



CUPE Local 500 Speaking Notes

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**Standing Policy Committee on Innovation**

March 16, 2020

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

As you know, CUPE represents the largest group of workers at the City of Winnipeg. Our members value the work they do and the services they provide contribute greatly to the quality of life in Winnipeg.

CUPE will be speaking at committee meetings this week to deliver the same message: we are opposed to all cuts to services and staffing.

First and foremost I want to convey CUPE's 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.

While some of the cuts were rejected, a number remain in the budget: reductions to library hours, cuts to jobs at 311, French Translation services, cemeteries, 24 hour emergency crews at Water & Waste, and more.

The proposal to close Waverley Fleet repair facility raises some serious red flags that may end up costing taxpayers more.

Winnipeg's fleet service is a well-run operation that has gone through years of steady improvements.

Closing this facility will result in increased repair and maintenance wait times and downtime for city vehicles and equipment.

Delays in preventative maintenance would also result in increased risks of vehicle and equipment failure.

Not to mention the increased costs for external vendor repairs when the other two fleet repair facilities are unable to absorb the increased volume of work.

According to the Fleet Management SOA 2019 business plan, one of its strategic objectives is to be a leader in environmental stewardship through the management of the agency's fueling infrastructure and promote fleet emission reductions.

Closing Waverley will increase fuel consumption when you factor in the added time to bring vehicles and equipment from the south end of the city to the Thomas or Tecumseh facility. Couple that with added towing charges, down time and loss of productivity, it will put the city further behind.

The Staff at Winnipeg's Fleet Services give their absolute best efforts every single day to help in the repair and maintenance of city equipment and vehicles. They play an important role in helping to keep our city functioning.

We are very frustrated at the proposed closure of this facility that lays out a plan to reduce 8 FTE's.

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.

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.

Contracting out results in tax dollars being sent into private profits instead of quality services, at the expense of city staff who live here, spend here, and count on job security and benefits for their families.

We have also been outspoken against mismanagement and cost-overruns in major projects that have cost taxpayers millions that could have been spent on improving civic services.

We are proud of our track record in working with city administration and council over the years. CUPE 500 has offered many suggestions 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.

CUPE is proud of the work our members do day in and day out, providing needed services to the citizens of Winnipeg

I'll conclude my remarks by reiterating CUPE's position: We are opposed to any cuts to our public services and programs. We are opposed to cuts to an already under resourced workforce.

Thank you.