



## CUPE Local 500 Speaking Notes

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### **Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development, Heritage and Downtown Development**

March 11, 2020

Thank you for the opportunity to present on the 2020 preliminary budget.

Our presentation today will look at the cuts being proposed under this Committee's jurisdiction, and other areas of the budget that we feel will impact services and the quality of life in our city.

First and foremost I want to reiterate my concerns with the budget process; as a whole.

Our members and members of the community have expressed their frustration with the way in which this budget process was presented.

Winnipeggers were presented a doomsday budget that created fear over the future of the services and programs they depend on.

Your municipal workforce feels the same way. We are incredibly frustrated with the cuts to the services our members provide, and the livelihood of these workers.

CUPE Local 500 has put in a great deal of time, energy, and resources challenging previous councils on some of the decisions they made: from contracting out garbage and snow clearing, to protecting our public golf services.

We were at the forefront in the media, calling for greater accountability over major projects like the Police Headquarters, Firehalls, and more.

CUPE 500 has offered many suggestions over the years on big ticket items and smaller on-the-ground solutions to make our city more accountable, more transparent, and offer better quality public services.

At the same time our union has always been open, to having difficult conversations with department heads and councillors alike. We have worked collaboratively, and when we haven't, we have disagreed respectfully.

But the proposed budget we are seeing today, here at PP&D as well as other departments, is simply an attack on front-line services and the workers who deliver them.

How can we have faith that the City values our members and the services we proudly deliver each-and-every day when an axe comes crashing down?

The PP&D proposals will hurt our members. With proposed staff cuts as well as cuts to services our members provide in the department, it will be Winnipeggers who pay the price.

With the proposed closure of the Terry Sawchuk Arena comes the loss of our Building Servicer. Someone whose livelihood depends on that work.

Other departmental staff who are potentially on the chopping block provide value to the citizens of Winnipeg. And while many Winnipeggers may not know what inspectors or field officers do, or what staff in the planning department do, or what occupancy clerks do, we know that these roles help ensure the City is running smoothly.

These workers make sure that businesses, residents, and developers understand the permits that are required to set up shop or build a home.

These workers help to try to ensure construction of new developments, or infill developments adhere to planning principles that reflect the nature and culture of the community.

We've heard from many businesses, developers, and residents that they are frustrated with the length of time it sometimes takes to navigate permitting and approvals.

Even eliminating a customer service representative in our cemeteries could have an impact. The Administration noted in November that the loss of this position could result in lost sales at St. Vital and Transcona cemeteries, let alone having someone there to help Winnipeggers through a difficult time.

Staff give their absolute best efforts every single day to work with the community to ensure their needs are met, and that they comply with the relevant bylaws and requirements.

All of these positions are critical to a growing, aging, and complex city.

Losing even one of these positions would be bad for our city.

To make matters worse, our municipal workforce continues to suffer under decades of Vacancy Management.

Our City can reach a million residents, but without a robust workforce we will have a public service that is unable to meet the needs of our community.

The preliminary budget also proposes to establish a Transformative Fund through the sale of city assets. We'll be watching this process closely to ensure these initiatives do not undermine our public services now and into the future.

In closing, as the union that represents Winnipeg's municipal employees, we are against all the cuts to our members that this preliminary budget puts forward.

Our city is growing, our infrastructure is aging, and we need a strong Property, Planning & Development department to help ensure our City addresses our challenges and builds for the future.

Thank you.