



September 14, 2023

Mayor Amarjeet Sohi & City Council
2nd Floor, City Hall, 1 Sir Winston Churchill Square
Edmonton, AB T5J 2R7

Mayor Sohi and Members of City Council,

RE: Budget Update, Projected Deficit, & Our Members

On September 13, City Council heard that the City of Edmonton projects a \$73.8 million deficit at the end of the year. As you strive to address this, two of our unions are currently bargaining while two others have agreements that expire at the end of 2023. The CECU is taking this opportunity to remind Council about the City employees who provide essential services to thousands of Edmontonians each day, and about how they have seen their wages eaten away over the past number of years due to the rising cost of living.

The largest variance identified in this deficit was salary settlements, of which a significant piece was an arbitrated award with the Edmonton Police Association. Staffing costs go up and City wages cannot be held down indefinitely. Since the pandemic, the City of Edmonton has run on artificially low taxes that cannot support the services it provides. Over that same period, City employees have seen their wages shrink as the cost of living rises and their wages have stagnated. While Council is in a difficult position, you must realize that as part of a solution to this problem going forward, you must project what reasonable increases are for the rest of the workforce and Administration must provide you with realistic estimates for contract settlements so that appropriate funding can be set aside (without needing to project a deficit and rely on a reserve).

Our members work in all areas of the City and provide essential front-facing and back-of-house service that ensures the City can keep fire fighters ready, libraries and pools open, lights on, roads clear, and buses running. These members are passionate about their jobs, but they are struggling to make ends meet like so many others, and it is not their job to subsidize the City's budget with their wages.

As Council moves to address this current budget issue, we urge you to put attention to ensuring the public servants who make your plans and projects a reality are not left to fall further behind.

