
To: Mayor and Council
From: Paul Gipps, CAO
Meeting Date: May 20, 2025
Meeting Type: Regular Council Meeting

Prepared by: Reyna Seabrook, Director of Corporate Services
Department: Corporate Services

Title: Council Procedure Bylaw 1282, 2025 | Meeting Management
Description: Update to Council Procedures Bylaw

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council Procedures Bylaw 1282, 2025 be read a first, second and third time.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In January 2025 Council began a review of meeting management best practices and potential bylaw amendments that would assist with facilitating productive, inclusive and enjoyable Council meetings. By way of an anonymous survey, Council provided feedback and input on potential amendments which are detailed below and included in the attached draft Council Procedures Bylaw for consideration.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

In the feedback provided, Council indicated the current days (first and third Tuesdays of each month) and evening meeting times were satisfactory, with some minor amendments. Evening meetings allow the public and Council members time to attend meetings after daytime work hours and it was suggested daytime Council meetings may limit the demographic of people potentially considering an elected position.

MEETING TIME AND DATES

It was requested that public hearings begin earlier in the evening at 5:30 p.m. as opposed to the current 7 p.m., and that Regular Council Meetings begin immediately after a public hearing has concluded. In addition, staff should avoid additional meetings on the same date as a public hearing and consider the weight of each item when scheduling Regular Council Meeting agendas. These proposed changes allow the public an opportunity to attend evening meetings after regular work hours, provide additional time to continue regular business following a public hearing and help to ensure meetings do not go past 11 p.m.

The draft bylaw establishes the following Council meeting dates and times:

| First and third Tuesday of each month | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 4:30 p.m. | Closed (as required) |
| 5:30 p.m. | Committee of the Whole (COW) (as required) |
| 5:30 p.m. | Public Hearing (PH) (as required, no COW if PH scheduled) |
| 7:00 p.m. | Regular Council Meeting (where PH scheduled, immediately following PH) |

STRATEGY SESSION / COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

When considering Strategy Sessions, preference was indicated for renaming Strategy Sessions to Committee of the Whole (COW) and establishing procedures for COW meetings. COW meetings will generally be held on the same date and time as the current Strategy Sessions, will continue to be open to the public and live streamed and available on the District's website. The procedures established for COW include the ability for Council, if they desire, to make motions that provide a recommendation to Council, that direct staff or that refer matters to Council Committees or advisory bodies.

CONDUCT AND DEBATE

When considering conduct and debate, there was general agreement that procedures should indicate the mover has the opportunity to speak to their motion first, followed by the seconder, if they choose, followed by other members of Council who will be called to speak in the order they requested to speak, as determined by the Mayor. Such procedures are in keeping with Robert's Rules of Order.

Survey results expressed the desire for only clarifying questions to be asked of staff or the applicant with debate and positional statements related to an agenda item, presented either at the time a motion is being moved or seconded, or after a motion is on the floor for debate. This will assist in streamlined and efficient meeting processes. The draft bylaw includes language indicating members may ask clarifying questions of staff or presenters prior to a motion being moved and seconded and that debate or statements will be reserved for when a Member is either moving or seconding a motion, or after the motion is on the floor for debate.

The time limit for permitting members of the public to speak during a public hearing or where public is otherwise permitted to address Council, has been reduced from 10 minutes to 5 minutes with the additional caveat that members of the public may speak a second or third time, only after all others have been given a first opportunity. The time limit for a delegation remains at 10 minutes.

Clarifying language has been added to explain that the public may only address Council during a Regular or Special Council meeting when legislation specifically allows for public input or the right to be heard. Although the bylaw permits Council to hear from the public by resolution, staff recommend Council first seek guidance from the Director of Corporate Services or the Director of Legal Services before doing so. If notice does not indicate that public input will be received, and Council subsequently passes a resolution to allow it, this may result in procedural unfairness. Individuals who chose not to attend, relying on the notice that indicated no public input, would not be afforded the same opportunity to speak as those present and thereby permitted them to do so simply because they were present.

WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS IN RESPONSE TO PUBLIC HEARING

Public hearings provide an opportunity for members of the public to be heard, in person or through written submissions and provide Council the ability to weigh public input when making a decision. Where a public hearing has been prohibited, legislation has removed the opportunity for public input to be considered, both written and oral, with the intent that Council decisions are based on the OCP rather than public input.

The current Council Procedures bylaw permits the receipt of written submissions where for a prohibited public hearing which is contrary to the intent of the legislation and a de-facto way of holding a public hearing and does not provide consistent information to all parties.

To mitigate risk and ensure adherence to the intent of the legislation the draft bylaw establishes that written submissions for a prohibited public hearing will be retained by the Corporate Officer until conclusion of the application which is consistent with the requirement that Council not receive new information after a public hearing has been adjourned. Written correspondence in response to a public hearing that has been waived at the discretion of Council will follow the same process.

APPLICABLE LEGISLATION

Pursuant to section 124 of the *Community Charter*, Council is required to establish the general procedures to be followed by council and council committees in conducting their business. The procedures bylaw is required to establish:

- (a) rules of procedure for council meetings
- (b) rules of procedure for committee meetings
- (c) how resolutions may be passed
- (d) how bylaws may be adopted
- (e) rules for taking minutes of Council and Committee meetings
- (f) rules for certifying minutes
- (g) rules and how advance notice for committees will take place
- (h) where public notice posting places are located
- (i) procedures for an acting mayor
- (j) the first regular council meeting date following an election

A Council Procedures bylaw under section 124 of the *Community Charter* including any amendments, repeals or substitutions, requires notice to be posted for 2 consecutive weeks and must include a general description of the proposed changes. Should Council proceed with readings of the bylaw, notice will be published in the local newspaper for 2 consecutive weeks.

ALTERNATE RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. THAT Council Procedures Bylaw 1282, 2025 be referred back to staff with changes as identified by Council.

Respectfully Submitted

Reyna Seabrook, Director of Corporate Services

Report Approval Details

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|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| Document Title: | Meeting Management-Council Procedure Bylaw 1282, 2025 .docx |
| Attachments: | - Council Procedure Bylaw 1282, 2025-Draft-2.pdf |
| Final Approval Date: | Apr 30, 2025 |

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Brad Savoury, Director of Legal Services and Risk Management - Apr 28, 2025 - 3:35 PM

Paul Gipps, Chief Administrative Officer - Apr 29, 2025 - 8:00 AM

Makayla Ablitt, Legislative & FOI Coordinator - Apr 30, 2025 - 9:49 AM