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February 15, 2024

Reference No.: 41-01WRA.February2024

Mr. Andre Corbould  
City Manager, City of Edmonton  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, City Hall  
1 Sir Winston Churchill Square  
Edmonton, AB T5J 2R7

Mr. Corbould:

**RE: Working Relationship Agreement**

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The Executive Board of Civic Service Union 52 has long stood by the principles of the Working Relationship Agreement (WRA) and sought to uphold its values in our dealings with the City of Edmonton. Collaboration, mutual respect, and trust are values that we hold in high regard, especially when tensions are elevated. As a Union we have enjoyed great success in the past by living up to these principles in our work with the City of Edmonton and we believe that the City has enjoyed those same successes.

However, given the current climate at the City and what we perceive as an ongoing disregard for the WRA, we will no longer remain a signatory to this document. In recent conversations with the Unions, you made comments about a re-signing of the WRA, which caused us to consider this matter; however, we, and our Coalition partners, have concluded that continued participation is not possible at this point and any effort to do so would simply be a mockery of what the WRA stands for. If you refer to the document attached to this letter ("History of the WRA") you will see that this agreement wasn't just signatures on paper, but a commitment to a method of problem solving based on mutual respect and trust, which does not currently exist.

A positive and productive working relationship is not about words, but about actions. CSU 52 has taken down all copies of the WRA from our offices and we insist that the City do the same. While we are open to re-examining this issue in the future, there will have to be serious work done to re-establish trust and goodwill before we can honestly engage in such a process.

Sincerely,

Lanny Chudyk  
President  
Civic Service Union 52  
Encl.

Cc: City Council



## History of the Working Relationship Agreement

Originally signed in September 1998, the Working Relationship Agreement (WRA) was a joint-undertaking of Union leaders and senior management of the day. After a period of serious conflict and tension, both sides agreed that an alternative method of labour relations could prove beneficial.

Assisted by the provincial government, who provided facilitators and mediators, a committee with representatives from Management and Union met over the course of several months to create a new foundation for labour relations at the City of Edmonton. The result of these meetings was the Working Relationship Agreement, which consisted of 7 principles and was signed by both Union leadership and senior management.

These dedicated efforts resulted in more than just document to hang on a wall. Along with the WRA was the rollout of training across the entire City and for Union executives, City Leadership, and all employees. This was done to drive home a new way of doing business, along with a new conflict resolution model that started with informal consultation (as a way to address issues before they grew) and then escalated as appropriate.

In the year following, the number of grievances across the City was significantly reduced. This was a direct result of a larger number of issues being resolved at the informal consultation stage of the dispute resolution process. There were several critical elements that allowed the WRA to start building this success:

- Recognition by both the City and Unions that each side still had responsibilities. The preamble of the WRA states “A commitment to collaborative relations in no way diminishes the right and responsibility of managers to manage in the best interest of the organization or the right and responsibilities of unions to represent the best interests of their members.”
- A commitment by both sides to building a relationship based on mutual respect, fair treatment, and ultimately trust.
- High levels of support from senior managers, Union leadership, and City Council.

This positive relationship continued for many years, owing to a continual willingness to work together and approach problems in an interest-based manner. The WRA has been re-affirmed and signed by each City Manager since its inception. In 2015, representatives from the City’s Labour Relations area and CECU were proud to make a presentation to the delegates of the FCM when Edmonton hosted their annual convention and trade show.

