



Corporation of the City of NEW WESTMINSTER

A vibrant, compassionate, resilient city where everyone can thrive.

SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING

MINUTES

Thursday, June 1, 2023
Meeting Held Electronically

PRESENT:

Mayor Patrick Johnstone
Councillor Ruby Campbell*
Councillor Tasha Henderson*
Councillor Jaimie McEvoy*
Councillor Nadine Nakagawa*

ABSENT:

Councillor Daniel Fontaine
Councillor Paul Minhas

STAFF PRESENT:

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Ms. Lisa Leblanc* | Acting Chief Administrative Officer |
| Mr. Peter DeJong | Corporate Officer |
| Ms. Jacqueline Dairon* | Acting Director of Finance and Chief Financial Officer |
| Mr. Marius Miklea | Assistant Corporate Officer |

* Denotes electronic attendance

1. CALL TO ORDER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Mayor Johnstone opened the meeting at **1:33 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.

2. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

2.1 **Appointment of Acting Director of Finance**

This report recommends that Council appoint Jacqueline Dairon as Acting Director of Finance, effective June 3, 2023.

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT Council appoint Jacqueline Dairon to be the Acting Director of Finance, with the responsibility of financial administration set out in Section 149 of the *Community Charter*, and the responsibilities set out in section 2(c) of the Officers Establishment and Indemnity Bylaw No. 7175, 2007 and section 8 of the Delegation Bylaw No. 7176, 2015, effective June 3, 2023, until the hiring process for and appointment of the Director of Finance position is complete.

CARRIED

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

Councillor McEvoy left the Meeting at 1:34 p.m.

2.2 **Notices of Motion**

a. **Enhancing Livability in New Westminster**

Submitted by Councillor Nakagawa

WHEREAS the City of New Westminster is focusing on enhancing livability in the downtown and throughout the entire city; and

WHEREAS the City of New Westminster prioritizes compassion and proven solutions;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council directs staff to report back on opportunities to bring a program similar to the Chinatown Stewards model to New Westminster.

b. **The Right Person, the Right Time, the Right Place Report**

Submitted by Councillor Campbell

WHEREAS June 5 to 11 is Seniors' Week providing an opportunity to honour and celebrate seniors contributions and acknowledge the integral part seniors play in communities across British Columbia;

WHEREAS, The City, working with seniors, has been a leader in policy to assure seniors in our community have the supports they need to thrive , such as the Age-Friendly Community Strategy, Dementia-Friendly Community Action Plan, the development of a Seniors Engagement Toolkit and other resources to optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security;

WHEREAS our recently adopted Strategic Plan includes a focus on New Westminster Community Belonging and Connecting as well as Homes and Housing Options; and

WHEREAS the Century House Association produced a report entitled The Right Person, the Right Time, the Right Place, which addresses critical issues presented in a webinar titled Long Term Care-Time for Change, organized with the BC Healthy Coalition, which featured The Provincial Seniors Advocate, Simon Fraser University Department of Gerontology Professor Emerita, and Fraser Health Authority Board Chair, with recommendations to local and senior levels of governments that prioritized supports for seniors to age in place.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Staff provide a report back to Council on opportunities to action the local government recommendations presented in the Century House Association report The Right Person, the Right Time, the Right Place; and

THAT City Staff work with Century House Association, Senior Services Society and other New Westminster senior support agencies to develop a senior government advocacy strategy to support the additional recommendations in the report.

c. New Westminster: a 15-minute City

Submitted jointly by Councillors Nakagawa and Henderson

WHEREAS the City of New Westminster declared a climate emergency with an accompanying plan of 7 Bold Steps, and is committed to a just energy transition to greener infrastructure;

WHEREAS walking and biking stimulate and improve health, both mental and physical, and the City of New Westminster has seen a recent uprise of mental health issues; and

WHEREAS the City of New Westminster is already committed to creating a safe and comprehensive network of bike paths in order to give people more options in addition to personal vehicles and transit and is committed to a more connected way of life, as demonstrated by their environmentally friendly plans and recently introduced Strategic Plan 2023-2026.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City of New Westminster endorse the concept of becoming a 15-minute city and create a plan to implement the plan by 2030.

a. Backgrounder

d. Implementation of a temporary Low-Income Energy Assistance Program in 2023

Submitted by Councillor Fontaine

WHEREAS New Westminster had the highest per capita death rate during the 2021 “Heat Dome” which according to the BC Coroner’s office killed 28 residents, many of whom were renters living in tree-canopy deficient neighbourhoods;

WHEREAS according to the BC Coroner’s Office most decedents were in homes without adequate cooling systems such as air conditioners or fans;

WHEREAS the ‘Heat Dome’ event had significant financial and operational impacts on New Westminster’s first responders including our fire and police departments; and

WHEREAS in 2023 the City of New Westminster injected \$26 million dollars into our Climate Action Reserve for which no funds have been allocated and this in addition to the \$1.9M we anticipate collecting this year by way of a Climate Action Levy charged to all New Westminster electrical utility ratepayers.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that effective June 1st, 2023 the New West Electrical Utility be directed to provide a one-time reimbursement of up to \$500 to low income residents to install a new or replace an older non-functioning air conditioning unit; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that New West Electrical Utility establish a low-income energy assistance program effective June 1st

to provide up to \$500 in credits for eligible residents who are facing markedly higher energy bills due to increased consumption during the summer season (June through September); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the definition of low-income mirror that of the Province of BC which is defined as individuals with an income of \$39,115 or less, and families with a household income of \$50,170 or less in 2022; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that up to \$500,000 be sourced from the Climate Action Reserve Fund to cover the cost of this temporary program; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that on urgent basis the CAO be authorized, in consultation with the Mayor, to establish the streamlined program eligibility and temporarily reallocate the necessary internal resources to support the operations of this program; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mayor write a letter to the Premier of BC requesting the 14 recommendations contained in a June 7, 2022 BC Coroner's Office report titled "Extreme Heat and Human Mortality: A Review of Heat-Related Deaths in B.C. in Summer 2021" be fully implemented in an expedited manner.

3. **END OF THE MEETING**

The meeting ended at 1:38 p.m.

Patrick Johnstone

MAYOR

Peter DeJong

CORPORATE OFFICER