



## CORPORATE SERVICES *Staff Report*

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REPORT NO: COR-2024-53

TO: Council

SUBMITTED BY: Kaitlin Bos, Supervisor of Legislative Services / Deputy Clerk

PREPARED BY: Kaitlin Bos, Supervisor of Legislative Services/Deputy Clerk

REVIEWED BY: Greg Clark, Acting Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: November 4, 2024

SUBJECT: Proposed Changes for the 2025 Council Meeting Schedule and Notice Provisions

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### RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report COR-2024-53 Proposed Changes for the 2025 Council Meeting Schedule and Notice Provisions, be received for information; and,

THAT Council supports the proposed changes to the 2025 Council Meeting Schedule; and,

THAT Staff be directed to bring back the Committee of the Whole Terms of Reference, 2025 Council Calendar, and Procedural By-law amendments at the November 25, 2024 Regular Council Meeting for adoption.

### SUMMARY:

The Council Meeting Schedule is set annually in order to plan appropriately for the upcoming year. This report sets to establish the dates for Council Meetings in 2025, and provides the changes necessary to the Procedural By-law to allow for a change in Council Meeting structure.

The presented 2025 Council Calendar includes a number of changes to the existing format of Council Meetings including adding in Committee of the Whole Meetings. Staff are supportive of these changes to increase notice times, and public consultation through the committee structure.

In addition to the changes to accommodate the Committee of the Whole structure, Staff are proposing that the notice period for Agenda's of Council and Committees be adjusted to allow ten (10) days notice for Council and constituents to have more time with the material included in the Agendas.

### BACKGROUND:

Annually, Council adopts a schedule of Council meetings for the following year, the schedule is created consistent with the below section of the Procedural By-law.

The Procedural By-law currently sets out that following the Inaugural Meeting, Regular Meetings of Council will be held at 7:00 p.m., local time, twice per month on Mondays as per the schedule approved by Council Resolution or By-law. During the months of July, August and December in each year, there will be one Regular Meeting of Council per month to be held at a time designated by Council by resolution or By-law to accommodate the Ad Hoc Budget Committee Meeting schedule and the summer holiday season. Where possible, the Council schedule was designed to afford a one-week break between meetings to provide Council with additional time to consider agenda items and to connect with constituents on matters of public interest, while also providing an opportunity for staff to gather information when requested by Council.

The Municipal Clerk and Committee Administrators create and circulate Agenda's in accordance with Section 4.14.3 of the Procedure By-law which provides for the Agenda to be circulated for Regular Meetings three (3) business days before the meeting.

### REPORT:

Summary of proposed changes:

- Introduce the Committee of the Whole structure
- Move from two to one Regular Council Meeting per month
- Create consistency in timing of meetings
- Increase notice period (Agendas) for Council and Committees from three (3) Business Days to ten (10) calendar days
- Move to calendar days instead of Business Days to decrease potential confusion for certain timelines

Benefits for implementing changes:

- Increased opportunities for public participation
- Increased time for Council to engage with constituents
- Increased opportunities for debate
- Increased consistency on schedule
- Increased opportunities for staff to receive direction from Council
- More efficient use of Legislative Services time, less time on agenda prep and more time on service delivery
- Improved planning and delivery of work from administration

## Committee of the Whole

Staff are proposing that the Committee of the Whole meeting replace one of the two prescribed Regular Council Meetings in the current Procedural By-law. Committee of the Whole (Committee) facilitates the decision-making process of Council. The Committee is comprised of all members of Council who fully participate in debate and forward recommendations to Council for final decision. The Committee is an important forum for policy debate and public input on issues within Council's area of responsibility.

The Committee does not have decision-making authority, all recommendations that come from the Committee must be formally approved at a following Council session. The Committee of the Whole has the ability to refer items back to Staff, defer items to a later date, amend recommendations or provide recommendation to Council for approval. Items of a time sensitive nature may be ratified by Council in a Special Council Meeting being called immediately after the adjournment of the Committee of the Whole Meeting.

In examining the area municipalities, the Committee structure is used by the following in the Waterloo Region:

- City of Kitchener Standing Committees
- Region of Waterloo Standing Committees
- Township of Woolwich Committee of the Whole
- Township of Wellesley Committee of the Whole

Staff examined the Council and Committee structures of all of the lower tier, and upper tier municipalities in the Region. In examining the decision-making process at each it was determined that the Committee of the Whole structure was the most appropriate for Council to make the necessary decisions to move projects forward and resolve issues that affect the Township of Wilmot.

Staff are proposing that Committee of the Whole meetings be held on the first Monday of each month, save and except for July, August and December. The Regular Council Meetings scheduled in the months of July, August and December will include items of a time sensitive nature, or in which had received previous direction from the Committee of the Whole.

*Example of an item moving through this structure:*

- Friday, December 27<sup>th</sup> – Agenda for Committee of the Whole released, Staff report and related material available for review
- Monday, January 6<sup>th</sup> – Committee of the Whole meeting, public input through delegations, debate and provide recommendation to Council for approval
- Friday, January 17<sup>th</sup> – Agenda for Regular Council Meeting released, including recommendation for approval
- Monday, January 27<sup>th</sup> - Regular Council Meeting, item receives final approval

## Regular Council Meeting

Staff are proposing that the Regular Council Meeting be held on the fourth Monday of each month. These meetings will follow the order of proceedings currently included in the Procedural By-law and will be used to ratify any recommendations made by the Committee of the Whole.

After a Committee of the Whole meeting, staff will summarize the decisions made by the committee and submit the reports to Council for final resolution at their next meeting. Council is also responsible for making decisions on other matters, including adopting bylaws, receiving presentations and delegations during Regular Council Meetings.

## Regular Meeting- Notice (Agendas)

Staff are proposing to increase the notice period for Regular Meetings including Council and Committee Meetings. Currently, notice is given through the publication of the Agenda which occurs three (3) Business Days prior to the date of the meeting. The proposed change increases that to ten (10) calendar days.

Staff have heard from elected officials, and members of the public that the current notice period is an insufficient amount of time to prepare for debate and consideration of items. Staff believe the ten (10) days notice period is achievable with other work plans and achieves the goal of more time to engage, review and disseminate information.

Other changes with the draft Procedural By-law amendments as attached to this report are a direct result of this notice period being increased, including when members of the public need items such as petitions, presentation and correspondence to Staff for inclusion on the Agenda. Staff believe with the proposed Committee structure members of the public will have sufficient notice of the topics being considered at the next Regular Council Meeting. Clerk's Staff are committed to communicating effectively and working with members of public, organizations and agencies on the changes to the structure and timelines.

### *Example of public participation in the proposed structure:*

Monday, January 6 <sup>th</sup> -	Delegation to the Committee of the Whole
Wednesday, January 15 <sup>th</sup> -	Correspondence submitted to Staff for inclusion on the Agenda for the January 27 <sup>th</sup> Regular Council Meeting
Friday, January 17 <sup>th</sup> -	Correspondence published on the Regular Council Meeting Agenda
Monday, January 27 <sup>th</sup> -	Delegation to Council with new information, or Council can pull the piece of Correspondence for discussion

### ALIGNMENT WITH THE TOWNSHIP OF WILMOT STRATEGIC PLAN:

Aligns with the Responsible Governance and Community Engagement strategic goals.

**FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

There are no financial considerations associated with this report.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment 1- Proposed 2025 Council Meeting Schedule

Attachment 2- Draft Committee of the Whole Terms of Reference

Attachment 3- Copy of Procedural By-law with Changes

Attachment 4- Draft Amending By-law to By-law 2024-42 being the Procedural By-law