

**CANADIAN UNION OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES
LOCAL 500**

SPEAKING NOTES SUBMITTED TO:

WINNIPEG CITY COUNCIL

**RE: JURISDICTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY
FOR THE DELIVERY OF ENVIRONMENTAL
HEALTH SERVICES**



July 18th, 2007

**CUPE Local 500 Speaking Notes submitted to City Council –
July 18th, 2007**

**RE: Jurisdictional Responsibility for the Delivery of Environmental
Health Services**

Mr. Speaker, Your Worship, Councillors, thank you for allowing us a few minutes to speak to you regarding the Jurisdictional Responsibility for the Delivery of Environmental Health Services. With me today is Mr. Lindsey Hofmeister, a Public Health Inspector who can answer any technical questions regarding the delivery of environmental health services.

In consultation with CUPE Local 500 members working in the City Environmental Health Services Department - Public Health Inspectors:

- We feel the best delivery of Environmental Health Services or Public Health Inspection is within the Civic workforce. It seems the Mayor may agree, as your worship is quoted on July 12th, 2007 in the Free Press and I am paraphrasing, “a lot of people will say if you’re going out to a restaurant, eat downtown”. Our service is a leader across Canada.
- We know there is some inefficiency in inspection service delivery and it is important that Civic government delivers these inspection services to overcome this situation. We know highly qualified personnel in many areas of inspection are doing work that could be done by other departments and provincial agencies.

- There are obvious Administrative duplications between the city and provincial services.
- There are also potential weaknesses in the system due to staff workloads and reductions that often preclude annual facility inspections.

The current structural inadequacies can lead to a high risk situation for residents, businesses and tourists. If the public health capacity of the City of Winnipeg is not addressed effectively, there is a danger to the public that could then lead to major liabilities and costs. This point is critical because Winnipeg has a thriving restaurant and food industry and the public must have confidence that the prepared food will not make them sick. This is what our public health inspectors do and this benefits both business and Winnipeg citizens. We believe all of Winnipeg deserves the level of inspection service provided by our Civic workforce.

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS:

However, this means City Council has to commit to amalgamate city and provincial services under one City of Winnipeg mandate. We believe this could be done with minimal cost for the City, it would trigger a management review and changes that could lower costs for the City in the long term and actually improve public health services for the City.

RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE MAY 25TH REPORT:

The report of the administration to the Red Tape Commission
Recommendation No.21 does not adequately explain the pros and cons of

the two different options available to the City. We are concerned there may be a bias against the City taking over all the services.

Specifically, the report outlines risks that are not adequately defined:

- Work volumes and staff capacity – With additional staff and an improved management mandate, the required services can be provided better and more efficiently. There may be a need for more By-Law Enforcement Officers, but overall amalgamation would not create a ‘service deficit’.
- Cost to the City of an expanded capacity – Because the Province would benefit from amalgamation under the City, it would be motivated to provide funds for the service.
- Information technology – There will be some increased demand on technology resources and therefore potential budget implications, but none that are more than current demands of two separate and parallel services. Again, there is a benefit to the Province to amalgamate services and then increase funding to compensate for City administration of the service.
- Provincial government position – A great deal of the success of making appropriate changes to the delivery of Environmental Health Services depends on the Provincial Government. We are confident the Province will agree to the logic of amalgamating city and provincial services under one City of Winnipeg mandate.

If City Council agrees to amalgamate city and provincial services under one City of Winnipeg mandate, there is potential to improve service delivery and reduce costs. A change in structure, with an adjustment in mandate, and improved management could lower costs for the City and the Province in the long term.

We strongly encourage the City to direct the Administration to review its understanding of the situation, take into consideration the views and advice of City of Winnipeg employees, and build on the history of reviews that have been done since 1997.

We are confident the logic of amalgamation under the City will be obvious.

Speaking notes submitted by:

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cc: Central Council

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