



# Corporation of the City of NEW WESTMINSTER

*A vibrant, compassionate, sustainable city that includes everyone.*

## **SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

### **MINUTES**

**Monday, April 17, 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. Jacque Killawee	Meeting Clerk
Mr. Kwaku Agyare-Manu	Senior Manager, Engineering Services
Mr. Mike Anderson	Manager of Transportation
Mr. Gabriel Beliveau	Manager, Engineering Operations
Mr. Bryan Canuel	Acting Chief Information Officer
Mr. Rod Carle	General Manager, Electrical Utility
Mr. Brad Davie	Assistant Deputy Chief, New Westminster Fire and Rescue Services
Mr. James Doan	Manager, Parks Operations and Services
Mr. Steven Faltas	Electrical, Business Process Manager
Ms. Corrinne Garrett	Senior Manager, Recreation Facilities and Programs
Mr. Dean Gibson	Director of Parks and Recreation
Mr. Dave Jansen	Chief Constable, New Westminster Police Department
Ms. Lisa Leblanc	Director of Engineering Services
Ms. Erika Mashig	Manager of Parks and Open Space Planning Design and Construction
Ms. Tobi May	Manager, Civic Buildings and Properties
Ms. Jennifer Miller	Manager of Public Engagement
Mr. Steve Montgomery	Senior Systems Analyst

Ms. Lynn Roxburgh	Supervisor of Land Use Planning
Mr. Gary So	Senior Financial Services Analyst
Mr. Alex Tam	Senior Financial Analyst
Ms. Denise Tambellini	Intergovernmental and Community Relations Manager
Ms. Serena Trachta	Acting Director of Climate Action, Planning and Development
Ms. Harji Varn	Chief Financial Officer and Director of Finance
Mr. Erin Williams	Acting Chief, New Westminster Fire and Rescue Services
Ms. Eva Yip	Acting Director of Human Resources and Information Technology
Ms. Debbie Reimer	Recording Secretary, Mosaic Writing Group

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

Mayor Johnstone opened the meeting at 6:07 p.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.

MOVED and SECONDED

**THAT** Council varies the order of the agenda to consider Item 2.3. prior to Item 2.2; and,

**THAT** Council adopt the agenda as amended.

**Carried.**

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

## 2. **OPPORTUNITY TO BE HEARD**

### 2.1 **Summary of Written Submissions, Meeting Clerk**

Jacque Killawee, Meeting Clerk, advised that four written submissions had been received, two of which were on table.

MOVED and SECONDED

**THAT** Council receive the following written submissions related to the Five-Year Financial Plan (2023-2027) Bylaw No. 8392, 2023.

Public Input Submissions			
Name	Date Submitted	Date Received	#
Sonia Florian	April 13, 2023	April 13, 2023	C-1
C. Carlson	April 14, 2023	April 14, 2023	C-2

Public Input Submissions			
Name	Date Submitted	Date Received	#
Bob Crocket and Laura Grady, Arts Council of New Westminster	April 17, 2023	ON TABLE	C-3
Christopher Bell	April 17, 2023	ON TABLE	C-4

**Carried.**

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

**Procedural Note:** In accordance with Item 1.0, the order of the agenda was varied to consider Item 2.3 prior to Item 2.2.

### **2.3 Opportunity for the Public to Speak to Council Regarding the 2023-2027 Financial Plan**

Debra Parkes, Resident, expressed support for the 2023-2027 Financial Plan's attention to the housing crisis, climate crisis, and the willingness to engage in reconciliation with Indigenous people. She expressed concerns regarding the expenditures related to the Police Department and the safety of New Westminster residents.

Janice Meehan, Resident, expressed support for the 6.4% property tax increase, noting the planned increases to services and infrastructure.

Rohan Singh, Resident, commended staff for their work on the budget and the improvements noted in the 53 items identified for service and infrastructure upgrades. He added that the 6.4% increase is aligned with neighbouring communities and the planned improvements will make the City safer, more equitable, and encourage residency.

Rick Folka, Resident, suggested the Financial Plan should not be approved without consideration of the impact of increased property taxes and service fees on the residents of New Westminster. He also raised concerns regarding the high interest rates and debt plan.

Elliot Rossiter, Resident, expressed support for the budget, noting that the increased cost of living requires the City to improve services to support the vulnerable populations and to make the City more resilient. He suggested more participatory engagement from lower income groups be utilized for the next budget.

Phil Goldfeldt, Resident, requested information regarding the increased assessments and corresponding total property tax increase, the BC Hydro rebate, and funding for the təməsewtxw Aquatic and Community Centre.

In response to questions from Council, staff reported:

- Funding of \$3 million dollars was received for the təməsew'tx<sup>w</sup> Aquatic and Community Centre; and,
- BC Hydro rebate was assigned as a credit to residents of approximately \$100 per customer and was passed New Westminster electrical customers.

Jack York, Resident, supported the incorporation of authentic Indigenous reconciliation efforts into City policies and expressed support for the construction of free-standing toilets to offer safety and dignity to New Westminster residents and businesses. He supports the affordable housing initiatives for the City.

David Brett, Resident, expressed concerns regarding the modest increase to the budget for the New Westminster Police Department in relation to the increased need for safety. He suggested that a larger budget allocated to policing would provide more police and increase retention of officers.

Brook Jensen, Resident, expressed concern regarding impending changes in rent and the possibility of evictions due to rent increases and requested the Council continue building affordable housing and continue policies to protect rental rates.

Kevin, Resident, expressed support for the budget as proposed to invest in infrastructure and services for residents. He also requested Council continue to address climate change, alternative transportation initiatives, and supports for vulnerable populations for a better future.

Brad Cavanagh, Resident, expressed gratitude for Council and staff prioritizing initiatives such as smart meters, climate change, car reduction, and public engagement.

Chris Bell, Resident, requested that Council reassess the need for a freestanding toilet and prioritize funds to support City staff.

Mayor Johnstone called for first time speakers three times and none were present in person or electronically.

Ms. Killawee reviewed the ways in which people could speak to Council.

**Procedural Note:** The Council meeting recessed at 7:13 p.m. to allow for additional speakers to join the meeting and reconvened at 7:16 p.m.

Mayor Johnstone called for first time speakers three times and none were present in person or electronically.

## **2.2 Report: Budget 2023: Five-Year Financial Plan 2023-2027**

MOVED and SECONDED

**THAT** Council give three readings to the Five-Year Financial Plan (2023-2027) Bylaw No. 8392, 2023 as presented in Attachment 1 of this report.

Discussion ensued on:

- Concern regarding the increase in utility rates;
- Lack of surplus in the current budget;
- Suggestion that more property tax options be considered;
- Suggestion that the salary increase proposed for Council be postponed;
- Council priorities are reflected in the budget; and,
- Budget workshops provided options regarding taxes and services.

**Procedural Note:** As a result of the discussion, an amendment was introduced:

MOVED and SECONDED

**THAT** Council give three readings to the Five-Year Financial Plan (2023-2027) Bylaw No. 8392, 2023 as presented in Attachment 1 of this report;

**THAT** Attachment 1 be amended to adjust revenues and reduce our projected surplus by approximately \$1 million such that it would produce a 5.4% property tax increase in 2023; and

**THAT** noting the significant property and business tax increase being imposed this year, Council delay the annual inflationary increase of elected official salaries until Spring of 2024.

**Defeated.**

Mayor Johnstone and Councillors Campbell, Henderson, McEvoy and Nakagawa opposed.

Discussion ensued on:

- The need for more public engagement on the budget process;
- Increase in the Fire Department budget;
- The need for increased affordable housing;
- Concern regarding the process to determine the police budget;
- Rents are regulated provincially;
- The need for a City accessibility plan;

- The need to advocate for more provincial and federal funding; and,
- Improvements to critical infrastructure are long-term investments.

**Procedural Note:** The question on the main motion was called.

**THAT** Council give three readings to the Five-Year Financial Plan (2023-2027) Bylaw No. 8392, 2023 as presented in Attachment 1 of this report.

**Carried.**

Councillors Fontaine and Minhas opposed.

### 3. **BYLAW**

#### 3.1 **Bylaw for readings**

##### a. **Five-Year Financial Plan (2023-2027) Bylaw No. 8392, 2023**

MOVED and SECONDED

**THAT** the Five-Year Financial Plan (2023-2027) Bylaw No. 8392, 2023 be given First Reading.

**Carried.**

Councillors Fontaine and Minhas opposed.

MOVED and SECONDED

**THAT** the Five-Year Financial Plan (2023-2027) Bylaw No. 8392, 2023 be given Second Reading.

**Carried.**

Councillors Fontaine and Minhas opposed.

MOVED and SECONDED

**THAT** the Five-Year Financial Plan (2023-2027) Bylaw No. 8392, 2023 be given Third Reading.

**Carried.**

Councillors Fontaine and Minhas opposed.

**4. END OF THE MEETING**

The meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

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Patrick Johnstone

MAYOR

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Peter DeJong

CORPORATE OFFICER