



# Corporation of the City of NEW WESTMINSTER

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

## **SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP**

### **MINUTES**

**Monday, November 27, 2023, 3:00 p.m.**

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

**Council Chamber, City Hall**

#### **PRESENT:**

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

#### **ABSENT:**

Councillor Daniel Fontaine

#### **STAFF PRESENT:**

Ms. Lisa Spitale	Chief Administrative Officer
Mr. Peter DeJong	Corporate Officer
Mr. Kwaku Agyare-Manu	Senior Manager, Engineering Services
Mr. Ronald Au	Senior Financial Services Analyst
Ms. Leya Behra	Manager, Climate Action, Climate Action, Planning and Development
Mr. Gabe Belliveau	Manager, Engineering Operations
Mr. Rod Carle	General Manager, Electrical Utility
Ms. Renee Chadwick	Manager of Special Projects, Parks and Recreation
Ms. Jacqueline Dairon	Acting Director of Finance and Chief Financial Officer
Mr. Brad Davie	Deputy Chief, New Westminster Fire and Rescue Services
Mr. Steven Faltas	Senior Manager, Electrical
Mr. Blair Fryer	Senior Manager, Economic Development
Mr. Richard Fong	Director of Human Resources
Mr. Dean Gibson	Director of Parks and Recreation
Mr. Indeeep Johal	Manager, Financial Services
Ms. Lisa Leblanc	Director of Engineering Services

Ms. Jackie Teed	Director, Climate Action, Planning and Development
Ms. Serena Trachta	Manager, Inspections, Climate Action, Planning and Development
Mr. Erin Williams	Chief, New Westminster Fire and Rescue Services
Mr. Marius Miklea	Assistant Corporate Officer, Legislative Services

\*Denotes electronic attendance.

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

*Mayor Johnstone called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m.*

Mayor Johnstone recognized with respect that New Westminster is on the unceded and unsundered 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. BUDGET 2024 COUNCIL WORKSHOP (PART THREE)**

### **2.1 Budget 2024: Proposed 2024 Operating and Capital Utility Budgets (Circulated Separately)**

Staff presented on the 2024 Proposed Utility Fund Budgets, focusing on rate increases for the Electric, Water, Sewer and Solid Waste Utilities and Five Year Financial Plans (2024 – 2028). Staff indicated that January 2024 Council will meet to debate further refinements to the Capital and Operating Budget expenditures and begin bylaw readings in February 2024.

Several factors in the increased funding requirements included:

- The growing demand for electricity creating the need for additional infrastructure capital investment;
- The new Sewer Asset Management Plan and inflation related to materials and construction create accelerating upward cost pressures; and
- The increase in costs of solid waste vehicles and equipment requiring an increased equipment reserve.

Discussion ensued on:

- The need to inform residents how the Metro Vancouver Regional District rate changes affect both the City as well as residents, citing the need to be fiscally prudent before making any changes to City rates;

- Due to complex soil and water environments, many City assets require repair. Staff noted this is in line with many other cities across Canada experiencing aging infrastructure;
- Electrical Utility is higher than previously projected, the Utility Commission recommended the rate increase in order to keep up with anticipated accelerating growth in the City;
- Sewer separation work is ongoing, the Engineering Department will be reviewing the data regarding contamination rates;
- Reserve amounts in the future may need to be adjusted accordingly as the City maintains a healthy surplus of funds, it may not be required to continue growing the surplus at a faster rate than the value of the assets it is reserving; and
- In response to questions, staff noted the Asset Management Plan can scale with projects leading to cost savings through multi-year contracts.

MOVED and SECONDED

**THAT** Council approves the 2024 Utility Rates for the Electric, Water, Sewer and Solid Waste Utilities;

**THAT** Council directs staff to prepare the necessary bylaws to amend the City's utility rates for 2024 as outlined in this report; and

**THAT** Council approves the Utility Fund 2024 – 2028 Capital Plans and the 2024 Utility Fund Service Enhancement Requests in Attachment #1 - 4 and the Climate Action Fund Service Enhancement Requests and 2024 – 2028 Capital Plan in Attachment #5.

**Carried**

All members voted in favour of the motion.

### 3. **END OF THE MEETING**

*Mayor Johnstone terminated the meeting at 4:11 p.m.*

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Patrick Johnstone

MAYOR

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Peter DeJong

CORPORATE OFFICER