budget and have Council adopt as information.

Madam Speaker: Do you wish to speak to the item?

Councillor Chambers: I will wait to hear from my colleagues.

Madam Speaker: Any speakers on this item? Councillor Wyatt.

Councillor Wyatt: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise because I know I along with Councillor Duncan have moved motions on this matter and spoken to this matter many times. I don't know…I don't think this is being resolved in this budget, either. But the issue being that we still have a situation related to the pandemic whereby multi-million dollar new Police Headquarters built by the ratepayers, built by the taxpayers at significant expense both in the East District and the West District. The one on Dugald Road and the one on Grant remain closed to the public, and it may not seem like a lot, but to a lot of people in the community who want to access the police station, it's a…it's a concern. And I've heard about it over and over and over again. Why isn't that police station open for us to go on to make a police report? Why isn't…why can't we go down and talk to somebody? Now, you can go down there. I've done it. You've got to buzz to get in, and…but it's very uncommunity-friendly. It's not. We used to have remember the slogan one time community-based policing. That's what we used to talk about community-based policing. And there was a famous book written by a chief of police of New York City, Bill Brattan called Broken Windows, theory or policy and basically broken windows, the idea was that if you look after the small stuff, the bigger stuff starts to look after itself. If you try looking after vandalism, start addressing graffiti, start addressing minor stuff in the neighborhood, believe it or not, that actually starts addressing the larger issues in the neighbourhood by making the neighbourhood safer, making the community safer. And I would argue that we don't have unfortunately anymore Keith McCaskill, I think one of the greatest chiefs of police I ever worked with. You know, spearheaded, very proactive community based policing model. He got resources in the community. He had officers out and about, he had officers walking the beat out of the vehicles. He dedicated resources to that. He was a real believer in it. I don't think under McCaskill, we would've ever seen this, where the offices remain closed for this day. He would've

never allowed that because he believed in his heart the importance of having an accessible police service. And that relationship with the public goes a long way to helping the police do the job that they have to do. And I don't blame the rank and file officers. I think rank and files officers is doing what they can do with the resources they have. I put this right at the doorstep of the management, the executive, the Police Board. Councillor Duncan and I have been more than once to the Police Board. It's almost like the Police Board which is supposed to be there, the board is supposed to be there to hear the voice of the community representing the community with the Police Service, but it seems to be the reverse. When I can see the Police Board is now basically kind of a function or arm of the executive. I'm not really hearing what the community has to say. So when you have elected representatives, elected city councillors showing at the Police Board which doesn't happen that often. Does not happen that often but when we do show up to be completely ignored by the board that was supposed to be appointed, that's supposed to there represent the community, they seem to have forgotten that. That's my impression. Maybe I'm wrong. And I would hope that the issue of those offices being open. I understand during the pandemic why they weren't open. But now that the pandemic is over, there's no reason why we have spent 10s of millions of dollars of public money to build those new stations. Why they cannot be accessible to the public at least during working hours, business hours so that they can go down and make police reports. Part of the challenge of course, Madam Speaker, is that you know the statistics that we see with regards to crime are directly derived and found from based on reports being made by citizens based on incidents occurring. If residents don't make a police report, there's no statistics generated to confirm that incident. And so, in an affect, what this does is supress the numbers which in effect actually goes further to undermine the Police Service. The very service that you know we want to support because of the numbers are down. And we can say well, why should we have the funding in place? That speaks to the bigger issue here, Madam Speaker. My understanding is there is an efficiency in the budget to cut millions back from the Police Service which I think is wrong. I think we're in a point and time in our city, we've got to be investing in policing again. We have seen the city, our growth in the city has been unprecedented. We now know that the per capita officer to population, per capita rate of the amount of officers on the street has been in decline in the last number of years in the city. We have not kept up with growth. We have the same amount of cruisers as we had in a decade on the streets of Winnipeg, in cruiser car areas. We have not grown that even though we've grown brand new neighbourhoods, new subdivisions out of nowhere, out of farm field. But we still have the same amount of cruiser car areas. But we have all these challenges facing the City and the Police getting pulled in all these different directions, but we're not giving any support in my view that they need to have both in terms of the resources to do the frontline services, but also in terms of…and their offices open to the public. I believe that that's something and to claw back the budgets, say here's your budget, but we're going to claw you back millions? It's your so-called corporate efficiencies that you've got to find? You know, I mean that's one of the…Police Board should be standing up and say, no, we're not going to allow that. But it's kind of hard to do when the Mayor sits on the board as well. And so, the board is supposed to be there to represent the community. That was the vision of when we created the Police Commission at the time when the legislation was brought forward to the legislature actually under Premier Selinger's government. We were the ones advocating for because we wanted the community to have a greater say in policing. It seems to be the reverse now. Then the Police Board has now become subject to what the famous Stockholm syndrome, you know. And now they are basically an extension of the executive which is not what the purpose was. And I think time has come. I like to think that if we could do it under McCaskill, if we could do community-based policing that we did back then even with less resources, we sure can do it now and we can get those offices open and we can get officers walking the beat and in the streets and all in downtown Winnipeg. Right now downtown Winnipeg, ask a regular citizen if they want to come downtown today. You know they avoid it all plot. Let's…perception unfortunately is reality in politics. It's definitely receptive reality when it comes to safety. If people perceive it unsafe, they will not come. And we need to get that presence out there. We need to support the police. Don't need to cut them further as we are doing in this budget. And so those are my concerns, Madam Speaker. And I want to put them on the record even though this is for information which is another thing which I frankly don't understand. At one time we had direct link between the police budget and our budget. And now we've actually become more insular thanks to the creation of this board where there was a completely disconnect between Council and the Police Service which frankly I don't think serves citizens of Winnipeg very well. Thank you.

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

Councillor Rollins: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, the budget allocated to the Police Department often raises eyebrows with equal part concerns about transparency and a lack of accountability as well as considered as a source of funding for life sustaining social services like perhaps pools at Happyland and at Windsor Park, Madam Speaker. Given competing concepts of community safety spending, given the lack of transparent dialogue on policing, perhaps you know an area where I and the Transcona councillor may actually agree for a change, Madam Speaker. So perhaps, Madam Speaker, as a matter of modelling and opening of debate for the budget as it relates to the Police Department, we might have a healthy opening of debate and perhaps a healthy close, Madam Speaker, of debate which is actually rare in this chamber given the relative import of community safety in the city and the relative import of the dollar amount, just the sheer dollar amount, Madam Speaker. So I'll try. So, one of the notable discussions looming Madam Speaker on the horizon is the potential introduction of body-worn cameras for law enforcement officers. Starting in 2027, the multi-year budget introduces the connected officer program to the tune of almost $1 million, Madam Speaker. While this move may

seem to some like a step towards accountability or as the 2022 provincial government press release, the only information really you can provide outside of the budget page, Madam Speaker, the 2022 provincial government press release states putting frontline officers back on the street faster. So while it may seem to some like a step towards accountability, you can't find City information on this. You can only find the 2022 provincial government press release because that was a pilot that connected officer pilot. This opens up, in my opinion, a broader conversation about privacy rights, surveillance ethics and the potential for misuse or misinterpretation of recorded footage. Important Madam Speaker because body-worn cameras is on the horizon. It looms. When are we to engage in this discussion? It's crucial I believe, Madam Speaker, if you move forward with such initiatives, we do so with careful consideration, with robust oversight and a clear framework that prioritize both public safety and individual rights. We have not had a sufficient review of how we record today, Madam Speaker. Record just traffic. We haven't had a review, a promised review of how we survey. So why would we expand a provincial pilot in multi-year budget? This budget funds a pilot to which there has been little to know, have a discussion on side pilot at the provincial level. Now we find it as in our capital budget, Madam Speaker. Transparency and engagement should be non-negotiable pillars with receptive governance and I am concerned.

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

Councillor Schreyer: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I wasn't going to speak on this, but it's rather important because look, we're closing pools and library hours. And we have to look at why. Happens to be…pardon me? We're…well, we're closing library hours on Sundays.

Madam Speaker: Councillor Schreyer, you have the floor.

Councillor Schreyer: Yeah, fair enough. And I appreciate that the comments by my fellow councillors even if it is out of record. I understand…no, I understand I had a briefing on this including with Jeff Browaty, including members of the library advisory committees. And they are aware of what's happening with their libraries, which it does include reducing hours or closing hours on Sundays. There's no perfection, perfection here. If I'm wrong about this, then I apologize. We're not in a great area of library service expansion and hours. And we can all take a look at that in terms of the time that I've been here on city council. So why are we doing this? We've got to find efficiencies. We've got to find where the costs are. So we talked about the police report, the police budget, and it's important. I think we need to take a comparative analysis. And that's what I'm going to do here when it comes to the…to police. There's no point in saying that we are going to solve our budgetary problems with the police budget. There's no point in saying why we don't…we don't…I don't think we should…we can't do elude ourselves by saying the reason we're closing pools and playing with library hours is due to the police budget alone. The police budget is not a close second to the reason we're…we'll be raising every tax fee, fine, levy and rate in this…in our city budget. Reducing services and reducing our financial reserves to make the assumption that somehow the police budget were not…this is going to keep going. So regardless of our values and priorities over the police budget, that's one thing. And you can apply your political values to that as you wish, but we've got a shared reality regardless of our opinions. And we better understand then when we're talking about, and it's important stuff. Councillor Rollins and Councillor Wyatt made some important points. We have to talk in terms of sufficient review as Councillor Rollins said. Sufficient review of procedures with the city including those that are revenue generating. But look, I see the police budget. I see when it's being challenged. I've seen the police budget be challenged by my follow councillors including Councillor Rollins. And I've seen them come back to an extent to which she's been satisfied with the response once she's been given the numbers because the police budget is in front of you. You can look at it. But what's causing us to increase every tax, fine, fee, levy and rate. Reduce our services and reduce our financial reserves over the years and decades. Well, what is it? More than anything else because we are raising our taxes, fines, fees, levies and rates. We are reducing services, we are reducing over time, we've been reducing our financial reserves. So what's causing it? The police budget, it's not an answer. Why would we do it to ourselves. It's our budget. Don't we care? We're accountable to this and so do the taxpayers, the taxpayers. Well, we've been bearing more weight every single…every single decade. This hasn't happened over night. But once again, let's not have the police budget be…what would you call it, the kicking cat for our economic woes at city hall. Why? It doesn't help us. It's not true. We've got an excellent reporting mechanism with the police budget, and yes, they've had one of the highest increases of budget in the last generation. Is it the first? No. Is it a close second? No, it's not a close second. It's much closer to the rest of inflation of the budget than compared to construction inflation, Madam Speaker. It's not even really that close. So when we talk about sufficient reviews, when we talk about efficiencies, when we talk about accountability, Madam Speaker, we will not solve our budgetary problems until we have what we've talked about for the police budget when we have that for our construction budget. How? You can't run a government that way. You do need your sufficient reviews. You do need your accounting. You do need to have it on paper. You do need to have these meetings, not behind closed doors. We don't solve our budgetary problems really behind closed doors, that the police budget isn't behind closed doors. It's put on paper. And when they don't, we send it back to them. We've done that, and they have to come back to us. It's written essentially. Do we have that with construction? I'm trying to help the construction industry. I'm trying to make it sustainable. I don't know how it is sustainable. It's never been explained to me. It's never explained to city council. So it's never been explained to the people of Winnipeg how our construction budget is sustainable, how the construction industry is sustainable. I need to make it sustainable.

We need to keep it sustainable. How are we doing that? We're doing that with the police budget. We're doing that with the…we're trying. We're raising every tax, fee, levy, rate. Reducing services to try to be sustainable. How closing…closing pools is sustainable, (inaudible) budget during the budget speech. But yes, we do know and we can all account and every single member of the council here can talk about how over the last 10, 20 years, how we reduced services in the libraries. Every single one of us is in this room. So if you want to contradict me, talk about what's happened over the last decade while some of us who've been on Council because this budget doesn't stand alone. So I'll repeat that. We do know that we've been reducing services to the libraries. So we can talk about that, and if you can't talk about that, we've got a problem because others have, it's already on record. We don't want to contradict each other on this stuff. So I will leave it at that, but my saying, don't make the police budget a scapegoat for our budgetary woes because t won't work. Regardless of what your political values are. So whatever your political values, keep them. And if you've got a problem with the police budget, okay. But if you want say that's what's causing our budgetary problems closing pools and library hours regardless of what year. We can just all admit we reduced hours for libraries. And if we can't agree on that well, someone is going to get contradicted. So let's not do that. Let's apply the pressure that we've been doing for ourselves for the taxpayers in the benefit of finding efficiencies. Let's apply what we have done with the police budget. Let's apply to greater aspects of sustaining budget and our society and our economy and as Chris Lorenc said, there is budgetary pressures, it's inflationary pressures that are not the fault of the Manitoba Construction Association. That's consistent with what I'm saying. So I'm glad he agrees with me. We need to talk about what those are so we can do our job for the construction industry to make it sustainable. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, Councillor Schreyer. Seeing no further speakers. Councillor Chambers to close if you wish.

Councillor Chambers: Yes, thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I want to thank all of the councillors that rose and provided comments. You know, just as a matter...a point here, we have been focusing…downtown as a priority. This came up in terms of our strategic priorities action plan that Council determined early January 2023 as well as Winnipeg Police Board as part of our strategic plan to ensure that our downtown is safe for all residents. The Province has also made investments adding new foot patrols to the downtown area. The community safety officers are downtown and are already making an immediate impact on safety. There's also the renewal of the downtown community safety partnership that in collaboration will make a difference in our downtown area. There's also need investments in mental health and addictions to have a better outcome for all of those are struggling in our city. The creation of safe spaces will also provide the safety for individuals to go in their time of need. People want a visible presence of policing in their communities to ensure the safe transition of law to all of its citizens. the Winnipeg Police Board is working on the 2025-29 strategic plan, and working in collaboration to ensure the voices of residents are heard respecting community safety and well-being. But this budget is reflective of all of the work that we have been doing as a board to ensure that all areas of policing are satisfied. I want to thank all of the councillors for input throughout this process. And with that, I close on the presentation of the 2024-27 multi-year budget for Winnipeg Police Service.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, Councillor Chambers. With that, I'll call the question on Item 1. All in favour? Contrary? Carried. And that's noted. Councillor Wyatt in opposition. Okay, moving on. Report of the Executive Policy Committee dated March 19, 2024. Madam Clerk, please read the subject line into the record.

REPORT OF THE
EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE
DATED MARCH 19, 2024

Item 1 - Executive Policy Committee – Final Recommendation – Preliminary 2024-2027 Multi-Year Operating and Capital Budgets

Madam Speaker: We have amending Motion 1 that was circulated, moved by Councillor Gilroy, seconded by Councillor Allard. I believe there is a wish to possibly withdraw that. Okay, Councillor Gilroy and the concurrence of your seconder, Councillor Allard. Okay. All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

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

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Item 1 the Report of the Executive Policy Committee dated March 19, 2024, be amended by deleting Recommendation 1.Z. in its entirety and renumbering the remaining recommendations accordingly.

Madam Speaker: We have Motion 2, moved by Councillor Wyatt, seconded by Councillor Gilroy. It's regarding increased funding for Buhler Recreation Park for 2025 to 2027. We'll first hear from the Mayor to introduce and move the report, followed by the mover of the motion I just mentioned and we'll get into debate.

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

WHEREAS the Buhler Recreation Park is a 'destination' Regional Park, annually attracting visitors to Winnipeg, hosting many tournaments and games, with teams and their families visiting Winnipeg from across Manitoba and Canada;

AND WHEREAS the Buhler Recreation Park directly drives thousands of hotel room rentals annually, generating revenues for the City of Winnipeg, via the Accommodation Tax, that benefits the City, providing funds to assist with attracting events and conventions along with promoting Winnipeg for Economic Development;

AND WHEREAS the Buhler Recreation Park receives no funding from the City of Winnipeg, the only Regional Park in the City not to receive any Operating Budget dollars to assist with running this 170 Acre, multi-purpose outdoor sport park;
DECISION MAKING HISTORY (continued):

AND WHEREAS the Buhler Recreation Park was created by the community and is run by the community, with extensive user fees and charges, fees and charges that exceed City of Winnipeg pricing at City run parks;

AND WHEREAS the volunteer Board of Directors of the Buhler Recreation Park has worked hard to drive events, fully book the playing fields, as well as secure needed revenues by charging and increasing field rental rates, the gate pass rate, as well as food and beverage prices from a well-run canteen, not to mention applying for operational and capital grants from the other levels of government;

AND WHEREAS the Buhler Recreation Park has been affected dramatically with rising fuel prices, insurance prices, and an escalating minimum wage or fixed costs;

AND WHEREAS the Buhler Recreation Park, which first opened in 2008, saw their annual Operating Grant of $60,000, from the City of Winnipeg, eliminated in 2015, and with the new rise in inflation, their Projected Budget for 2024 has a $70,000 deficit/shortfall, which the federally accredited Not-for-Profit Park cannot afford;

AND WHEREAS the 2024 Buhler Recreation Park Operating Budget is $657,000 and therefore the requested grant will only represent 10.7% of the Parks overall Budget, making this Regional Park virtually independent of City funds, which can be attributed to a successful business model combined with strong management.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Item 1 of the Report of the Executive Policy Committee dated March 19, 2024, be amended as follows:

- *Add the following new Recommendation 1.VV.i.:*

  "1.VV.i. That a $70,000 grant to the Buhler Recreation Park, starting in 2025 and continuing for each year until and including 2027, be approved and funded as follows:

  a. $35,000.00 from the Transcona Community Fund Share (Per Capita Formula).

  b. $35,000.00 funded through corporate operating budget efficiencies as determined by the Chief Administrative Officer."

Mayor Gillingham: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I do introduce the report and move the item. I'm going to be sharing my opening time today with Councillor Browaty, the Chair of Finance Committee. I want to begin my comments today with expressions of gratitude to several people. First of all, Councillor Browaty, Chair of our Finance Committee, who has led this budget process and at the last year of our council, we changed from a one year balancing one operating year to going to a four year balanced operating budget. It's a much more difficult task, but it's a very important task that we undertake. What we're doing is endeavoring to eliminate tomorrow's deficits today. So we balance four operating years. Yes, we have to come back every year and update our budget and adjust it accordingly. What this does by balancing four operating years, though it's much more difficult, it gives us a framework that is really more stable, more stable for departments, for the public, for taxpayers, for ratepayers, for other funders and partners like the federal, provincial

governments. And so this process began I think our four year combined deficit that we're looking at was over $350 million that had to be eliminated to balance the four operating years. So thank you to Councillor Browaty and to the budget working group members, to the Executive Policy Committee, and to all of Council because I…Browaty chairs the Finance Committee for several years. I think this year, there was more input for more councillors than ever before. And that's credit to certainly Councillor Browaty and his efforts. I also want to thank our Corporate Finance team. First of all, our CAO, Mr. Michael Jack, and our Corporate Finance team led by Catherine Kloepfer, our CFO, Eliza Pablo, Howard Falk, Jody Lisowski and other members of the team who are here today as well. I want to, if I can, dedicate this budget to Catherine Kloepfer and Howard Falk, both of whom are stepping away and retiring. And so thank you so much to both of you. And certainly Mr. Falk has been through a lot of budgets, and so he and the entire team do just outstanding work. So thank you so much to each of you. I'll just simply say that this budget seeks to really balance investment with obviously some difficult decisions need to be made, but also cost control as well. And I think with that, I can…I'll say more at the close, but now I'm going to stop here and turn it over to Councillor Browaty. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Councillor Browaty. Yes.

Councillor Allard: Is this always in order to be allowed to share your time?

Madam Speaker: It is very much in order and we've done it to previous budgets.

Councillor Allard: I realized it's practiced procedure by-law because…

Madam Speaker: It is in order, yes.

Councillor Allard: So, we can do that at anytime.

Madam Speaker: It is the…the Mayor introduced the item and he's shared the time with Chair of Finance.

Councillor Allard: Okay, I look forward to using that…the procedure by-law in the future. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Talk further about that. Thank you. Councillor Browaty.

Councillor Browaty: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It's my pleasure today to get to this ending point of the budget process. It's a long grueling process. And I'd like to start by thanking the members of the budget working group, yourself, Madam Speaker, Councillor Eadie, Councillor Duncan and Councillor Lukes. Dozens and dozens of meetings sometimes contentious. But again, thank you for your time, your opinions. And of course EPC as part of the charter, lots of time spent with EPC and the Mayor making final decisions. I'd like to thank the staff the Mayor already mentioned, led by Catherine Kloepfer, our CAO and staff from the Mayor's office as well. Destiny Watt, Luc Lewandoski for their assistance, and Brian Kelcey for all of their very good work to get us to this point. So again, I think what really put us in a good spot to be able to do this budget was the fact we had our strategic priorities action plan. We have an opportunity as a new council under new leadership to come up with what unites us, what moves us forward as a group. That's three-legged races we may have had, you know, a…maybe a little karaoke session with Councillor Schreyer, but it was…it was a really positive exercise I think really united a lot of, you know, we found out what unite does. This budget has a lot of the important things in it. You know, we've already seen, you know, through the Mayor's campaign platform to launch up the transit safety to you. We've seen some results where it's literally saving lives on our street within the first several weeks of operation. This year, we're going to see the launch of the neighborhood action teams where we're going to find neighborhoods and we can go through them and fix all these little things that are annoyances. We refocus on the Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Strategy and Newcomer Welcome and Inclusion Strategy by putting in a more influential place within our bureaucracy. I know before the budget came out, everyone suggested you're going to cut libraries. Well, we had a report last fall. This council unanimously voted for a report last fall. You know, they pointed out that, you know, we need to refer to the budget. In fact, we had some of the shortest operating hours of libraries in the country. Public Service came out with a proposed recommended schedule. That schedule by the way had every single library branch close on Sundays. I'd say that was not acceptable. We found a way to open up ten library branches between Labour Day and May long weekend. We've got…based on what they proposed, those were over 4,000 more hours per year in our library branches. We weren't even above beyond. I don't even have the exact number, but it's thousands of additional hours of libraries being opened in Councillor Schreyer's all of ward. Munroe Library, it's always been closed on Wednesdays. It will now be open every single Wednesday all year round except of course if there is a holiday. We're investing downtown parks. We…our capital fund for downtown. Lots of art organizations struggle through COVID due to, you know, being closed, not having shows, not having their facilities open. This is a way to, you know, help some of those deferred capital challenges that they have. Tray record our planning, improvements to the permitting process. I know we'd like to get their fast and know it's part of our economic engine in the city, but we're now able to over the course of four years to staff that up appropriately. Winnipeg 150 this year, very exciting, very fun, and you know that in 2025, we're going to be hosting the

Grey Cup back to where the CFL was born here in Winnipeg. Look forward to working with Councillor Schreyer on some of the initiatives (inaudible). Again, CentrePort Canada, the additional funding there to get water and sewer in…put together there. Even further on libraries, not only are we increasing the hours across the board, we're building a new library in northwest Winnipeg, thanks to Councillor…our chairman, Speaker Sharma's initiatives. It's great piece of additional infrastructure. We have aquatics modernization program. We have old, old infrastructure in the city. We keep getting criticized that, you know, we aren't taking the reality of the state of our infrastructure to heart. We're doing that now. Old wading pools that are 50, 60 years old there. All those are I think…I think, have we built a wading pool in my life? Probably not. They're probably all older than me. So these things have a life. What's really nice about spray pads for the younger set is the fact that season to be a lot longer. We don't need to have lifeguards or pool attendants present at those pools. So you can open up May long weekend where there's going to be running through September when there is hot weather. And in terms of swimming pools, again we need to have a rationalization and strategy that makes sense. St. Boniface probably should have a major pool facility, very much like the one we have in Transcona. I think that's a better model than having multiple small pools that a. you know, 50 plus years old that need millions of dollars improvement rather than, you know, you get patching these you know older style poor amenities. East of the Red RecPlex. Very good piece of infrastructure waiting for other partners, but we're…City of Winnipeg is ready and we're at the table to move that one forward. The Bonavista rec and leisure centre, that funding set aside there. It's a little park gym. Wildwood Golf Course Club House. Studies at the marketing park campus and the south Winnipeg gym. Valley Gardens, one in Councillor Schreyer's area. Valley Gardens Community Centre outbuilding, it's been on the books. It's getting the attention it needs. Lots and lots of good stuff across the city. I really look forward to hearing, you know, further comments from my colleagues here today. Is it perfect? Of course, it's not. Are there things that I would change in, you know, would I put more money into roads? I probably would. But regardless, I think this really is a good balance of all the varied priorities of the members of the council and of all Winnipeggers. So again, thank you to all of you. I mean you guys send me wish lists. We worked through them. We did our best. So again, I really look forward to your comments here today.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. First speaker, Councillor Rollins.

Councillor Rollins: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Oh, one moment. We do need to introduce the motion, still. Getting ahead of ourselves. Councillor Gilroy, your opportunity. The mover is Councillor Wyatt. That was withdrawn. Okay, Councillor Wyatt will introduce…okay, Councillor Wyatt, you will introduce Motion 1 and Councillor Gilroy was your seconder. You certainly have 10 minutes.

Councillor Wyatt: But 10 minutes to speak to what? To introduce your motion and to speak to the budget, and…

Madam Speaker: Oh, I speak to the motion and the budget and then when do I get to speak to…

Madam Speaker: And you'll have an opportunity to close as well for…

Councillor Wyatt: And how many minutes there?

Madam Speaker: Eight minutes. Eight minutes.

Councillor Wyatt: Eights, okay.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, Councillor Wyatt.

Councillor Wyatt: Thank you. Thank you for clarification on these matters, Madam Speaker. I rise today. I'll speak to my amending motion later on. I just want to put a few words onto the record, Madam Speaker. There's no doubt in my mind that others in the budget who are going to speak here today are going to speak to a lot of the positive things in the budget, which no doubt there are, and I want to say that as well. And I've read the budget thoroughly (inaudible) and there are a lot of many positive things, but I'd like to also point out the challenges we're facing whether it be with our bus, lack of the fact we're not increasing size of feet, but Planning Department, the lack of resources there, the inability for them to respond, get permits approved and out the door as quickly as possible, for example, with regards to our fiscal stabilization fund, the fact that it's not fully funded with cash. So we're looking at borrowing, something we've never done before that we're going to have to change our own by-laws. With the fact that recreation in general and the challenges facing with our city with safety across the city. And now for the first time Madam Speaker, we have municipalities around the city of Winnipeg that are offering urban standards. Urban standards where people can actually move to and live it similar to city of Winnipeg. For the first time, since the creation of unicity, we have municipalities that are in some way better run with more money in their reserves where capitalized in the city of Winnipeg. Unicity of 1972 was in many ways a cash grab. It was a cash grab of a broke City of Winnipeg who was basically nearly bankrupt grabbing the reserves of all the other municipalities around the city and forcing it all that money into one pot again called the new City of Winnipeg. Well, there won't be any other

Unicity to bail us out, Madam Speaker, in the future. There's no more land and grass so to speak. What I'd like to speak about, Madam Speaker, is what I call the self-imposed austerity that we've had for the last 35 years in the city. And there's barring self-imposed austerity is this: that's keeping taxes low via cuttings or freezes or similar to that. To undermine our inherent ability to deliver the services we're responsible to deliver. It may be said that after tomorrow, the Portage and Main debate, right or wrong, only history will tell that it was a courageous decision and the right decision. We won't know what time, but we do know this about the self-imposed austerity because we have the benefit of time of being able to look at what's happened. Since 1989, 99, when Winnipeg started a practice of self-imposed austerity. First, by having taxes low then by freezing, and in some cases cutting them. We paid a price with regards to our existing services. And I'm not just talking about our physical aspects, both our roads and sewers and our buildings, our facilities. But even worse than that, even worse than what we've done in our existing infrastructure is what we've done to the public service. At one time, we had civil service who can make a decision as quickly as snapping their fingers. And they could do it because they were well trained, worked through an organization had depth, wisdom and knowledge. People who once knew when they made that decision, it was the right decision. They were then moving onto the next one. Instead, we have gutted the organization slowly that we have now lacked these minds that we once had in the past. Today, we have decision making by paralysis. We go back and forth with decision without doing what we have done in the past, which is a proper due diligence to ensure we're making correct decisions with the information we have. Or we hire consultants who really don't have a true stake in the city. So their advice is, in my opinion, is not as objective nor as accountable as it were…if it were our own professional hired by us, who have the accountability tied to their performance and jobs. This mayor and council is like the general of an army or a country who want to fight this last…the next battle the same way that the last ones were fought without realizing the technology and knowledge and things that changed using the same tactics as before. And yet, here we are again using the same tactics of the last 35 years. This…this philosophy, this mentality of the self-imposed austerity of 35 years driving us ultimately, Madam Speaker, to the lowest common denominator, rather than striving towards excellence and the highest common denominator. Mayor and Council, we are stuck in this cycle of 35 years. And we know that history of the last 35 years will go forward at the present rate that we're going for now that the city of Winnipeg is going to…is in trouble today with challenges we're facing. We're only going to be making it worse for the future. The benefit we have on this is that we know, Madam Speaker, that the City's finance and (inaudible) infrastructure for physical and people are (inaudible) are hurting because of these decisions of the last 35 years. And I can say to you, Madam Speaker, that rising and striving to excellence towards perfection will never be achieved, but it's nice to be able to strive towards it, but instead we strive downward. And what is happening here in the City of Winnipeg, when we compare ourselves as a so-called major city in Canada, we are called a major city. But yet, we read letters to the editor, the "Winnipeg free press" of a woman who moved her and her husband moved from Mississauga, Ontario, only to say that if you compare our roads here our arrival to those that are seen in East Africa. Only a year ago, they moved to the city and they can't believe the state of their infrastructure. So we hear, we were…we've become a laughingstock in terms of from rest of the nation. You know, Winnipeg and their roads, ha, ha. You know, Winnipeg and their violent crime, ha, ha. You know, Winnipeg, it takes months and months and months to get a permit for something as simple as a deck or gazebo, ha, ha. You know, Winnipeg with the huge bridge right in the middle of it, that is shut down permanently? Oh, they must be very silly people, ha, ha. You know, Winnipeg, the community with the highest poverty rates in all of Canada and in some neighbourhoods, neighbourhood, one of the poorest in all of Canada, ha, ha. At least we don't live, there they will say. And they are saying, at least we don't live in Winnipeg. I love this city, Madam Speaker, and to see what is happening today breaks my heart. Cities of our size or even less now, municipal services that they can be proud of per capita wise, yet we celebrate some of the lowest funding core municipal services per capita as if it is something to be proud of. They have a civil service that is with depth and knowledge and it has a capability of making competent decision making and policy development. They have half decent roads, bridges being maintained, and cities of our size are planning and building LRT across this country. They have recreational facilities both regional, local parks that are beautiful and well-maintained, not hayfields because grass is not being cut, not be…playgrounds that are running to the ground or pools that now have to be abandoned over tens of thousands of dollars. They don't have some of the highest violent crime rates per capita in the entire country. They have, therefore, confidence to face the future and the challenges that the future will always present. And they have regularly updated strategic plans. Not only as a council, but they ensure that the entire organization taking the lead from their council develops those strategic plans from right through the organization, starting with the council through to the public service and the departments, and CAO's office and right through it. Has that happened in this city since we…absolutely not. Have the departments led their own strap by…have we seen their strategic plans based on SPAP, the strategic party action plan? No, we have not. And yet, we did that well over a year. I had hope at the beginning of the term, Madam Speaker. I had hope. When we met last January and we did a strap plan together. I think everybody was prepared to role up their sleeves to face the challenges. I was impressed by the effort made by the Mayor. And I thought we were going to overcome the cycle of our last 35 years. But now I can see we seem to be trapped in this cycle, and that the strap plan was mostly maybe PR or false hope. Because most of the ideas that we developed in strategic plan because we are trapped in the cycle of self-imposed austerity, now sit the shelf because there is no funding as we know that is the key to often much of our policy development. And I know the Mayor has taken a step out arguing new information on Portage and Main, and the debate we're going to have tomorrow. And in the future maybe considered a wise and courageous decision, courageous no doubt right now, but maybe wise in the future and the time will tell. History will tell. I would only ask the Mayor via the Chair to consider that as well when it comes to this philosophy of self-imposed austerity.

That with new information that we have and indeed we do. We have now have…we have concourse we can't maintain, we have a bridge shut down since the last election, that maybe we need to have the courage to go to the citizens of Winnipeg and say, I know I promised this in terms of a tax increase. But now we have to do this, and by the way, yes, I know I promised it, but this is what we're going to do, this is what we are going to raise it by, this is where your money is going to go, this is what you're going to get in the end, this is when it will be delivered by and this is the service you will receive for the infrastructure that will define. Transparent, open…

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

Councillor Wyatt: Like comes with communication. Our risk is, Madam Speaker, we do not move in a different direction. If we continue the path the next 35 years like the last 35 years, we risk, not the Chicago of the North scenario. we risk the Detroit of the North scenario. We risk, Madam Speaker, not just our services, but actually quality and way of life. And we risk for the first time losing in competition with the citizens of Winnipeg will not vote in the ballot box with their pen that they'll vote with their feet, and that trickle that is now occurring, the citizens of Winnipeg slowly moving, some of them who can outside of the city. That trickle concern to…soon turn into a flight of those municipalities further expand their urban standard design and urban standard level of services that they never had before. For the first time City of Winnipeg has competition since Unicity. We have an expression, Madam Speaker. We call ourselves city mothers and city fathers. And that implies a very strong message that is very hard. That's only a mother and father who have in their heart, the best future for the child that they will go to any length, they will suffer themselves in their own lifetime to ensure that child's success. And that's the daring meaning of the term for ourselves as well that we are, too, supposed to have practiced the same values, principles. But instead we're more like absentee parents, for the child is sick. And we are not sacrificing in the way we need to as leaders making the decisions as leaders to ensure that this city, this child is healthy in the future. And so, therefore, Madam Speaker, I would finish up by saying that let us have the courage to do that. Let us end the 35 years of self-imposed austerity and leave the city where we need to lead by addressing these challenges that we face today. Thank you very much, and I appreciate your time. I get to speak again?

Madam Speaker: You shall, in closing.

Councillor Wyatt: Okay, very good. I'll speak again.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, Councillor Wyatt. Next speaker. Councillor Lukes. Yes, on the budget. Any speakers? Councillor Lukes.

Councillor Lukes: Okay, here we go. All right. Thank you. Firstly, I want to thank the Mayor for continuing to work on improving the budget process. For sure, there were improvements over the past years. And I know we all identified areas that we can continue to improve on. This is the first time in the last 10 years maybe longer that I am aware of that there has been representation from the Old Kildonan, Mynarski and Charleswood wards, which on the budget working group. I think this is a very significant and positive change. And I'm appreciative of the input from other parts of the city and the perspectives that were brought to the table. The budget working group is going to have a debrief on the process and I'm sure we'll reach out to everyone with the goal of continuing to make each year better. Overall, the process to make four year budget balanced was really grueling. Many, many long meetings, too many bags of Cheezies, thank you Councillor Browaty, and always never enough money. Having a strategic plan as guiding document also prove to be very beneficial for both City staff and the budget working group. The strategic plan will continue to play a critical role in ensuring accountability, accountability for councillors and for the public service going forward. I also appreciate the time between tabling and ending up here today. I think this has been one of the longer periods of time to allow the public and councillors the opportunity to seek clarification and have discussions on capital and operating. And I'd like to thank the public for the many, many presentations that were made and the e-mails that were sent to my office. The perspectives, suggestions and all input is appreciated. In the years prior to being elected, I came down to that very podium at least 50 times making the case, supporting and opposing all kinds of motions and budgets. It's really, really important work. I know I made a difference on that side of the room. And I want to ensure people that who do come in delegation also know they are making a difference in our city. It may not be immediate, but your voices are heard and considered. And I'd also like to thank the City's financial team. They're outstanding and providing answers to the many, hundreds, literally hundreds of questions and in providing an advice. And it is a loss to the City to see two financial leaders retiring, but I thank them for holding off till the four year budget was completed. Now for what's in the budget. I'm sure today we hear many specific projects listed. And there's many excellent initiatives. Very briefly from the Public Works, we're moving forward on an outstanding improvements in transit. A a new payment system, high frequency infrastructure and roads, well, we're not receiving the large dollars from the federal or provincial governments currently, we continue to invest in our roads. Active transportation, there's really solid investments and also very significant investments in the road safety strategy and infrastructure to support it. But my comments, the both of my comments are going to be on the very big picture because in addition to the budget process being very grueling, I actually found it extremely depressing because of the limited revenue opportunities we have as a city. So depressing I would submit as…it's motivating me to look to other levels of government for many

reasons. The decision to keep the property tax increase to 3.5% was made to ensure a level of affordability for the coming years. We've seen many cities across Canada and in Manitoba increase taxes much higher. For this year, I think it was a wise decision. Will it stay at 3.5% in the coming years? That is what the budget is built upon, and while they were incredibly hard decisions to be made to stay within the rate we know there are huge, huge financial challenges on the horizon and we may have to reconsider the 3.5% which leads me to the real crux of matter for Winnipeg, and actually for all cities across Canada, and our colleague has left the room here, but this is relevant to all cities not just Winnipeg. Winnipeg's infrastructure is aging and is under significant pressure. Winnipeg is 150 years old, community centres, roads, bridges, membranes and more are aging. This spring has been horrendous, were really seen on our roads what's happening. Municipal governments in Canada rely primarily on three fiscal tools of funding. Winnipeg is no different. Property taxes, user fees, federal and provincial taxes, transfers, federal and provincial transfers. It is estimated for every dollar a resident pays, for every tax dollar a resident pays, 10 cents goes to the city, 40 cents goes to the province, and 50 cents goes to the federal government. If this sounds like a speech supporting the Federation of Canadian Municipality efforts or even Mr. Chris Lorenc is never ending speeches to us. I guess it is. It's registering. Municipality's managing maintain approximately 60% of the public infrastructure and amenities that drive our economy and quality of life. But the reality is we're constantly doing more with less and unsustainable fiscal tools like taxes and user fees make it harder to plan for the long-term. We can only raise taxes so much before life becomes unaffordable. We can only increase user fees so much. And cities do not have the final say in the amount of transfer funding the provincial and federal governments decide to transfer. Receiving only 10 cents on the tax dollar as a local government we face huge challenges in maintaining current infrastructure and that's just not Winnipeg. This is cities all across Canada. So if some may want to paint beautiful, flowy thing, short grass, beautiful shiny new this and that. All cities are facing these challenges. So while it's always wonderful when the provincial or federal governments help us fund new infrastructure for decades to come. There is the ongoing cost to maintain that infrastructure with the 10 cents that we have. To be frank, it frustrates me when I receive e-mails saying, you don't invest enough in our roads and pipes, some (inaudible) plants. I know the big picture. It's not always what folks want to hear or learn about. Property taxes account for about 38% of Winnipeg revenues. And we can't dramatically raise them year after year given the challenges many households face with inflationary, with inflation, wages, and increased costs of other things such as transportation, energy, food, child care, the list goes on. Moreover, post COVID, commercial and business tax revenues are starting to decrease as more people work from home versus the office, more retail is going online versus retail commercial space resulting in less tax revenues for cities. User fees and licenses for goods and services which account for 35% of Winnipeg revenues. There is a limit in the struggling economy as to how much we can raise these fees and licenses. All of these points are meant to highlight Winnipeg as a city with old infrastructure, old water and sewer pipes and old roads and very limited revenue generating opportunities. Yes, city council does make decisions on how to invest the tax dollars we have. And to be frank, we know we aim to stretch the investments far as possible. Look at our transit system. So in closing and I might need a couple seconds here. What is the solution to enabling as a more robust revenue source to run the city? We must focus on every possible economic development opportunity we have. Just one minute.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Mayor Gillingham moves extension, two minutes. All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Councillor Lukes: So what is the solution? Focusing on every possible economic development opportunity we have. Winnipeg CentrePort site as earlier you noted needs to be developed ASAP and we're moving forward on that. That got my vote on the last budget on the…under the former regime. We need to focus on our industrial sites and we must continue seeking revenue generating partnerships. Each…and this is important. Each and every one of us must continue to have ongoing conversations with provincial and federal governments to continue building even better partnerships to grow our municipality, our province and to grow Canada. We have to support the efforts of this, CM&E, MM and the Big City Mayors. This isn't obviously a specific what's in the budget details, but I hope it sets the big picture and we have to think about the big picture and our whole 10 cents as we look at all these projects. So as exciting and great as things are in the budget. I find it really challenging. I find it really depressing. And I thank the Mayor for having the opportunity and for my colleagues to work on the budget together and to sit there and pick and argue over 100,000, 50,000, like…14,000. It's really…it was really challenging. I think we did a good job, but like we have to think of the big picture and we have to support economic development. I've got a tour coming up for CentrePort. I've got a couple people lined up already. I'm going to extend it broader and wider. I just really, really…I just really think that we have to think big picture here, a lot more than we are, and not every city in Canada. It's coming in a glorious time of all. So we're all in the same boat. We have to do things differently. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, Councillor Lukes. Next is Councillor Santos.

Councillor Santos: Thank you. Good morning, Madam Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to address you today as we dive into the discussion of our city's multi-year balanced budget. It's a crucial moment for all of us. One that requires practical approach as we navigate the complexities ahead and work toward solutions that benefit our community. I'd like to quickly highlight some of the aspects of this budget that I support. Firstly, is a huge commitment in investing in the Winnipeg recreational master plan. As a huge advocate for community wellness and recreational amenities, I am happy

to see capital investments allocated towards revitalizing the recreational spaces in different areas of the city. With all these new investments, it's a testament to our dedication to fostering healthy and active lifestyles amongst all Winnipeggers. Most particularly to note is the allocation of money for the Tyndall Park gym expansion and Freight House outdoor pool. I'm hopeful that these initial investments will serve as a catalyst for leveraging additional dollars allowing us to realize the full potential of these projects and further enhance our community recreational opportunities. But our efforts don't stop there. The significant investments in extending library hours of operation demonstrates our unwavering commitment to provide free access to information and resources for all Winnipeggers. This expansion will undoubtedly enhance the daily lives of countless students and individuals empowering them with the tools they need to succeed. Furthermore, I'm very supportive of the inclusion of the spray pad strategy reinvestment strategy, sorry, spray pad reinvestment strategy, a cause very close to my heart since its development in 2019. This initiative, not only promises fun filled summers for our children, but also underscores our commitment to creating inclusive interactive and accessible spaces for families to thrive. Additionally, I must mention my reasons to motion, amending motion during our Community Services last week regarding the Eldon Ross Pool. This motion seeks to explore the possibility of collaboration and partnership with a third-party service provider which could inject new life into our aquatic facilities while ensuring their sustainability for years to come. I see the recommendation was accepted in this amending motion or in this motion before us today. So I'll be supporting that as well. However, we shouldn't be too quick to celebrate because let us not forget that there is still much more work that needs to be done. The stark reality remains that there are pockets of our community in dire needs of assistance. Point Douglas ward with its high concentration of children living in poverty and being the central location for unsheltered residences serves a harsh reality and reminder of the inequalities that persists within our city. We must also prioritize the needs of our seniors. Ensuring they too have access to affordable recreation amenities as they age in place. So I want to extend a simple thank you to Mayor Scott Gillingham and the budget working group for their efforts in crafting this multi-year budget. It's worth noting that while I may not have been on board the last few budgets over the years. I am pleased to see the progress we are making this time around. As we conclude today's discussion, let us remember that while this multi-year budget marks a small step forward, there is still much work to be done. It's imperative that we remain committed to constructive dialogue and collaboration as we address the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. Together, let us embrace the journey towards a stronger more resilient Winnipeg ensuring that the needs of all residents are met and that our city continues to thrive for generations to come. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Councillor Gilroy: Thank you, Madam Speaker. First, I want to thank the budget working group for their work. I might not have agreed with all your decisions but I know those decisions are tough. But I do want to talk a little bit about what Councillor Lukes has said. By no means, was this process any better. It's those that are in the room and those that are not in the room, and that feeling is still here live and well. No difference when the shoe was on the other side. And quite frankly, we have less people in the room, less people in the room talking about the issues that really make a difference to all Winnipeggers. We also have no councillors from the downtown that were part of those decision making on the budget working group. So yeah, we do see a difference in this budget. We see a difference on these pages in here, on who got what and who didn't get what, and where our money went and where our money didn't go. So it does matter who is in the room. I respect those decisions and I know that they are tough. By no means, does this process make it any better. And quite frankly, I don't know if you can. It's a political environment we're in, and so I'm still not blaming anybody, but I'm just letting you know that this process is not better and that was for a lot of people in this room and for a lot of delegations that came forward. So there are some good things in the budget that I do appreciate having in there. And I am hesitant, but I am supporting the budget, but I do want to talk about is what we're missing and what I do really feel that we need to work on. We had a strategic master plan that clearly talked about our downtown and poverty reduction. And Councillor Wyatt was not wrong when he talked about people leaving our city. And they're not leaving our city because of higher taxes, they're not. They're leaving our city because this is not a city that they want to live in. This is not the city that they believe in. And that's our job to change their minds and to get people to live here. And we're not going to be doing it if we're going to be cutting out services…community services. Cutting them out. So the difference between our roads and our waterways. It's our roads and waterways are what we live on, right? Community services is what we want to be, what we want our city to be. It's how we live. How we feel about our community. I do not understand the cutting of staff going into our CAO's office, just totally do not understand that. And so I'll be looking at why that happened and why we aren't concentrating that staff where they should be in the heart of what we do, which is our community services. And I know we need to do investments in our suburban areas. And I do believe that there were some in there that we really needed to invest in. But by no means, you cannot be doing that on the backs of inner city neighborhoods that are struggling. Great that we have a new plan for splash pads for $40,000 to cover it over and not provide new amenities is not city building. We can do better. We must do better. I really want to talk about our homelessness and poverty reduction. Our poverty reduction strategy, I don't think that we're moving in any direction. In the last…under the last government that we had, we moved the direction, we moved the needle. We did a poverty direction strategy. We were…we had a list of things that we could accomplish and it was nowhere in this budget. Actually, we're cutting…we're cutting positions out of it. So at the same time that we are cutting positions at…and we have a huge issue in our community around homelessness, addictions and gang violence that we got do keep our youth busy doing other things like going to pools, like going to recreation facilities.

So I'm very concerned at the direction in terms we are moving in terms of poverty reduction. Quite frankly, under our strategic plan, we talked a lot about the downtown. We talked a lot about you know fixing things up. But I don't see anything in the budget that really talks about that, and that's concerning. There's little pieces, but we need to do better. And so I want to encourage us all because this is a budget that at the end, that we all have a hand in. To really ask our different…our different committees on what they can do to improve poverty reduction, and where are we going to meet those needs. And I want us to look at homelessness. Like we all know that this is a major issue in our city, but our answer is like closing a library on a Sunday. And I'm talking about the Millennium Library and no fee where we're moving hours elsewhere, but the Millennium Library is the only civic service for the community in the downtown on a Sunday. And in an area where we want people to go and be vibrant in and around that area. We're closing down Sunday hours at the Millennium Library. And I guess another issue I have is if we want vibrant downtown, why are we looking at doing it? What is the reasoning behind that? And I want us to understand that libraries are very different for people in an urban setting than in a suburban setting. And a suburban setting if you have, you know, a big home and you're able to go out and take a book that you can read it and for…if you can afford it, you're buying it. You're not really going to the library. You're buying it on Amazon, right? If you can afford it, you're buying it from Amazon. You're not going to the library. But in the inner city, if you live in a small apartment or if you live in a small house with large family, a library is your sanctuary. And if you're someone that doesn't have a lot of money, the library is a place where you get knowledge for free. And if you don't have a computer, you could access for free. And that's a vital, vital support that we could be providing right in the middle of our downtown. So we can do better. So yeah, I am…I'm going to let you know that the process was not better for me and I feel the same way that Janice Lukes felt when she was not on EPC and not in the budget working group. It's no different. So we can do better. I'm going to be working towards making sure we have improvements. I know the Mayor has talked about homelessness. He's gone and looked at the Houston model. I really want to see us moving in a direction on how we're going to deal with that matter. And I also want to talk a little bit about the business tax. When we talk about the local economy and the effects on the economy and being a city where businesses want to come. We're having a major issue attracting businesses right now just because of the amount of decay we're seeing in our downtown. And when we look at…I'm a firm believer that yes, we should keep our business taxes low for certain businesses, which is what we're going. And I approve that. But when we're giving tax breaks to places like Loblaws that can afford to have police officers in their building while we have struggling businesses that are struggling to keep their doors open because of the crime and issues around there and depleting…

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

Councillor Gilroy: Thank you. And depleting those areas because businesses are going to close, and that's what's happening. In my community, they are struggling to stay open because of you know the violence and the issues they're having around stealing. But we're giving tax breaks to big companies like Loblaws that can afford to do something like hire police officers, right? It's just…it's…we're not balancing things out. We're not looking at the economy from what a city should look like in terms how people want to live, and how…what businesses want to do to come here, what makes them want to come here. And right now, I think we could do better as a city. So those are the things that I'll be working on, working with the Mayor and my councillor colleagues on. I will be supporting the budget today, but I think it's important that people understand that…I feel that we've taken a step backwards in what we should be doing in our city. So I'm very concerned. I guess step backwards, not forwards. We're moving backwards. And if we're not going to be dealing with the poverty issues that we're seeing in the city within our core. We're going to have a major issue that impacts everybody. If that impacts whether people want to come from the suburbs to see a game, whether if they want to even build a house in the city. So I think we've got lots of work to do. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, Councillor Gilroy. Is it the will of Council to recess and now and reconvene at 1:30? All in favour? 1:15, thank you. 1:15 sharp. Thank you.

Reconvened meeting of
Winnipeg City Council of
March 20, 2024, at 1:26 p.m.

Madam Speaker: Good afternoon. I'd like to reconvene our Council meeting of March 20, 2024. Our next speaker on the Capital and Operating Budget is Councillor Rollins, followed by Councillor Chambers. Councillor Rollins, you have the floor.

Councillor Rollins: Thank you, Madam Speaker. So today I want to discuss critical aspects of our city's multi-year budget, particularly of the sizing and celebrating, Madam Speaker. I want to emphasize celebrating. The importance of our second four-year balanced budget as a strategic frame work to manage inflation, affordability, realizing our goals as a human rights city by investing in housing and life sustaining services like parks, recreation, libraries and still, yes, managing the

aftermath of the pandemic on our city like other big cities must while making good on priorities in the strategic action plan for the city of Winnipeg. Madam Speaker, the intervening years marked by challenges due to global health crisis have necessitated fiscal responsibility and prudent financial management. And to that end, we have been lucky. We've been lucky to have CFOs like Mike Ruta and Catherine Kloepfer, and her team, Eliza Pablo, Helen, Howard that are with us today. We have also had Finance chairs like Mayor Scott Gillingham. Council Browaty also who have emphasized a balance to safeguard the city against economic volatility, but also ensure we can allocate resources to meet the city's evolving needs. It is the protection of the city that I am most interested in, Madam Speaker. And the most protective I felt was after the multi-year budget last term when we had safeguards in budget that I think when Winnipeggers and frankly they don't need to. But I think that Winnipeggers didn't necessarily fully appreciate. And I will argue they didn't need to. That is our job. But that day, the day that we closed down and the day that we concluded really simultaneously the multi-year budget was the day I felt really good that what we've done. We can't as Councillor Lukes has stated very well. We can't replace withdrawal and support of our provincial government on social services like I felt last term where housing, primary health including mental health and addictions were vacated or a federal government, Madam Speaker, that should have been more aligned and cognizant of the impacts of the pandemic on their big cites. Investing in Canada infrastructure round after round, Madam Speaker, we missed as a city. Where are Winnipeg MPs? Where are our Winnipeg MLAs was an often used refrain around here and perhaps it's time to make that public. I'm grateful for the leadership of Mayor Gillingham and his recent leadership at the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Big City Mayors' discussion on ICIP and inflationary costs. That needs to stated for the record. Very grateful. Very important discussion. Very important leadership, and it's with that context that we begin. As budgets are completed in other municipalities, the 3.5% property tax decision will set us apart from many other cities that are choosing far greater increases. This is a deliberative choice, a platform pledge of the Mayor's, yes. It comes with opportunities and challenges. Why? Because on the one hand, it poses limitations on our ability to expand services as rapidly as some may desire on the other hand, it enables people to afford what they need like their rent or the mortgage which could make for a more inclusive and stable city given how families and local businesses are still weathering that storm of affordability. And we have the data, Madam Speaker, that it is adversely impacting the COVID, pandemic adversely impacted in particular North End and inner-city neighborhoods. The downtown businesses and residents are still weathering uncertainties. Revitalizing Winnipeg's downtown is part of Winnipeg's Strategic Priorities Action Plan for this reason. Investments in budget such as the downtown parks and green space, CenterVenture, Downtown Arts Capital Fund underscore our commitment to a vibrant downtown that is safe, happy, healthy. Initiatives like increasing the urban tree canopy that for a large credit, I owe to Councillor John Orlikow, River Heights-Fort Garry, who is a constant and consistent champion of the tree canopy in the city of Winnipeg. The enhanced pruning services reflect our response to climate justice concerns raised by community members from Trees Please or like Josiah Neufeldd who came here at Council Committee and his family, his children at my Broadway Neighborhood Budget Consultation. Introducing new budget lines for downtown project is laudable, but we must remain vigilant to ensure they do not come at the expense of critical amenities such as the millennium library and the West Broadway Neighbourhood Centre, both of which serve vulnerable populations. Similarly, while new funding directed towards the Housing Accelerator Fund, tackles housing issues, sustain multi-year efforts and funding are indispensable for effective homelessness strategy and the uninterrupted provision of life sustaining services, and I worry every day, Madam Speaker, and you…many folks around Council know this is true. I worry every day we put forward a housing for strategy emphasizing housing as a fundamental human right, affordable accessible safe and healthy when the NGOs that we've been holding though…that have been holding up the one end of the housing spectrum from encampments, mobile services, interim shelter system's responser told to wait for pending outcome of inter-governmental work in 2025. This represents a risk in budget in my opinion, but with respect to the housing commend continue as the Chari of Property and Development and Housing, I have that front row seat to this work, and I don't in time to disengage. Concerning Broadway Neighbourhood Centre and Millennium, a lack of transparency does a road of public trust and hinders our ability to ensure that budget efforts are conducted ethically and fairly. I'm concerned the proposed new granting motion that is to come won't contain enough meaningful structure, given the NGOs mentioned in the appendices or as I will continuously mention the Broadway Neighbourhood Community Centre, the only community center that sets to be defunded in the following year. I'm concerned on the manner of hours at the library, not that they're increasing. I want to be clear, and they are increasing at this budget. And at this point, it is a challenge that we have to just get to work on in the intervening years to stay the libraries hours, and it's not a vote of nonconfidence, but we should have all had access, not just budget working group on the hours we were voting on, and that's a point of contention often times mentioned by our deputy mayor, Janice Lukes about the availability of hours to all, not just to some. While our Fort Rouge-East Fort Garry ward exceeded engagement expectations thanks to Trixie Maybitiun and Shanae Reader in my office. The remains of probably need for enhanced communication and community engagement city-wide and this is why I'm going to move on from budget to public safety dialogues in short order.

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

Councillor Rollins: And Wyatt, Councillor Mayes to his credit is moving onto Portage and Main dialogues, I could be ten night of all nights, Madam Speaker, but I will say that I think too if you hold budget discussions or dialogues of any kind and they should not be nearly a matter of protocol but fundamental principle that ensures all voices are not only heard,

but also genuinely valued. Something to be more thoughtfully negotiated I think too, Madam Speaker, are the urban and suburban dynamics in budget. There seems to be in patience on the urban areas and budget as too costly, as too demanding for more resources or cleanups so life sustaining social services due to higher population and maybe more complex needs like poverty access to basic healthcare, harm reduction, homelessness, more. Conversely suburban areas and a lot more equal distribution as they cannot benefit from what grew up overtime for various reasons like proliferation of community facilities and pools in St. Boniface or libraries in the ward I represent. Each neighbourhood type wants really acknowledgments of contributions to the city fabric. That's fine. We must as long as we're here, I think continuously renew our commitment to building our Winnipeg that is resilient and inclusive and leaves no one behind. And in terms of resilience, I see a lot of this budget and that's why it has my support. I believe within this document, there are moments we have challenged the status quo or even embraced constructive descent and we paved away for our brighter future for all of Winnipeggers, Madam Speaker. I'll be seeking change to the end as Michael Jackson sings don't stop till you get enough or Queen saying under pressure. That's what budgets are about, but ultimately this budget has my vote.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, Councillor Rollins. We'll go remote to Councillor Chambers. Councillor Chambers, you are muted.

Councillor Chambers: Thank you. Thank you, Madam Speaker. Reflecting on this multi-year budget I want to thank all members of the budget working group including the City of Winnipeg public service staff for the countless hours dedicated during days, evenings and on weekends away from their families to receive input, hear recommendations and provide options to the multi-year budget for Council's consideration. Even though we have budget working group. Mayor Gillingham styled a collaborative input, ensures all members of Council have an opportunity to listen to their citizens who elected us to be their voice and provide valuable input into this process. Certainly, Councillor Allard must agree that the budget working group is open to discussion and negotiation as I have witnessed the hard work that he has undertaken to save the pools for his ward both tabling up the preliminary budget in leading us here today where there is consideration to keep the Windsor Park and Eldon Ross Pools open as solutions are sought for future aquatics throughout our city. Coming out of COVID, we knew there would be many challenges to rebuilding our economy and ensuring the services that we continue to deliver would not be negatively impacted. While there are some service that have been altered and some have been eliminated, tough decisions had to be made in order to maintain efforts in moving Winnipeg forward as an affordable city to live, work and raise a family. Similar to Councillor Gilroy, I want to see more services and increased safety for all of our citizens especially for those most vulnerable citizens and newcomer communities. You know, I've been able to visit the city of Vancouver recently and witnessed first hand and Canadians struggling on the daily on East Hastings Street. I've also had conversations with officials from Vancouver who recently visited American cities such as San Francisco where they're ready, almost ready to throw in the towel and give up. I don't want to ever entertain that thought for the city of Winnipeg. We're celebrating Winnipeg's 150th birthday. With that comes consideration for all of the infrastructure whether it was built yesterday or 150 years ago. We have to consider Winnipeg's future and the viability to keep it affordable for our children and their children and beyond. I believe this multi-year budget will provide the future councils of Winnipeg the tools it needs to build this great city we know Winnipeg can be. I urge all council members to support this multi-year operating and capital budget before us here today, noting that we still must work collaboratively and diligently to improve outcomes for all citizens while having a clear vision for the city for our future. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, Councillor Chambers. Next speaker. Okay, seeing none. We'll…Councillor Eadie.

Councillor Eadie: Just give me a moment.

Madam Speaker: Councillor Allard will be next.

Councillor Eadie: Allard's after me? Okay. Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise today, today we got the news of the world happiness rankings. And I just want to point out to my colleagues that the countries who are happiest are ones who understand that hardworking people have different capacities to pay for the services that our governments provide to them, but the American way, they're way down the list. If you want to follow the American way, it's not the way to go because people are not happy there. They keep going down the list. Canada is kind of up there a bit, but we have a problem, Madam Speaker. So I just wanted to point that out today because I was thinking about the budget and how I was going to speak about it today. When I heard those rankings, that's something we have to realize and those countries as well recognize that there is a need to raise revenues, but you have to respect their ability to pay. And if you do that and you continue to provide services that make people happy, provide what they want, it's a good thing. And well, this is my 14th budget, Madam Speaker, that I'll be voting on. And Madam Speaker, it's been a very difficult 14 years for myself, but I want to just say to the public and to all of you I spent 14 years trying to get and have Winnipeggers, and elected Winnipeggers at Council level and even at the provincial level to understand disability to pay perspective. It's fair. It's the way to go. I always…I keep saying we've got to raise you know property taxes more. A lot of people don't like that. however, whenever I do ask for that, I'm trying to point out that we could do things that assist people who have lesser of an ability to pay, they're working hard every day. Every day. So I'll leave it at this is my 14th budget, and just before I go

into it in detail, so this year, it's Winnipeg 150. It's 60…sorry, it's 60…64 years since Metro Winnipeg in 1960, the year that I was born. And back then, they combined all of these different cities that ended up under Unicity, they combined together, Madam Speaker, because they were having difficulty taking care of parks and recreation and other things. And it just made more sense that each elected council had an entity, public service entity that took care of aspects of their cities, since Unicity and that was a good thing. We brought one council, one city for all of us, and the intentions of it were that we were going to be able to ensure that we could provide the services that make people's lives healthy at the City level to ensure that that was there, and that's what the goal was and what we have now, Madam Speaker though, the problem is we're moving into, we've been doing these budgets, Madam Speaker, some areas because the city, original City of Winnipeg had more money than a lot of the other cities. There's a lot of services that were there. And frankly, what the people are seeing today is a continued struggle to try to balance providing for the new areas of the city because every Winnipegger deserves, deserves proper City services so everybody can enjoy a healthy, happy life, and many of the services we provide help people do that. It's not healthcare. Recreation is healthy. It's important. So I just wanted to say, I want to thank the Mayor. Unfortunately, Councillor Orlikow was unable to participate. And I thank the Mayor for the opportunity to be on the budget working group. Just before I talked a little more about that, I think the best word I heard today about trying to do these budgets is it's brutal. It's brutal. Thank you, Councillor Lukes. Because we're also having to deal with this whole Unicity and being able to sustain a certain level of services for our people. So anyway, it was…it was hard work. I had to emotionally keep myself down. So I did it. And if I was asked to participate on the budget working group again, Mayor, I wouldn't say no and I would do my utmost best to try to balance things out because that's where the brutality comes is how do we balance it all out. Very difficult. I wanted to say I feel…actually I feel awful about residents. They are so distressed. We're closing down pools, wading pools and we're…like we're trying to distribute. And I just…oh, I just don't…Madam Speaker, it…anyway it's hard to deal with, but I wanted to say we are building new sustainable infrastructure for our kids to enjoy. And while some people may not disagree that it is or it isn't, we are trying to do things in a sustainable manner. I'm happy…happy that we managed to keep the West Kildonan Library open where it exists today, at Powers and Jefferson. But I'm disappointed that we were not able to find the kind of money we need to renew our heritage building at the corner there. So you know, it's disappointing. I'm quite happy about the library increase in library hours and the new library for the newer neighborhoods in Old Kildonan, the traditional part of Old Kildonan. Some people get confused between Old Kildonan and West Kildonan. When we…the cities merged, there was two different ones back in 72. But I am disappointed that we couldn't…couldn't find staffing for the Community Connections at the Millennium Library or (inaudible) alternative service because what they provided in Community Connections is basically at 211 service. I'm disappointed that we were unable at this point to look at that and stop it because, Madam Speaker, ultimately the people that are using Community Connections, they were coming to the Millennium Library before it existed. And they will continue to be coming to the library after. So I'm happy that we have vastly increased the care of our forestry. But I'm disappointed that we weren't able to increase our…

Madam Speaker: Mayor Gillingham moves extension of two minutes. All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Councillor Eadie: I'm not…and I am disappointed we couldn't increase the maintenance of our parks across the city. We continue to expand and we are getting less maintenance of those spaces that we all need to enjoy or want to enjoy and need to. And I'm just going to conclude. I'm really concerned. The Arlington Bridge. We were unable…well, we are waiting for a report. Then I'm hearing things in the news. Nobody updated me on the first phase of looking at the Arlington Bridge. There's many councillors around here that understand that the Arlington Bridge is a city-wide issue because you use that Arlington Bridge to get all the way from the northern part of your ward, Madam Speaker, all the way down into Councillor Orlikow and Councillor Lukes ward. It is a channel for traffic. And at the same time, another city-wide issue, we are looking at the Portage and Main, and I'm not going to get into detail, but I just want to say that Portage and Main is just as important as the Arlington Bridge which needs to be replaced. We don't want the CPR to leave and all of those good jobs. So don't listen to these people who think that the CPR only created the North End. It actually created the North End. It also created central and all the neighborhoods along the railway on both sides struggle today because they're in the inner city and we are failing to deal with the decay while at the same time, we're pushing a lots of money for the growth of the city. And you know what, we are all Winnipeggers. We need to acknowledge all of this stuff and we have to do our best to do it. So in the end, Madam Speaker, today it will be the second time I'm voting for the budget both operating and capital. You're welcome.

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

Councillor Allard: Perhaps some of the new physicists are right and we're living in multi versus much different worlds that are very similar, but not quite the same. Anyway, I digress obviously. Madam Speaker, through you to my colleagues, thank you for the opportunity to address the operating and capital budgets. Things have been a really tough budget for me. And I would like to give everyone the heads up, that I will be speaking French for my speech in recognition of **(Speaking French).**

Madam Speaker: Mr. Clerk, technical difficulties here with the translation. Okay, Councillor Allard, if we could just go on to the next speaker, we'll come back to you momentarily.

Councillor Allard: Sure. Okay. Merci.

Madam Speaker: While we remedy the issue.

Mayor Gillingham: Can we reset the Councillor…give him his full time allotment, please, start again? Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you.

Mayor Gillingham: When it does come to. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Noted.

Madam Speaker: Next speaker. Councillor Mayes.

Councillor Mayes: Thank you, Madam Speaker. A number of things by way of introduction. Perhaps four things. Very good comments by Councillor Rollins about taking seriously about the interest of the suburbs and the inner city. A fair person said the more of that (inaudible), please. That was good. More of that spirit would be welcome. We'll come back to that tomorrow I suspect. In a…somewhat less happy context. Number two. There was reference to Charleswood-Tuxedo and having somebody at the table for ten years in honour of Councillor Morantz. He was here. He did accuse me of trying to set up remarks summer camp was. Loved the guy, very good calling he does. So he was here six years ago. So forgotten, but no. Two under preliminary matters. I think we need to talk a bit more with our staff about how we treat the strategic plan. When I show up at a meeting, I've said a million times, my number one thing is the Bonavista Rec Centre, and given the draft documented, it reduces the funding by a third from last year and I'm told it's in keeping with a strategic plan to have more recreation facilities. It just isn't. You just can't torture the language enough to make that fit. If you're taken away that much money and nothing got closed in my ward, Councillor Allard probably has stronger remarks but we need to have a little talk with our staff about strategic plan. Lasting by way of introduction, thank you to as many have said to Howard Falk who's been here for many budgets and to Catherine Kloepfer who's been here for a few budgets, and thankfully who's with us for a few more months. There are not many left to get my 70s music preferences, but Catherine has always been the one to come through one that so our high flying bird of Finance is leaving us. she asked me to get Remone's quote in. I just…there is nothing that lends itself to be quoted from the (inaudible) luckily. A couple of things under this budget which I will be supporting. A lot of hard work. I was not on the budget working group for the second time over the past 10 or 12 years, 12 years I think. But certainly a number of things that I'm pleased within the budget. A late addition was a study of traffic on St. Mary's Road. This is actually a good example of councillors working together I think. Councillor Allard in the past and his assistant, Mr. Palmquist said, we don't want this widened, we don't want Henderson Highway going passed Nelson Mc Collegiate, and I've listened to that and so the study is going to look more at transit options, and bike path, AT options, but it is time to take a look at that issue with (inaudible) on St. Mary's Road. So this is by Councillor Chambers and Councillor Allard and I will all be very interested in future planning on St. Mary's Road. Two other things really as Chair of Water and Waste, I think I should've talked a bit about the Water and Waste items. There's nothing new and dramatic here. We're sort of on the…on the doorstep of some dramatic things. There will be debate here in June or July about compost and where we want to go with that. We have approved the idea in principal. Many decisions left to be made, who will pick it up, what will be in the cart, how often will we pick it up, when will it start, what will we do with it once we pick it up? All of this, hopefully to be answered by June or July. So stand by (inaudible), relatively small provision here about some funding to the carts settling. Very good speech by Tanya Paulson at committee saying, where is the commitment to the North End, and a very good response from Tim Shanks, their staff saying, it's not in the budget. It's a fair point. It's budgeted but it's inter-year stuff. So we are…we are at this point committed to finishing phase…project 2 biosolids if necessary alone. The Mayor as has been stated multiple times, to his credit, has written to the Prime Minister and the Premier saying this has gone up massively in price not because we started working miss stuff, it's because of the inflation that's inherited in the situation so hopefully we will get some federal and/or provincial relief on biosolids, but to be clear, you won't see it in this book. But there has been a commitment of between the three levels of government right around a billion dollars for that. More problematic. Project three, nutrient removal. Mr. Shanks brought me to point out that my comments about no money are not dead accurate. There's something like 18 million we've approved for preliminary studies, 18 million towards another billion dollar project though does not sit well. Hopefully, we will by the time this term of office is done, have a plan with the other levels of government. We've all…if not shoveling the ground at least the money committed to go forward on phase 3, the nutrient removal, it has haunted us to an extent since 2003 or at least been on our to do list since then it would certainly be I think a great environmental achievement for this council if we were able to get a plan together. That's not in today's budget but it's…it was a fair comment about where we're going. That will require higher water and sewer rates, but that's not in front of us today. On a point, CSO combined sewer, and we'll come back to this as well when we talk about ascribing certain costs to the suburbs and to certain toss to inner-city areas. Combined

sewer. We're now at the point where it's a six-year budget so the 50% increase that's in place for four years is kind of moving through and we are now back looking at going back to 30 million for clarity, and the Mayor to his credit, talked a lot about this in the campaign and the 50% increase. We do need some help from other levels of government or we need to go it alone if necessary. We have talked about that. We've cost it out. Hopefully, we can work out something again with the feds and the province. We need to get to 60 million a year inflation adjusted. That will be 3% if we can do that for 20 years with the inflation adjustment, it's roughly $1.8 billion. That should get us home. That should get us done while we are hopefully all still here. It's not the 2095 deadline that has been….troubled us before. So we need to get to 60 on CSO plus inflation adjustment. We're part of the way there at 45, and certainly closer than we were a few years ago. But mayoral candidates from (inaudible) Scott Gillingham saying, we need to do more on this. I agree, not in today's budget but hopefully we will soon have a plan to get us to 60 million a year and then inflation adjust that. Last point then. I wanted to thank…there are a number of good things I won't touch on the budget, I want to thank Councillor Orlikow who isn't here today for coming to me a few months ago and saying, hey the people of Grant Park want to do a track. And I said, do I look like I have a big bag of money under my desk or something, equally class? So then, we started looking and remarkably there was a big bag of money that Councillor Orlikow himself obtained in 2018 over a million dollar to a Gant Park rec amenity that had not been spent, unknown to him had been… It was incredible, 2020, appendix four: three different funding sources combined to spend on six new programs spread over five years of budgets. Quite…incredibly complicated. Luckily, this was the fifth and final year. There was still some money left, of that money Councillor Orlikow had fought for, so we were able to salvage $897,000 of the money set aside for Grant Park still goes toward Grant Park. I've had to put in some money, he's had to put in some money. We've got this great track project that will be hopefully unveiling later this year. It's…it is a grant to the school division and they can run with it and construct. So I may need brief extension, Madam Speaker. So I want to thank Councillor Orlikow who's back to my track initiatives.

Madam Speaker: Councillor Rollins move extension of two minutes. All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Councillor Mayes: Thank you. You know, it has been one of the highlights of my career to work on these and it's…Councillor Swandel once said well, we're going to start working on stuff outside your ward, then you're really dangerous, which is incredibly enough true because people don't expect it. It does build certain collegiality and it does tend to get things done. We've been able to work on one in my ward to start and then we together did help with one in your ward, Madam Speaker. We've got two coming in Councillor Allard's ward this year. We opened River East with Councillor Browaty sprinting phoenix like down the back stretch at his old track at River East. I think we went down to Chambers' there with more the sprinter as well as River East, and I'm very…I very much hope Councillor Orlikow will be with me to run a wrap when we open track park track later this year. These are relatively cost-efficient amenities. Somebody said, is that how you want to be remembered and I said, actually yeah, I'd be fine with that. You know, I wouldn't dredge that. I think these have been relatively cheap. You don't need an $800 racket or a hockey stick to play on it. You just need a pair of running shoes. So we've done it I think rather a good job on the track development. Why will I have to go on the West End, but Councillor Dobson has been talking to me about that. So we'll hopefully have something next year to finish this off, so again thanks to Councillor Orlikow for coming forward with the idea. He did say to me at one point, you're enjoying yourself, aren't you with this five different funds going over six years. I had to admit it. It was the kind of thing that appeals to me in the budget. So very good to work together, and looking forward to opening that amenity with Councillor Orlikow and assist Councillor Rollins to intervene at some critical times and hopefully will be there to run the relay with us. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Councillor Allard, back to you now. Got the French translation working. Thank you.

French Spoken: (

Madam Speaker: Mayor Gillingham moves extension. All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Councillor Allard: Two minutes.

Madam Speaker: I think we did an extension already. Thank you. If you could wrap up, Councillor Allard.

Councillor Allard: Okay.

Councillor Allard: After all is said and done, it's I think mostly anger that you are hearing from some residents, they're seeing their pools probably demolished unless somebody can come and adopt pools. I hope that one day, Madam Speaker, that St. Boniface has an aquatic park, not only would it have an aquatic park but the slides would be higher, better and faster than the aquatic park in Transcona. So I'm hoping for that. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Okay, Rick. Thank you, Councillor Allard. Next is Councillor Duncan.

Councillor Duncan: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Today marks another milestone in the 150 year journey of the City of Winnipeg. Today Council meets to vote on a multi-year budget, the testament or commitment to fiscal responsibility and betterment of our community. I would like to thank our Corporate Finance team who work day and night to help facilitate council priorities and at times I'm sure attempted to decipher what was being asked of them. I would also like to commend Councillor Browaty in his role as Chair of Finance, and all of my council colleagues who engaged in this process as imperfect as it may be. And of course, Mayor Gillingham who has demonstrated how to be the devoted leader guiding us all to today's culmination. Completing the City's multi-year budget is more than just numbers in a budget book. It's a reflection of our collective vision for our vibrant and prosperous Winnipeg. It's about ensuring that every dollar is invested wisely to enhance the quality of life for all residents both now and in the future. Throughout this process, we faced several challenges noted by my colleagues here today. We had to balance competing priorities, and allocate resources in a way that moves our communities forward towards a vision shaped in part by our council's strategic priorities action plan. But through collaboration, diligence and shared dedication to a common good I believe Winnipeggers will emerge stronger and more resilient. In the coming years, Winnipeggers will see 10 libraries across the city open 7 days a week, a nearly 20% increase in service. The opening of the 21st library in northwest Winnipeg. Fifteen new spray pads strategically located to serve many…as many residents as possible. A $19 million investment in community centres to support our volunteers. A visionary investment on how recreation services will be delivered at East of the Red RecPlex and South Winnipeg Recreation Campus. Leveraging funds for new leisure centres in Bonavista neighborhood. And a gymnasium expansion in Tyndall Park. Investments in our at risk youth with new programming at the downtown YMCA. A prioritization of safety throughout in a new, more flexible community funds to support the investment in the people of Winnipeg. This budget represents more than just financial planning. It's a blueprint for progress. It outlines our priorities for infrastructure, development, public services and community initiatives that will shape the future of Winnipeg for generations to come, but our work is far from over as we move forward, we must remain vigilant and adaptable. Cultivated culture of innovation and collaboration where new ideas are welcome, a diverse perspectives are valued. We must continue to engage with residents, listen to their concerns and strive to meet their needs to the best of our abilities. Together we have achieved this milestone, but there is still much more to be done. Let us move forward with confidence and determination knowing that by working together, we can extend our hand to Winnipeg. Help her up and make our forefathers dreams of 150 years ago the place to become educated, build a future, raise a family and prosper. Thank you very much.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, Councillor Duncan. Councillor Schreyer.

Councillor Schreyer: Thank you, Madam Speaker. First of all, I do want to thank everyone over the years for all their work in dealing, seriously dealing with our budgetary concerns and how it comes back to this day every year, which we vote on the budget. Something that is a constant process and it's Councillor Duncan has made the point for 150 years, and so here we are again. I did want to give and it is important to do this. I didn't want to give any wrong impression when I talked about closing up libraries because that's been made…the point was made when I was speaking. I kind of appreciate that whether it's out of order or not because I owe an explanation. I'm not wrong in what I'm saying. Well, we deserve an explanation. The reality is that Councillor Browaty said that there will be thousands of new hours in this new budget. That is true. Because right now, right today at this moment, of the 20 libraries or so that we have, half are closed at this moment, of half of those that are open, half are open until students get out of school and people are finished with their 9:00 to 5:00 job. And they close at 5:00 o'clock. So I'm glad that we'll be increasing hours to our libraries. It's an excellent improvement. What I'm saying though and I guess…I don't say I think 150th perspective and all these things, but I've been around for over 50 years and I do take a decades long perspective on when it comes to budget because that's how long it takes for us to get in the position we're in. And I've done that throughout my decade here on Council. So I do appreciate the work on libraries and yes, we did not reduce hours during Evan Duncan's time in the Chair of Community Services now. Also, I want to thank Councillor Browaty, those that are heating my advice in terms of what Councillor Browaty said (inaudible) the Valley Gardens, what I call the outbuilding. And there isn't a budget called the Valley Gardens outbuilding. So $250,000. So my suggestion was because if we were to ensure that building, the deductible would have been about $250,000. So I felt I was being pretty reasonable in my request to our Chair of Finance to say if we were to ever ensure this conventionally, our deductible would have been a quarter million, and that's what I asked for. So because we had damage to a building, we're putting in our deductible. And I'm grateful for Councillor Browaty and those of EPC and those of budget working group for heating what I would consider being ridden sensible and a rational approach to dealing with the Valley Gardens, what I call the outbuilding. There's…while I was elected to talked about, and I only got five minutes. Oh my goodness. You know, I can guess so. You know, I was told this morning that if I talk about what has been the large, greatest increase on our budget, on our taxes, tax increases in the last generation of it. If I talk about it, I'm misinformed. That's pretty much the paraphrasing. You can go back and see it. The reality is that I have to talk about it. That's my job. That's our job. So I could talk about it, and talk about what I know. So when I say that the cost of construction has gone up in the last 30 years, 10 times higher than the income of the taxpayers to pay for it. I mean it's gone up 10 times higher than the income of the taxpayers that pay for it in the last 30 years. So if I'm wrong, I need to be told I'm wrong. Saying I'm wrong for saying something without explaining what it is I'm saying wrong doesn't help anybody. Nobody around here says I'm wrong anymore, right? Not to me, not in this room. We heard it once this morning. And by the way, I was also told that my statistics on construction inflation were completely inaccurate a year ago. I didn't get an

explanation this morning, but I'll tell you what. If my statistics are completely inaccurate, I will resign because I got no place in this room if I can't take seriously the issues and statistics as presented to me about construction inflation. I should not be here, but I think I should. You know what I don't like about (inaudible)? I don't like getting my intelligence insulted because when it comes to something as big as this, the biggest increase in our budget of the last 30 years, the last 50 years, more than that. The reality is we're insulting the intelligence of all citizens and taxpayers of Winnipeg. That's all I'm trying to do is have a public dialogue, and that's why I bring it up here, not in some other rumour a couple of councillors and there were some others. That's good. Good thing. Every councillor should have these meetings but so should every taxpayer. The information I have is public information. That's all I've got to work with. So if there is information missing, if I'm misinformed. Well, who misinformed me? If my stats are wrong (inaudible) completely, anytime I'm corrected on the stuff, I will publicly thank you every time because I'm grateful because we have to move on this. It's not just me knowing the stuff. We have to go. So it's very nice that we balanced our operational budget, but people should also understand how that works. I want to thank the budget working group. We have to understand the limitations and which they work. The budget working group doesn't decide the entire budget. They don't even decide the revenue streams. They have a budget and they are told how to distribute that for our operational budget. people should understand there's two-parts for the city budget, the operational and the capital. Capital is essentially the construction. How is it different? Because the operational, we tax people, we raise our taxes, fees, fines, rates, levies every single year. But we have a struggle maintaining services. In fact, we don't essentially overtime. We did some good work for the libraries in this budget, and that's good. But the reality is over time we reduced our services including our hours to libraries and we can all agree that. The reality is that the capital budget is different because we don't tax you and spend it that year. It's done over time, over generation we borrow money. In fact, it's gotten so bad. We're actually borrowing money…we used to have greater reserves. Greg Selinger was here today, and he was the Chair of the Finance Committee. We have more reserves and we have more money in those reserves. We're actually borrowing money to fill our stabilization reserve fund. That's where we're at as a city. So I'm talking about the big picture. I'm talking about the long-term. Why not? We've talked about, you know, the question was asked, where are our provincial counterparts and federal counterparts? Well, I need to see this again. I've said it before. It's really important. If you want to know part of how we got into this this mess, part of it, in terms of just governments. Let's just realize that it was a change in government policy primarily on the federal level starting in the 1980s. And that's how long it takes like a ship at sea, it slowly moves, it slowly turns until it turns around. But it takes a long time and it takes decades. It's happened in our lifetimes right in front of our eyes because in the 1980s, the federal government reduced transfer payments, federal to the provincial governments. In turn, the provincial government reduced transfer payments to the municipalities. Is that not a direct cause and effect? Well, yes, it is. Has it gotten worse? Well, yeah. Interesting, however, that in the 1980s when they reduced transfer payments to the provinces, they actually got further into debt. How is that? If we want to understand our budget and talk about other levels of government.

Madam Speaker: Councillor Rollins moves extension, two minutes. All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Councillor Schreyer: If we are going to understand our budget and our budget problems, we need to understand how all levels of government work together. I'm not making that up. It was already brought forward here today. Where are our counterparts? And that's a constant one. I think we've been doing that for 150 years and it's true. But our federal and provincial governments used to be…do a better job. Our federal government used to do a better job, but now you have an idea of why they don't. At the same time, they reduced transfer payments to provinces. They actually went further into debt. We all understand this stuff. We got to understand that too. I want that public dialogue. And by the way, I worked for years in the construction industry. And I'm very grateful for every job that I've had in the construction industry, whether it be a minimum wage or whether it be approaching the salary of elected representatives such as a city councillor. And I feel sorry for anybody in the construction industry that does not feel grateful for their jobs whether…because they don't…minimum wage by the way is less than used to be. And construction workers' income used to be…we found it it's a third of construction costs. They used to be half. It's going towards a quarter. So let's not blame construction workers. Their jobs are on the line if we can't sustain the construction industry. We need to sustain it. I'm an ally and when I talk about my concerns. I shouldn't be looked upon with contempt because I'm trying to my job because government's got to do theirs because taxpayers have to pay for it. And that is a restrictions on our operational budget. Hats off to those that have tough jobs creating our operational budget. And I will be voting for the operational budget. I will not be voting for the capital budget. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Next is **C**ouncillor Wyatt. Your opportunity to close.

Councillor Wyatt: Is there anybody else who wants to speak? No? Okay. Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, on October the 4th, Winnipeggers woke up thinking that we had no longer a provincial conservative government in this province, but the reality is we do right here at city hall. The conservative government is alive and this is a conservative budget that we have before us. And no matter what the Kinew government does coming up with their forward provincial budget. There's two things that I'm sure they should be aware of, and I'm sure they are. And that is, and by the way, they do listen to these peaches. They listen to everything we hear in this chamber, say in this chamber. And that is number one that no matter how many dollars that we as a city ask for them to subsidize the city that we will do everything we can

to artificially keep our taxes low at the same time. That has been our pattern for the last 35 years. They should be aware of that. I'm sure they are. And number two, coming time for their re-election, the same groups are still here at city hall. They do everything that they can to work against them to bring back provincial conservative government. And I'm sure they're aware of that as well. The reality is, Madam Speaker, we do have a conservative budget here before us. We have in the city today traffic congestion that is getting out of control. Traffic congestion that is getting worse and worse. Go on St. Mary's in the morning into downtown, see it backed up. All the way passed their main intersection and St. Anne's and St. Mary's, go on any major road way, coming into the city, say if maybe Main Street or Portage Avenue this point, and. you have massive traffic congestion in both directions at rush hour. And it's getting worse, so I can understand why Councillor Mayes calls for and LRT and why we've got to start investing in rapid transit again in the city. Talk about transit congestion in the morning, buses full, packed. We're going to roll out of brand new transit master plan, but not at one new route other than the three routes riding in this budget because of Councillors on EPC or friends of, but the reality is we're not expanding the fleet. We have no plan to expand, and yet, we're going to make all these folks who are used to getting on the busy, getting downtown to have to take a transfer. So it's all going to be about the connections now, folks. They're going to be freezing in the cold, standing in dirty cold bus shelters if they are lucky to have a shelter to make a connection to get on to the main route, and that, Madam Speaker, is again a sign of a conservative budget. Let them ride the bus. Let them wait in the cold. Planning paralysis. Average people trying to pull permits, months upon months, Madam Speaker, to get a permit for a simple thing like a deck or to pull or build a veranda. But yet nothing's been done about that to speed up customer service to make it more user friendly. Again Madam Speaker, a conservative budget. And the sick and the homeless in the streets, they're out there by the droves and growing. Nothing is being done. We didn't kick the conservatives out in October the 3rd. Conservatives, they are alive right here, Madam Speaker, running this city day in and day out. The reality is, Madam Speaker, look at the budget. Very friendly to business. You heard Mr. Lorenc here today. Heavy Construction is quite happy with this budget. They're very happy. The developers, right in the budget. Brand new interceptor pipes. How would the ratepayers of Winnipeg would like to know which now I'm going to inform them that their water and waste that they pay all the time quarterly is now subsidized brand new interceptor pipes for developers to make money on their new subdivisions. It's in the book. Tens of millions of dollars that wasn't there before now exists. All being done for the development of the community, not for the average person. And the growing violent crime, the arson. since January 1st, we heard in our standing…500 fires, now (inaudible) more, all up and down Main Street. Now, you talk to our folks in the Fire Department. It hasn't been a cold winter. It hasn't been a cold winter. Typically, you get a cold winter. That's where you get electrical fires happening inside buildings. That has not been the case. The issue, Madam Speaker, is the fact, in their opinion, they're still investigating a lot of them. But they're mostly likely related to arson. Something is going on inside the inner city, and we need to wake up and we need to wake up very fast. But here we are, Madam Speaker, again a conservative budget. What are we going to do? We're going after community groups. We're shutting down a wading pool. We're eating $2,000 called Happyland. We're shutting down…we're shutting down wading pools while the inner city got fires right across the city. We're shutting down community connections after this year at the library. We're going after the Sherbrook Pool. We're going to study it. We're going to go after. And the Arlington Bridge sitting there. Nobody knows. Nobody has any plans, but it's only be the North End. So who cares, right? That's the attitude of this conservative government here at city hall. And yet, Madam Speaker, I look at all these community groups. And I have also the motion here which I have no doubt was not passed. I've been informed by Buhler Recreation, another community group, no different than Assiniboine Park, by the way. Buhler is a regional park. Assiniboine is a regional park. The only difference with Buhler, they actually have a blue-collar board of directors. The Assiniboine Park has a multi-millionaire board of directors. The young difference here is the blue-collar workers actually had conacts and they had friends, and they called an emergency board meeting to plan for the cancellation of the 2025 season and the permanent closure of Buhler Recreation Park because they have to forecast and budget into the future. They are like us, believe it or not. And they don't have the deep pockets like the millionaires over to Assiniboine Park who by the way as regional park, we fund by the tens of millions. And I'd like to thank Councillor Browaty for his kind comments about the Transcona Aquatic Park, but with all fairness if I had built the Transcona Aquatic Park, I know you would've been closing my pool down, too. And you would be shutting down, and all fairness to Councillor Allard. They would've…we never have done this in the past in the city. We close an arena, we build a new one at the same time. We have a plan. We don't go in just shut these down without making the investments or showing that the investments are happening at the same time. This is the first time I remember us ever doing that. What a mean-hearted, mean spirited budget. And I can honestly say, to say…and I remember, you know, Councillor Eadie talks about 14 years being on Council. This is my 18th year. You know, and I remember Mike Pagtakhan sitting in this chair for Point Douglas. I remember Harvey Smith, Harry Lazarenko, Dan Vandal, strong councillors, strong members of Council, Madam Speaker. And I don't recall…I don't think they would be rolling over right now when their neighborhoods are being cut right, left and center. They would not. They'd be standing up for their communities (inaudible) and if I am the one who has to stand up for those communities even though I don't represent them I shall do so. And that's what I'm doing to do here today, Madam Speaker for this budget. Even though the rest of council has chosen not to. Madam Speaker, it's been said that the budget process is terrible, and everybody agrees. The budget process is terrible even my Councillor Lukes said that. So why can't we change it? Why can't we change it? We came together through strategic priorities action plan. We worked together on that, and then all of a sudden everything went back to the old ways. And even though there was all that goodwill. You know, and I always say this. That is the person who has the hammer sets the tone. The Mayor's office has always had the hammer. They…you know, if you're…I'm

not a gambler, but if you are a gambler. The Mayor's office controls the deck, controls the casino, controls the gambler, controls the players, controls the dealer, right? They control the cards. And so they are the ones that set the tone. If they want cooperative tone, they'll have a proper tone. And if they want one where they start shutting down pools and wading pools and attacking inner city groups. You know they're have that as well, but when we came together a year ago January to write a strapline. I was optimistic. Unfortunately, not so much any more. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, Councillor Wyatt. Mr. Mayor, your opportunity to close.

Mayor Gillingham: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Appreciate the comments of colleagues around the room. Some which that were good, I agree with. Others are misleading, to say the least. I think, Madam Speaker, we'll be taking a look at this budget overall rather than deal with the specifics of it. I do want to go back to a couple of things. We did put in place a strategic plan together last year. The plan, the intention was the plan put forward five key priorities: downtown, strong economy, liveable, safe and healthy, happy city, and green growing city with sustainable renewal of infrastructure and the city that works with the residents through improved customer service. Like so many of my colleagues have clearly articulated today when you take a look at this budget, though it doesn't fully meet every one of those goals, we can see key investments in each of those five areas, consistent with the plan. The idea was to put a plan in place and then that the budget would fund the plan. I want to thank my colleagues who worked so hard to do that. We have made some difficult decisions in this budget. Every budget necessitates difficult decisions. Frankly if there's councillors, and I've been here for going on 10 years. And there's been…others that have been here 16, 17, 18 years, and don't like the state of things. Then I guess we have to look in the mirror about the state of things and the decisions made through previous budgets. But our focus is on the future, not on the past. This budget focuses very much on the future and investments in these key areas. Investments in improving customer service with additional investments in 311. So that we can further reduce the wait times and improve the service to customers are getting, customers being the people of Winnipeg. And increase in the number of permitting staff each year, over the next four years so we can better serve the residents who are building whether they're larger developers, who are building our communities and helping us with dealing with the housing crisis. Or whether we are adding assistance and better customer service to those who are building the deck, improving our permitting processes, adding more staff to help our department better serve residents. We're doing that. We do have almost a billion dollars of investment over six years in our roads budget. We haven't forgotten about roads. And I would say that over these last few weeks, roads are on people's minds. Every time, they slam into a pothole and they are many of them. We need to continue to invest in our infrastructure. The downtown. I've said consistently, and others have said too that the city of Winnipeg will only reach its potential when downtown can reach its potential. And I've said kind of as a way of illustration that the way we're addressing the downtown is not just one item or one element at the same time. It's kind of like Timbits Soccer with all the kids swarm the ball. We are putting every effort into it improving our streetscaping, improving safety, adding better investments into transit, assisting businesses with their development as well. That's why we are excited to see projects happening right now like the Wawanesa building that has just opened up, and the investment that Manitoba Métis Federation has made when it comes to 200 Main Street and their investment of Portage and Main, rail side at the Forks happening. Southern Chiefs' Organization in their investment in the Bay building that will transform that building. And of course, we all await to see what True North does and hopefully, frankly triggers our option on purchasing Portage Place. We're also looking forward to the transformation of the Graham Avenue corridor. And so much is being done in our downtown right now and we're focused on investing in that, but we know we need to do more, and it's a small things. And I'm really excited about $150,000 grant that will give you this year to the downtown Y so they can provide programming through young people in our downtown. That's in this budget. We'd like the $3 million for riverbank stabilization. If you take a look at…if you take a look at our investment in our full-time equivalents of city of Winnipeg. We're adding more staff because we want to do more work. One of the decisions that was brought forward by Councillor Rollins was to add a couple of more staff so we can make sure we're doing the maintenance work through municipal accommodations. That's important work. But in the suburbs, there's a new library, Madam Speaker, in you end of town, long overdue. There are new bus routes coming into the suburbs in new areas like Councillor Mayes's area and new areas as well that will serve people that allow them to have access to transit where they don't have access to transit today. So these are key investments, and there are many, many more. Why? Because we're focused on the future. I'm going to commend the colleagues today who are working hard to make difficult decisions. That's what this…these rules are. They're not always easy decisions, but sometimes we have to make a decision to sometimes decommission some things and look to the future. I want to commend Councillor Allard. This is not an easy budget for him, but he is focused on the future. He's worked with Councillor Duncan and Councillor Browaty and others to find a path forward for the future of aquatics in St. Boniface. That's a difficult decision, but I commend him for because he's at tomorrow and not just the past. Couple times, couple colleagues mentioned that people leaving Winnipeg in droves. The fact is our city's population has increase by about 90,000 people the last decade, and we have had mere record of, if not record, population growth in the last 12 months. That's why we consistently in this chamber talk about the housing crisis that we are facing. That's why we're taking money, receiving money and partnering with the federal government on the housing accelerator funding. We're going to talk about that at a greater length tomorrow. Why? Because we need to address the growth in our population. People are not voting with feet and leaving Winnipeg in droves. The stat prove point of contrary. Those are misleading statements. It is not that at all. And so that's why we're doing work to invest in the future, to invest in services,

to invest in our downtown, to invest in our urban canopy. There's an increase in our budget this year over the next several years for…to protect tree canopy to add more trees to urban landscape. And I want to thank colleagues for that, Councilor Orlikow couldn't be here today, but we all know to his credit, he has been driving that ship and talking more and more about the need for us to keep investing. People have asked why are some of the other projects not in is this budget. For example, I know Councillor Eadie today brought forward, you know, the issue of Arlington Bridge. We know that that report is yet coming. And so you know, there's more discussion to have on that. I am really pleased, and I will commend Councillor Browaty through all my years of trying as Finance Chair to encourage and convince Councillor Eadie to vote for both operating and capital. I could never do it. So Councillor Browaty today through his work and certainly through Councillor Eadie's work as well. I believe he has got Councillor Eadie here at this place. I do want to thank everyone for their efforts. I do want to thank everyone who's looking forward to the future. It's…we should be, you know, we should look at all of these things with sober judgment. We should look at all of these decisions and realize that sometimes they're difficult, that we have to make a choice on one item or another. But I especially want to again give my thanks and congratulations to every colleague around this chamber who is looking to the future with a positive outlook, who's looking to the future with…

Madam Speaker: No extension in close.

Mayor Gillingham: Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Wrap up, please, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Gillingham: Thank you. To who's looking to the future and trying to say to themselves what decision do Winnipeggers 20 years from now need us to make today. Then let's make that decision. Let's vote for this budget.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. With that, we will vote.

Unknown Speaker: The two motions?

Madam Speaker: Thank you. First of all, vote on amending Motion 2, that was moved by Councillor Wyatt, seconded by Councillor Gilroy. All in favour? Please rise.

A RECORDED VOTE was taken the result being as follows:

Yeas

Councillors Gilroy, Schreyer, Wyatt, and Madam Speaker Councillor Sharma

Nays

His Worship Mayor Gillingham, Councillors Allard, Browaty, Dobson, Duncan, Eadie, Lukes, Mayes, Rollins, Santos and Chambers

City Clerk: The vote Madam Speaker, Yeas 4, Nays 11.

Madam Speaker: Amending Motion 2 is defeated. And now onto the…Councillor Schreyer asked for separate vote. We will vote on the operating budget first. All in favour? Please rise.

A RECORDED VOTE was taken the result being as follows:

Yeas

His Worship Mayor Gillingham, Councillors Allard, Browaty, Dobson, Duncan, Eadie, Gilroy, Lukes, Mayes, Rollins, Santos, Schreyer, Chambers and Madam Speaker Councillor Sharma

Nays

Councillor Wyatt

City Clerk: The vote Madam Speaker, Yeas 14, Nays 1.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. The operating budget passes, and now onto the vote for the capital budget. All in favour, please rise.

A RECORDED VOTE was taken the result being as follows:

Yeas

His Worship Mayor Gillingham, Councillors Allard, Browaty, Dobson, Duncan, Eadie, Gilroy, Lukes, Mayes, Rollins, Santos, Chambers and Madam Speaker Councillor Sharma

Nays

Councillors Schreyer and Wyatt

City Clerk: The vote Madam Speaker, Yeas 13, Nays 2.

Madam Speaker: The operating budget passes. Capital budget, pardon me. Yes, we still have to vote on Recommendation 3. It's the officer's clause. I'll call…Mr. Clerk, the clause.

City Clerk: The recommendation, proper officer's recommendation.

Madam Speaker: Okay, recorded vote, did you say? No, no, no need. All in favour? Contrary?

City Clerk: It's just the end of proper officer's clause: That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to…

Madam Speaker: Yeah, and that's carried. Thank you. Okay, Madam Clerk. The next item, please.

Item 2 - 2024 Mill Rates for the Education Support Levy and Special Levy

Madam Speaker: Mr. Mayor. Would you like to introduce the item?

Mayor Gillingham: I think you can call the question, Madam Speaker. Oh, thank you. I'll wait to hear from my colleagues.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Councillor Eadie.

Councillor Eadie: Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker. And Madam Speaker, I'm not going to apologize, but I think I need to make a point about the school division special levy here. I'm not going to…it's not the traditional debate, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I just wanted to rise and speak to…we just passed a budget. And for me, a difficult one in some cases. So there's a difficulty. We have shared recreation aquatics, for example, with our school divisions, and on our school lots. They're all publicly owned lands, Madam Speaker. Is it distant history? No, a pool was built, for example, at Strathcona School. Wading pool, now that wading pool actually is built on school division ground land, not city ground land. William wading is another example of the school where there's a wading pool which are to be proposed to be closed, Madam Speaker. And we are moving towards more sustainable delivery of aquatics for younger kids. Spray pads are not for teenagers, that's right. Probably not even 11, 12. Used to take the bus to the Centennial Pool when I grew up. You ust have to take a bus to get there, but Madam Speaker, I digress a bit. I just wanted to speak about a problem. So we have had difficulties working with our school divisions and we're…councillors were invited to a meeting with the Winnipeg School Division, and Madam Speaker, you know that we are pretty well each year are hosted by the Seven Oaks School Division to have discussions. And the…so the difficulty is this, and I don't think they have enough money in their special levies. They were working at trying to provide more…king of more direct educational services. But I just wanted to point out there is going to be a call on this city councillor when we look at closing three wading pools in a ward. We are getting a new…brand-new spray pad, which is great, really important. But the difficulty is going to be we are taking something away from a more localized part of the neighborhood or from a neighbourhood completely in one example. Madam Speaker, so the pressure is that well, the school divisions, they don't spend a lot on the outdoor recreation, you know, for whatever reason. They do. Don't get me wrong. But Madam Speaker, there's a great difficulty in, you know, you take something away and it's the people who live in those neighborhoods. They're using them, Madam Speaker. It's the same people, very same people, Madam Speaker, that we serve. And so there is going to be some great difficulty. I just wanted to put that on the table today to say that the school divisions are going to have to work with us a lot closer and be more understanding of what our abilities are and how we can better work together to provide the services that the people in these neighborhoods even in St. Boniface, right? What…how much more…closer can we work? Although I don't know of the circumstances of any recreation facilities on school division land necessarily, Madam Speaker. But somehow we're going to have to work together to provide in specific areas of the neighborhood to ensure that our kids because they are still our kids, still our kids. They're all our kids. So that they can enjoy and be happy. Everybody deserves to be happy.

Kids are most happy when they have great recreation facilities to play. And so hopefully, I don't know if the special levies on these, from these different school divisions will be enough, but hopefully, we can find a path forward to serve those same kids. Thanks.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, Councillor Eadie. Mr. Mayor, do you wish to close? Oh, Councillor Mayes.

Councillor Mayes: Very briefly, a word and a praise of the city school divisions. I don't know…because five of us who sit around this table used to be school trustees. I don't know if it's leadership of various mayors. I…when I first got here, one of the media that wrote Mayes hasn't been around long enough to understand the animosity that's spelled the counterfort school divisions, which was true, but I also said, well maybe I've been around long enough to do something about it. So I think we've come a long way. We have done all of those running track projects (inaudible), all in conjunction, they're all on school division lands. Four different school divisions I'm having (inaudible) built today. So very…I think I've done 10 basketball projects in (inaudible), various other counts are done, work with other school divisions, some cricket to outdoor classrooms to reconciliation projects. So I think we belong together with the school divisions. You know I think we've made some real progress here. So I understand what Councillor Eadie is saying. There's going to be some pressure on end due to at least odd older information. Councillor Gillingham sorted out that odd land division thing with the St. James that went back to the 1950s when he was still a councillor. So we have some old arrangements, but by working together, I think we've actually done quite a bit of good in the past decade.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Mr. Mayor to close on the item.

Mayor Gillingham: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Thank my colleagues. You can call the question, please.

Madam Speaker: All in favour of Item 2? Contrary? That's carried. Onto By-laws Mr. Mayor.

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

Mayor Gillingham: Thank you. I move that By-law No. 38/2024 be read a first time.

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

Clerk: By-law No. 38/2024.

Madam Speaker: Mr. Mayor.

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE
CONSIDERATION OF BY-LAWS

Mayor Gillingham: Thank you. Move the By-law…the following by-laws be read a first time. By-law No. 28/2024, 29/2024, 30/2024, 31/2024, 32/2024, 33/2024, 34/2024, 35/2024, 36/2024, 37/2024, 45/2024, and 46/2024.

Madam Speaker: All in favour? There is no 38. All in favour? Contrary? Carried. Noted.

Clerk: By-law No. 28/2024, By-law No. 29/2024, No. 30/2024, 31/2024, 32/2024, 33/2024, 34/2024, 35/2024, 36/2024, 37/2024, 45/2024, and 46/2024.

Madam Speaker: Mr. Mayor, on the second reading.

Mayor Gillingham: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I move that By-laws No. 29/2024 to 37/2024 both inclusive and By-laws No. 45/2024 and 46/2024 be read a second time.

Madam Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Clerk: By-law No. 28/2024 to 37/2024 both inclusive and Bylaws No. 45/2024 and 46/2024.

Mayor Gillingham: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Move the rules be suspended and By-laws No. 28/2024 to 37/2024 both inclusive and By-laws No. 45/2024 and 46/2024 be read a third time and that the same be passed and ordered to be signed and sealed.

Madam Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? It's carried. And that is noted, the opposition. That concludes our agenda for today. Councillor Browaty, will you move adjournment?

Councillor Browaty: Moved.

Madam Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried. Stay for roll call.

ROLL CALL

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

Council adjourned at 2:56 p.m.