Agenda – Executive Policy Committee – November 13, 2024

REPORTS

Item No. 13 Legislative Changes – Public Utilities Board Regulation

COUNCIL DECISION:

On October 24, 2024, Council ruled automatic referral of the following motion to the Executive Policy Committee:

Moved by Councillor Wyatt,
Seconded by Councillor Mayes,

WHEREAS the biggest sewage spill in the city's records occurred in September 2002, when a mechanical failure at the City of Winnipeg's North End Water Pollution Control Centre (NEWPCC) caused a spill into the Red River of 427 million litres of untreated sewage over a 57-hour period;

AND WHEREAS as a result of this disaster, upgrades to the treatment plant were originally called for by the provincial Clean Environment Commission in 2003, and were initially expected to be completed early in the 2010s;

AND WHEREAS the full project cost of the NEWPCC was originally estimated in 2015 to cost $795 million;

AND WHEREAS the rising costs of upgrades to the NEWPCC is currently estimated at $3 billion, an increase of more than $600 million over the most recent estimate of $2.38 billion;

AND WHEREAS the City of Winnipeg has continually sought extensions on the timeline to complete the project with the most recent from 2030 to 2032;

AND WHEREAS the City of Winnipeg has approved a four-year rate increase that would impact families by a price hike of more than 20% by 2027;

AND WHEREAS the Public Utilities Board of Manitoba (PUB) is an independent, quasi-judicial administrative tribunal that has broad oversight and supervisory powers over public utilities and designated monopolies, as set out in statute;

AND WHEREAS the PUB considers both the impact to customers and financial requirements of the utility in approving rates;

AND WHEREAS the PUB provides regulatory administration of the Municipal Act in all water and sewer utility rate regulation in every municipality except for the City of Winnipeg;

COUNCIL DECISION (continued):

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That City Council call upon the Province of Manitoba to establish a new regulatory framework to make Winnipeg's water and wastewater rates, and their annual changes, subject to the approval of the Public Utilities Board.

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