



## **SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

### **MINUTES**

**Wednesday, November 24, 2021**

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

**Council Chamber, City Hall**

#### **PRESENT:**

Mayor Jonathan Cote  
Councillor Chinu Das\*  
Councillor Patrick Johnstone  
Councillor Jamie McEvoy  
Councillor Nadine Nakagawa  
Councillor Chuck Puchmayr\*  
Councillor Mary Trentadue

#### **STAFF PRESENT:**

Ms. Lisa Spitale	Chief Administrative Officer
Ms. Jacque Killawee	City Clerk
Ms. Emilie Adin	Director of Climate Action, Planning and Development
Mr. Curtis Bremner	Acting Fire Chief, New Westminster Fire and Rescue Services
Mr. Rod Carle	General Manager, Electrical Utility
Mr. Richard Fong	Director of Human Resources
Mr. Dean Gibson	Director of Parks and Recreation
Ms. Lisa Leblanc	Director of Engineering Services
Mr. Craig MacFarlane	Manager of Legal Services
Ms. Harji Varn	Chief Financial Officer and Director of Finance
Ms. Carilyn Cook	Committee Clerk

\*Denotes electronic attendance.

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

Mayor Cote opened the meeting at 10:00 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.

## **2. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS FOR COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND ACTION**

### **2.1 Canada Games Pool Update**

- a. Presentation (On Table)**
- b. Report: Canada Games Pool Update**

Dean Gibson, Director of Parks and Recreation, reported that over the past eight weeks, City staff, the təməsew' txw Aquatic and Community Centre project team, and independent professionals have been working to address issues related to the flooding of critical mechanical systems required to operate the Canada Games Pool, as well as factors related to a leak in the main pool tank. Today staff are releasing Council's decision to decommission the pool. Mr. Gibson acknowledged the impact that decommissioning the pool will have on the community, as it is a much used and loved facility.

Mr. Gibson, Tobi May, Manager, Civic Buildings, and Harji Varn, Chief Financial Officer and Director of Finance, provided a presentation on the Canada Games Pool.

In response to questions from Council, Mr. Gibson, Ms. May, and Ms. Varn advised:

- The cause of the leak is currently unknown; however, the contractor for the new facility has been following all protocol;
- Full attention is being paid to determine the cause of the leak and it is anticipated that a report of the findings will be coming to Council in the new year;
- While the minimum estimated time frame for repair of the pool outlined in Option B is eight months, that time could be extended if additional leaks are

- found or if current supply chain challenges continue. In the best-case scenario, the pool would be re-opened for one year maximum;
- The amount of funds projected to be either spent or saved reflects the minimum amounts; however, based on risk factors, the amount spent could amount to much more; and,
  - A specific public communication plan, will include updates to the city website and social media platforms, and emails to customers. The communications plan needs to be implemented as soon as possible so that the community is updated as the process moves through key milestones.

In discussion, Council members noted:

- Gratitude to staff for their work on this difficult situation and the comprehensive report that was provide to facilitate discussion of the options available to address the issue;
- This is a necessary but unrewarding process which requires a difficult decision;
- The history of scheduling auxiliary workers for full-time hours creates contentious issues and should be re-visited with the opening of the new facility;
- Correct information regarding the decommissioning of the pool must be shared with the public in order to dispel rumours circulating throughout the community;
- The Massey gym could be utilized to create fitness opportunities and employ auxiliary staff;
- The impact of decommissioning the pool will be great, especially since it was anticipated that it would be open until the new facility is complete;
- Ongoing updates must be shared with the community in order to remain transparent throughout this process;
- The financial and other variables that come with Option B make it an undesirable investment; therefore, Option A is the best decision for the City;
- Funds would be better spent to expand services in the community than risk a long and costly process of repairing the leak which would ultimately result in only a few months of extra service of the pool;
- The City must commit to determining the cause of the leak as the community deserves answers;
- Decommissioning of the pool puts pressure on the City to ensure that construction of the new facility is on schedule or even finished ahead of schedule so that it is open as soon as possible;
- Consideration should be made to extending the opening time periods for the outdoor pools, with feedback being sought from the community as to which

months would make the most sense for them, as well as assisting community members in accessing winter swim lessons at neighbouring pools;

- Previous discussions by Council regarding the aging Canada Games Pool addressed which would be the best choice for the City moving forward: renovation and repair or rebuilding the facility. Previous work acknowledging the facility's infrastructure problems allowed Council to make the most appropriate decision for the community and rebuild the centre and, as this work continues, it is important to acknowledge that there was some foresight and planning;
- Continuing to address aging infrastructure in the city is very important; and,
- The losses that will be experienced with the decommissioning of the pool only reinforces the need for this type of facility in the community.

Mayor Cote advised that he would reach out to neighbouring Mayors to seek opportunities that may be available for New Westminster residents at their aquatic and fitness facilities. He shared that decommissioning the pool is the right decision for the City and stressed the importance of keeping the community up to date on the closure and alternative services moving forward.

MOVED AND SECONDED

**THAT** staff release to the public, Council's decision to decommission the Canada Games Pool.

**Carried.**

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

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

The meeting ended at 10:56 a.m.

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Jonathan Cote

MAYOR

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Jacque Killawee

CITY CLERK