



Corporation of the City of
NEW WESTMINSTER

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

CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP

MINUTES

Monday, December 9, 2024, 3:00 p.m.
Meeting held electronically and in Council Chamber
City Hall

PRESENT: Mayor Patrick Johnstone
Councillor Ruby Campbell
Councillor Daniel Fontaine
Councillor Tasha Henderson
Councillor Jaimie McEvoy
Councillor Paul Minhas

Hanieh Berg, Corporate Officer

ABSENT: Councillor Nadine Nakagawa

1. CALL TO ORDER & LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Mayor Johnstone called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. and recognized with respect that New Westminister 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. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the December 9, 2024 Council Workshop Agenda be adopted as circulated, with the order of the agenda being varied to consider Item No. 5.1 and Item No. 4.2 prior to Item 3.1.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

5.1 Funding Application to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to Develop a Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Plan

MOVED and SECONDED

1. **THAT** the proposed resolution included as Attachment 1 to the staff report titled “Funding Application to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to Develop a Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Plan” regarding an application to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities’ Local Leadership for Climate Adaptation Initiative to support the development of a Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Plan, be approved; and
2. **THAT**, should the submission be successful, the Chief Administrative Officer and the Deputy Director of Climate Action be authorized to enter into a funding agreement with the Government of Canada through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

The question on the motion was not called as discussion took place regarding language used in the staff report that may not be accurate or inclusive. Also, it was noted that staff reports of a technical nature require refinement in an effort to ensure the principles of accessibility are maintained.

The question on the motion was then called and it was **CARRIED** with Cllr. Minhas opposed.

4.2 Interim Housing Needs Report 2024

With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, Lynn Roxburgh, Manager, Housing and Land Use Planning, accompanied by Liyang Wan, Housing Planner, provided background information and presented on updated legislated requirements for Housing Needs Reports.

Staff then spoke to the proposed Interim Housing Needs Report 2024-2044, included as Attachment 2 to the staff report, noting that a total of 8,137 units are projected to be needed by 2029, and subsequently 27,523 units by 2044. Further, other key findings include (i) a 0.8% rental vacancy rate, (ii) 77% households in the city are one- and two-person households, and (iii) one in three renter-households spend 30% or more of their income for housing.

L. Roxburgh then advised that the projected housing need is greater than previously estimated; combined with other new housing legislation, there are more opportunities for growth and a more dispersed population and housing supply than previously anticipated, impacting infrastructure, services, and amenities.

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Understanding Housing and Homelessness in New Westminster: Interim Housing Needs Report 2024-2044, included as Attachment 2 to the staff report titled “Interim Housing Needs Report 2024” dated December 9, 2024, be endorsed.

The question on the motion was not called as in reply to a query from Council, Jackie Teed, Director, Planning and Development, advised that livability and support for those that are most at risk of being unhoused is at the forefront of the Social Planning Division's efforts. J. Teed then advised that staff will provide Council with an update on the City's efforts to prevent homelessness by email.

As a result of the discussion, the following amendment was introduced:

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the following be added as Part 2 to the main motion "THAT a letter be sent to the appropriate Ministers in the new provincial government listing the City of New Westminster's capital funding gap needs for renewing, replacing and upgrading existing capital infrastructure and amenities to maintain current service levels and to support livability for future residents."

The question on the amendment was not called as the following amendment to the amendment was introduced:

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT "as well as the federal government" be added after "provincial government."

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

The question on the amendment motion, as amended, was then called and it was **CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**.

The question on the main motion, as amended, was not called as discussion took place and the following information was noted:

- staff examine housing across a broad spectrum of needs and efforts are currently focused on meeting legislated deadlines for 2024 and 2025;
- a reduction in those experiencing homelessness is not comparable to the elimination of homelessness, and the latter requires significant policy reform and support from senior levels of government;
- staff utilized the 2021 Census in their analysis and development of the City's housing needs; and
- the forthcoming public consultation to update the City's Official Community Plans needs to include engagement with renters.

There was agreement to consider Parts 1 and 2 of the main motion, as amended, separately, which now reads:

- "1. *THAT the Understanding Housing and Homelessness in New Westminster: Interim Housing Needs Report 2024-2044, included as Attachment 2 to the staff report titled "Interim Housing Needs Report 2024" dated December 9, 2024, be endorsed.*

2. *THAT a letter be sent to the appropriate Ministers in the new provincial government as well as the federal government listing the City of New Westminster's capital funding gap needs for renewing, replacing and upgrading existing capital infrastructure and amenities to maintain current service levels and to support livability for future residents."*

The question on Part 1 of the motion was then called and it was **CARRIED** with Cllrs. Fontaine and Minhas opposed.

The question on Part 2 of the motion was then called and it was **CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**.

3. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

3.1 Budget 2025: Draft 2025 – 2029 General Fund Five-Year Capital Plan and Funding Strategy Updated Report

With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, Shehzad Somji, Director, Finance presented on three proposed 2025 – 2029 Five-Year Capital Plan scenarios and corresponding funding strategies in the development of the 2025 General Fund Capital Budget and 2025 – 2029 Five-Year Capital Plan. It was noted that the staff report was updated to reflect the additional scope of work for the Massey Theatre as resolved by Council at its December 2, 2024 Workshop meeting.

The following information was noted regarding the proposed scenarios:

- Scenario 1 is a continuation of current 2024-2028 plan, including \$44 million carried over from 2024, plus 18.8 million for new projects;
- Scenario 2 keeps all the components of Scenario 1 and adds \$13 million for Fenton Street ditch enclosure and Anvil Centre 10-year plan implementation; and
- Scenario 3 keeps all the components of Scenario 2 and adds \$3 million for Asset Management Plans, Facilities Master Plans, and mechanical work at the Library and Police building.

Staff then spoke to challenges faced by the City including (i) aging infrastructure, (ii) growing infrastructure needs as a result of the new housing legislation and (iii) infrastructure funding gaps, noting that there is a significant demand for capital reinvestment, either renewing, replacing, or expanding the City's capital infrastructure and assets in the next decade. To address declining reserve balances and infrastructure funding gaps, staff propose the introduction of a Capital Levy for 2026. A levy would provide dedicated, sustainable funding stream to maintain or improve City infrastructure and ensure the City's reserve balances remain aligned with its policy.

The meeting recessed at 5:58 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 6:30 p.m., with all members of Council present, except Councillor Nakagawa.

Discussion took place and Council requested clarifying information regarding:

- the total full-time equivalent count of employees for 2024;
- the 2025 Workspace Improvements to City Hall;
- the feasibility study for Asset Management Infrastructure;
- Samson V maintenance details; and
- the removal of failing trees.

In response to Council queries, staff provided the following information:

- Line 31 – Esplanade Repair is for City-owned portions of the waterfront esplanade;
- Item 32 – Road Safety Improvements is for items recommended in the Intersection Safety Study;
- Item 33 – Pattullo Mitigation is to support the ongoing work with the Transportation Investment Corporation for the demolition of the existing bridge, which will continue into 2027;
- Item 144 – E-Licence is for a new application to streamline business licence application processes;
- Item 137 – Pollinator Pasture is for a biodiversity program, which works to naturalize areas throughout the city; and
- Item 452 – Anvil Centre Signage Upgrade is to replace signage that is approaching end of life.

Discussion took place regarding the proposed three scenarios and Council commented on the potential to include a plebiscite question on a ballot to gauge community feedback on major capital projects and the need for detailed information regarding the potential introduction of a capital levy, including which other municipalities have implemented one.

As a result of the discussion, the following motion was introduced:

MOVED and SECONDED

1. **THAT** Capital Budget Scenario 3 be identified as the preferred option for the 2025 Capital Budget and the 2025 – 2029 Five-Year Capital Plan; and
2. **THAT** staff report back with a 2025 – 2029 Consolidated Five-Year Financial Plan Bylaw.

The question on the motion was not called as the following amendment was introduced:

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the following be added as Part 3 “THAT Item 456, Queensborough Quick-build walking infrastructure” be removed from Scenario 3 for the 2025 – 2029 Capital Plan.”

The question on the amendment was not called as discussion ensued regarding the need to consult with Queensborough residents on all the implications of proposed pedestrian improvements in the area, such as the loss of on-street parking and introduction of one-way traffic.

The question on the amendment was then called and it was **DEFEATED** with Mayor Johnstone and Cllrs. Campbell, Henderson and McEvoy opposed.

The question on the motion was then called and it was **CARRIED** with Cllrs. Fontaine and Minhas opposed.

Councillor Fontaine left the meeting (7:16 p.m.) and did not return.

4. **PRESENTATIONS**

4.1 **Budget 2025: Council Clarification on the 2025 Property Tax Rate**

With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, Shehzad Somji, Director, Finance reviewed the components of the proposed 7.6% property tax rate for 2025.

Discussion took place on the various scenarios and their respective cumulative impacts on the property tax rate, and in particular enhancement requests recommended to be deferred until 2026. As a result of the discussion, the following motion was introduced:

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Council resolution made at the December 2, 2024 Regular Council meeting for Workshop with respect to the approval of a 7.6% property tax rate be rescinded.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT a 6.6% property tax rate, which includes service enhancements outlined in Scenarios 3a, 3b, 3c, and 3d of the staff report titled “Budget 2025: Council Clarification on the 2025 Property Tax Rate” be approved for the 2025 Operating Budget.

CARRIED

Opposed: Cllr. Minhas

4.2 Interim Housing Needs Report 2024

Please see Page 2 for action on this matter.

5. REPORT FOR COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND ACTION

5.1 Funding Application to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to Develop a Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Plan

Please see Page 1 for action on this matter.

6. ADJOURNMENT

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the December 9, 2024 Council Workshop meeting be adjourned (7:26 p.m.).

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Certified a true and correct copy of the Minutes of the Council Workshop meeting of the Council of the City of New Westminster held on December 9, 2024.

Patrick Johnstone

MAYOR

Hanieh Berg

CORPORATE OFFICER