



**SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

**MINUTES**

**Monday, January 23, 2023**

**Meeting held electronically and open to public attendance**

**Council Chamber, City Hall**

**PRESENT:**

Mayor Patrick Johnstone  
Councillor Ruby Campbell  
Councillor Daniel Fontaine  
Councillor Tasha Henderson  
Councillor Jaimie McEvoy  
Councillor Paul Minhas  
Councillor Nadine Nakagawa

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Ms. Lisa Spitale	Chief Administrative Officer
Ms. Lisa Zwarn	Auxiliary City Clerk
Mr. Mike Anderson	Manager of Transportation
Mr. Todd Ayotte	Manger, Community Arts and Theatre
Mr. Gordon Duggan	Executive Director, New Media Gallery
Mr. Steven Faltas	Business Process Manager, Electrical Operations
Mr. Dean Gibson	Director of Parks and Recreation
Mr. Indeep Johal	Financial Analyst
Ms. Lisa Leblanc	Director of Engineering Services
Ms. Lorraine Lyle	Manager, Financial Services
Mr. Craig MacFarlane	Manager of Legal Services
Ms. Vali Marling	General Manager, Anvil Centre
Mr. Rob McCullough	Manager, Museums and Heritage Services
Mr. Shawn Sheehan	Superintendent, Parking, Animals, and Towing
Ms. Jackie Teed	Acting Director, Climate Action, Planning and Development
Ms. Harji Varn	Chief Financial Officer and Director of Finance
Ms. Eva Yip*	Acting Director of Human Resources

\*Denotes electronic attendance.

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## 1. **CALL TO ORDER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Mayor Johnstone opened the meeting at 9:08 a.m. and recognized with respect that New Westminster is on the unceded and unsurrendered land of the Halkomelem speaking peoples. He acknowledged that colonialism has made invisible their histories and connections to the land. He recognized that, as a City, we are learning and building relationships with the people whose lands we are on.

Councillor Nakagawa shared that instead of celebrating the Lunar New Year yesterday, many community members were reflecting on the mass shooting in the United States that targeted the East Asian community. She noted the importance of acknowledging these types of occurrences as they often target marginalized groups and affect our community members.

## 2. **BUDGET WORKSHOP PART 1**

### 2.1 **Anvil Conference Services and Cultural Services - Operating Model, Revenue (Circulated Separately)**

Vali Marling, General Manager, Anvil Centre, introduced the PowerPoint presentation which outlined the operating model and revenue related to Anvil Centre conferences services and cultural services.

In response to questions from Council members, Ms. Marling, Lisa Spitale, Chief Administrative Officer, Harji Varn, Chief Financial Officer and Director of Finance, Indeep Johal, Financial Analyst, Todd Ayotte, Manager, Community Arts and Theatre, and Gordon Duggan, Executive Director, New Media Gallery, provided the following information:

- The \$2.7M in amortization costs fall under the Anvil Centre administration budget;
- Events being hosted at cost still require Anvil staff or staff from other departments being brought in to help, along with catering or other contracted services which are not recoverable;
- Information is available regarding event downtimes and staff management;
- Approximately 20 percent of events are City events such as the Civic Dinner, departmental meetings, etc., including events sanctioned by the City such as street festivals;

- During street festivals, the Anvil Centre is the only place with air conditioning available for people to cool off;
- Capacity was high in 2022 after the pandemic and is expected to be higher this year;
- Staff are working on an event series, funded through a government grant, called Outside/In in conjunction with the Downtown BIA and local businesses;
- Many people will go for dinner before the theatre and may browse around resulting in a spillover to businesses;
- Patrons are being surveyed to find out where they are visiting from, if they have visited other businesses, and what types of events they are interested in as a way to build momentum post pandemic;
- Planning for the Anvil Centre included quantifying the role of arts and culture as an economic driver as well as a discussion around economic analysis took place;
- Parking Level 1 is for the Anvil Centre and Levels 2 and 3 are for the office tower and there are other parking locations offsite; however, guests are encourage to utilize the nearby SkyTrain;
- While often unused during the day, Douglas College holds many evening classes during which their reserved parking spaces are used;
- Staff will look into possibly securing more parking spaces to accommodate Anvil Centre patrons;
- The Operating Agreement and Lease with the Massey Theatre outlines the relationship between the Theatre and the City, and staff are working closely with the Executive Director of the Massey Theatre around planning and the future vision for the venue;
- The operations and maintenance component of the Massey Theatre is challenging and being done through the civic buildings and properties team;
- The New Media Gallery was designed around physical space that was available in the Anvil Centre and, if the Gallery space grows, so will the budget, although growth does continue through programs;
- New Media Gallery advertising is done through social media and word of mouth; however, there are no wayfinding signs near the SkyTrain or elsewhere that advertise the Gallery and these are opportunities that could be capitalize on;
- Frontline managers share the exhibits with visitors and if the Gallery gets too big that personal aspect will be lost and more funding will be required;
- The Gallery's budget is not extremely high and about the same per capita as other cities, with most of it going towards staffing;

- The Gallery has not received art grants from the Provincial nor Federal Governments as they are often program specific, therefore becoming revenue neutral;
- The Gallery has received donations from businesses including from Piva Modern Italian restaurant, Amazon, and Best Buy among others, which allows businesses to connect with the community in a different way than grants do. While these donations were down during the pandemic, it is anticipated that they will pick up again;
- Guests attending events at the Anvil Centre tend to be focused on the event they are attending; however, some visit the Gallery during breaks;
- Anvil Centre has done very well without a hotel in the immediate vicinity; however, having a closer hotel would be ideal. The hotel study can be updated and shared with Council;
- The driving factor of higher costs is that Anvil Centre is a full-service conference centre which research determined is what corporate clients want;
- Anvil Centre has limited breakout space as a result of not being able to utilize the space in the theatre as much as before;
- The Anvil Centre shares clients with the Vancouver Convention Centre with large events being held in Vancouver and smaller ones in New Westminster;
- Conference services have a huge economic impact on the local economy, especially if guests are attending a conference over a number of days;
- Anvil Centre is expected to break even this year after starting from scratch due to the pandemic although the ability to offer more is almost non-existent due to the lack of available space;
- The conference centre is very well used; however, that may not be apparent at first glance or if you are on other levels of the building;
- All weekdays are promoted in venue marketing, and attendance varies based on what events are booked and when;
- Each department at Anvil Centre has its own budget; however, there are items that impact all departments, such as security, which are placed under the administration budget;
- Staff can follow up on what the break even and full cost recovery for Anvil Centre will look like;
- There is \$30,000 in the capital budget for yearly maintenance work on the Samson V which is a popular place for people to visit during the summer;
- The hull of the Samson V is in good shape and has been inspected and protected to keep out water and protect it from birds;

- Irving House offers drop in tours for approximately 4,000 to 5,000 visitors per year and sees visits from program groups such as École Qayqayt Elementary through their gardening program;
- During the bylaw analysis, staff primarily focused on the Indigenous component of older bylaws that included Indigenous peoples and other minority groups;
- Staff are looking at authentic reproduction carriages for the cannons and have received a quote of approximately \$25,000 for a cannon coach and wheels. Alternatives such as more weather-wearing materials such as resin carriages were also explored; however authenticity is an important consideration;
- Work is being done to decolonize Irving House and the Samson V with staff noting all the work that the Samson V did on the water, allowing many colonized vessels to come through the area;
- During private events at the Anvil Centre, the level one washroom is only open to those event attendees; however, all other washrooms are open and available. When no events are taking place, all washrooms are available for use; and,
- A lot of the aspirations for the Anvil Centre have been met and now, as we come out of the pandemic, the discussion around the future of the Anvil Centre, including animating it as the street level should take place.

In discussion, Council members noted:

- Arts and culture is a strong pillar in the Downtown with respect to building the economy through patrons going to dinner and/or drinks before or after an event;
- Hyack Square could be better activated with performers associated to the Anvil Centre;
- The 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Anvil Centre can be used to activate and revitalize the downtown area;
- The New Media Gallery is relevant, thoughtful, and refreshing, and through art and personalized experiences, which is uncommon in art galleries, it gets people thinking about things;
- The Gallery is a hidden gem and, while many people visit it regularly, a storefront space would alert those that are still unaware of its existence and draw them inside;
- A review of programs and services offered at the Anvil Centre and if they are meeting the community's need coming out of the pandemic is supported, including what the City would like the next 10 years to look like;

- It would be helpful to know what the actual net operating costs are and to have these brought forward in the future in a more standardized way, as well as clarity around what can be delivered based on the size of the venue;
- The presentation was a great refresher and reminder of the work that needs to be reviewed coming out of the pandemic including a renewed and refreshed vision of the Anvil Centre and the adjacent public realm;
- Given that the Samson V is located in a highly visible public space, it should be in better condition;
- A discussion could take place during strategic planning regarding whether or not there is a benefit to repealing bylaws that are no longer effective or in use;
- There is opportunity to activate the ground floor level of the Anvil Centre;
- The waterfront is an important space for Indigenous communities who historically travelled through or stayed in the City; however, there is more work to do at the waterfront as the Indigenous history there is not recognized nor represented; and,
- The last five years have been challenging for the museums and archives and the work may seem slow but it is being conducted in a cautious and thoughtful manner.

### **3. MOTION TO MOVE THE MEETING INTO THE CLOSED MEETING**

MOVED AND SECONDED

**THAT** Council will now go into a meeting which is closed to the public in accordance with Section 90 of the Community Charter, on the basis that the subject matter of all agenda items relate to matters listed under Section:

90(1)(k) negotiations and related discussions respecting the proposed provision of a municipal service that are at their preliminary stages and that, in the view of the council, could reasonably be expected to harm the interests of the municipality if they were held in public.

**Carried.**

All member present voted in favour of the motion.

**Procedural note:** At 12:03 p.m. Council passed the following motion:

MOVED AND SECONDED

**THAT** Council will move to the Closed meeting after a 10 minute break.

**Carried.**

All member present voted in favour of the motion.

#### **4. MOTION TO RESUME THE SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

**Procedural note:** At 2:30 p.m. Council passed the following motions:

MOVED AND SECONDED

**THAT** Council will resume the Special City Council Meeting.

**Carried.**

All member present voted in favour of the motion.

MOVED AND SECONDED

**THAT** in the interest of time, Item 5.3 Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) Project (Circulated Separately) be moved to the January 25, 2023 Special City Council meeting.

**Carried.**

All member present voted in favour of the motion.

#### **5. BUDGET WORKSHOP PART 2**

##### **5.1 Building and Development Permits (Circulated Separately)**

Jackie Teed, Senior Manager, Climate Action, Planning and Development, shared a PowerPoint presentation which outlined building and development permits.

No discussion ensued.

##### **5.2 Parking (Circulated Separately)**

Mike Anderson, Manager of Transportation, shared a PowerPoint presentation regarding parking permits.

In response to questions from Council members, Mr. Anderson, Lisa Spitale, Chief Administrative Officer, Lisa Leblanc, Director of Engineering, and Shawn Sheehan, Superintendent, Parking, Animals, and Towing, provide the following comments:

- Staff and visitors do not pay for parking at civic facilities except for the Anvil Centre;
- The cost of parking permits is the same for gas and electric vehicles;
- The decision to remove the parkade, which was only half used, was made in 2012 with work to remove one third of it commencing in 2015;
- Most municipalities are using different pay parking apps than each other;

- Consideration will be made to issuing parking permits to those that are not yet residents but are building in the city; however, it is expected that developers would purchase Street Occupancy Permits, for a specific amount of time, to reserve space in front of the development site to allow for parking of tradespeople and deliveries;
- A review of the \$15.00 parking permit charges was undertaken in 2018 and a significant charge increase was placed on the third and fourth parking permits to encourage people to not park their third and fourth vehicles on the street. While there have only been approximately 30 third-vehicle parking permits and two fourth-vehicle parking permits purchased, consideration will be given to rate structure in relation to the City's environmental goals;
- The increase in the price of parking permits was to bring them up to a market rate, and it has been observed that residents are using their visitor parking permits on household vehicles to circumvent the extra charge for third and fourth parking permits; and,
- The City has the technology to implement electronic parking permits; however, it is not on staff's immediate work plan.

Mayor Johnstone noted that the parking permit fee structure policy was a challenging six month long discussion between Council and staff during open Council meetings and included how to fairly increase permit costs.

**5.3 Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) Project (Circulated Separately)**

Per motion by Council under Item 4, this item will be moved to the January 25, 2023 Special City Council meeting.

**6. END OF THE MEETING**

The meeting ended at 3:19 p.m.

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Patrick Johnstone

MAYOR

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Lisa Spitale

ACTING CORPORATE OFFICER