



CORPORATE SERVICES

Staff Report

REPORT NO: COR-2026-10
TO: Council on May 4, 2026
SUBMITTED BY: Harold O’Krafka, Deputy CAO / Director of Corporate Services
PREPARED BY: Amelia Jaggard, Manager of Legislative Services/ Municipal Clerk
REVIEWED BY: Jeff Willmer, Chief Administrative Officer
DATE: April 20, 2026
SUBJECT: Procedural By-law Review – Meeting Structure and Notice Provisions

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report COR-2026-10 Procedural By-law Review – Meeting Structure and Notice Provisions be received for information;

THAT Council direct staff to present a By-Law to amend Procedural By-Law 2024-42, as outlined in this report; and,

THAT staff be directed to undertake a review of the Township’s Notice By-law (2003-25) and report back to the next term of Council with recommendations to modernize and strengthen the Township’s public notice framework.

SUMMARY:

In January 2025, Council implemented a Committee of the Whole (CofW) structure and extended agenda publication timelines from three (3) business days to ten (10) calendar days.

Staff have reviewed the implementation of these changes, based on meeting data and experience to date, to assess their effectiveness.

Based on this review, staff recommend that Council revert to a two Regular Council Meetings per month model and amend related notice provisions to improve transparency, clarity, and administrative efficiency.

The amendments are proposed to take effect June 15, 2026.

The 2027 Meeting Schedule is attached to provide clarity for the incoming Council.

BACKGROUND:

In July 2024, Council considered a comprehensive review of the Township's Procedural By-Law, and approved amendments to delegation processes and public participation requirements. This review was informed by a municipal scan of other jurisdictions.

In November 2024, Council approved amendments to the Procedural By-Law to introduce a Committee of the Whole structure and extend agenda publication timelines.

The intent of these changes was to:

- Increase opportunities for public participation;
- Provide additional time for Council review and debate;
- Improve planning consistency;
- Enhance transparency through earlier agenda publication.

Under the structure implemented in January 2025:

- Committee of the Whole meetings are held on the first Monday of each month;
- Regular Council Meetings are held on the fourth Monday of each month;
- Recommendations from Committee of the Whole require ratification at a subsequent Regular Council Meeting;
- Agendas are published ten (10) calendar days prior to meetings.

REPORT:

1. One-Year Operational Review

Staff have completed a one-year operational review of meeting frequency, agenda practices, and administrative impacts associated with the current structure. This review assesses the effectiveness of the current structure and identifies amendments to improve clarity, transparency, and administrative efficiency.

Special Council Meetings

In 2025 (excluding budget-related meetings), twelve (12) Special Council Meetings were convened.

Several of these meetings were required to address time-sensitive matters that would otherwise have experienced delay under the two-step Committee of the Whole to Council approval structure.

In 2026, two Special Council Meetings were held as part of the budget process, during which additional routine administrative matters were also addressed, and one additional Special Council Meeting has since been convened.

Special Council Meetings require full agenda preparation, public notice, confirmatory by-law, and administrative coordination, increasing overall administrative workload.

Revised Agendas

In 2025, twenty-five (25) revised agendas were issued (excluding budget meetings). This number includes Committee of the Whole, Regular Council, and Special Council meetings and does not account for multiple revised versions issued for a single meeting.

In 2026, revised agendas have been issued for each Committee of the Whole and Regular Council meetings convened from January to March.

While the ten (10) day notice period was intended to improve transparency, the frequency of revised agendas has reduced predictability and clarity for Council, staff, and members of the public.

In several cases, revised agendas were published fewer than three (3) business days prior to a meeting, which reduced public review time below the Township's previous standard.

Transparency is strengthened not only by the length of notice provided, but by certainty and reliability of published materials.

Decision-Making Efficiency

Under the current structure, most items require:

1. Committee of the Whole debate and recommendation; and
2. Formal ratification at a subsequent Regular Council Meeting.

This creates a minimum three-to-four-week approval cycle for routine matters. Where operational timelines require more immediate action, Special Council Meetings have been necessary.

Decision-Making Timeline Comparison

The following example shows the difference in timelines between the current and proposed structure:

Step	Current Structure (CofW + Council)	Proposed Structure (Regular Council)
Agenda Publication	April 24 (CofW)	May 20
Meeting / Debate	May 4 (CofW)	May 25
Decision	May 25 (Regular Council)	May 25

The extended timeline under the current structure creates challenges for planning matters, procurement approvals, and other time-sensitive operational decisions that require timely consideration. Under the proposed structure, the same matter can be considered and decided at a single meeting within a shorter and more predictable timeframe.

Administrative Impact

In 2025, the combined impact of:

- Twelve (12) Special Council Meetings; and
- Twenty-five (25) revised agendas

has increased administrative demands on Legislative Services, including agenda preparation, publication, meeting coordination, and communication.

The duplication in the two-step approval process has resulted in additional staff time and complexity without a corresponding increase in transparency or clarity.

2. Governance Considerations

Based on the operational review, staff have identified the following governance priorities:

- Clarity in when decisions are made;
- Predictability of agenda publication;
- Efficient use of administrative resources;
- Timely approval of operational and procurement matters;
- Consistency in meeting start times for public accessibility.

Council Authority and Flexibility in Decision-Making

Under the Procedural By-law, Council retains full authority to manage the timing and consideration of matters before it.

At any Regular Council Meeting, Council may:

- Defer a matter to a subsequent meeting to allow for additional review or consideration;
- Refer a matter to a Committee or back to staff for further information or analysis;

These procedural tools provide Council with the flexibility to ensure decisions are made with an appropriate level of information and deliberation.

This approach is consistent with standard municipal practice, where Regular Council Meetings serve as the primary forum for both discussion and decision-making.

Public Awareness and Communication

In addition to agenda publication timelines, staff continue to identify opportunities to enhance public awareness of Council business.

Recent initiatives include the introduction of social media “Coming up @ Council” updates to highlight key items for Council consideration, as well as “Key Decisions @ Council” updates summarizing outcomes of Council meetings.

These measures help make Council proceedings more accessible and easier to understand for the public. Staff will continue to explore opportunities to enhance communication and public awareness of Council business.

Public Notice and Transparency Framework

Through this review, staff have identified an opportunity to strengthen the Township’s approach to public notice and transparency.

The Township currently has a Notice Policy (By-Law 2003-25, approved in 2003) establishing procedures for the provision of notice as required by the *Municipal Act, 2001*. While this by-law

fulfills statutory requirements, it has not been updated to reflect current communication practices or broader expectations for transparency and accessibility.

A Notice Policy establishes consistent standards for public notice across the organization, including methods of communication and timelines. Areas addressed usually include: budget public participation meetings, budget adoption, fees and charges updates, procedural by-law changes, and acknowledgment of notice requirements within the Planning Act.

An updated Notice Policy would:

- Provide consistent and transparent standards for public notice across the organization;
- Support accountability in the application of notice provisions;
- Complement the Procedural By-law by providing clarity beyond meeting-specific requirements; and
- Enhance public confidence in how and when information is communicated.

Staff recommend that the Township's current Notice Policy be reviewed and that staff report back to the next term of Council with recommendations to modernize and strengthen the Township's public notice framework.

3. Proposed Amendments

A. Meeting Structure

Staff recommend reverting to two (2) Regular Council Meetings per month, held on the second and fourth Mondays at 6:00 p.m.

July, August, and December would remain one-meeting months.

This structure:

- Allows debate and decision at the same meeting;
- Eliminates duplication of approval processes;
- Reduces need for Special Council Meetings;
- Provides consistent meeting start times;
- Improves clarity for the public regarding when decisions are made.

Currently, Committee of the Whole meetings commence at 6:00 p.m., while Regular Council Meetings commence at 7:00 p.m. Establishing a consistent 6:00 p.m. start time improves predictability and clarity for the public.

B. Agenda Publication

Staff recommend amending the agenda publication timeline to five (5) calendar days prior to the meeting (Wednesday prior to the Monday meeting date).

This timeline:

- Is consistent with common municipal practice;
- Is operationally achievable;

- Supports predictable publication;
- Eliminates reliance on revised agendas.

While a longer notice period may appear to provide additional time for review, its effectiveness is dependent on the reliability of the information provided. The frequent use of revised agendas has reduced the benefit of extended notice, as materials are often added or changed following initial publication.

The proposed five (5) day notice period supports the publication of a complete agenda, providing the public with a reliable opportunity to review all materials in advance of the meeting.

C. Presentation, Delegations and Correspondence

Staff recommend the following amendments to presentation, delegation and correspondence timelines and requirements to align with the proposed agenda publication timeline:

- Presentations and general interest delegation requests, including presentation material: submission deadline seven (7) calendar days prior to the meeting;
- Specific interest delegations (agenda items) request: deadline 4:00 p.m. on the day of the meeting;
- Correspondence copied to the Clerk: submission deadline seven (7) calendar days prior to the meeting for inclusion on the public agenda, otherwise to be included on the next public agenda where appropriate.

The proposed amendments reduce submission timelines to the previous standard and allow members of the public to submit requests closer to the meeting date, while aligning with the agenda process. Requiring presentation materials for inclusion on the public agenda ensures that any materials intended to inform or influence Council decision-making are available to Council, staff, and the public at the same time.

These amendments support:

- Increased transparency, by ensuring all materials considered by Council are publicly available in advance of the meeting;
- Improved fairness, by providing all members of Council and the public with equal access to the same information;
- Greater clarity, by establishing consistent expectations for delegation submissions; and
- Alignment with agenda publication timelines.

The proposed amendments reinforce the integrity of the agenda as a reliable record of matters to be considered by Council.

D. Removal of Late Additions to Regular Council Meeting Agendas

Staff recommend the removal of Section 4.15 of the Procedural By-law, which currently permits the addition of reports, materials, and By-laws to an Agenda after it has been published.

Currently, late additions are permitted up to four (4) hours prior to a meeting, subject to administrative approval. In practice, this has resulted in frequent revisions to published agendas and has undermined the intent of extended notice provisions.

While the intent was to accommodate time-sensitive matters, its application has created a reliance on revised agendas as a routine practice rather than an exception. This reduces predictability for Council, staff, and members of the public, and limits the effectiveness of advance notice.

The removal of this provision establishes a clear expectation that agendas are a reliable record of matters to be considered by Council upon publication. This supports:

- Increased transparency, by ensuring the public can rely on the agenda as published;
- Improved clarity, by eliminating multiple versions of the same agenda;
- Strengthened public trust, by ensuring consistent and predictable notice of matters to be considered; and
- Greater alignment with the purpose of notice provisions under the Procedural By-law.

The need for late additions is also expected to be significantly reduced, as reverting to two (2) Regular Council Meetings per month shortens the time between meetings, and a five (5) day agenda publication timeline allows for more responsive internal report preparation. These changes reduce the likelihood that matters will arise that cannot reasonably be included through standard agenda processes.

Where an urgent matter arises following agenda publication, staff may, in exceptional circumstances, bring forward a recommendation at the meeting to add the item for Council's consideration. Any such addition would require Council's approval at the meeting to proceed. Such additions are expected to be rare and not form part of routine meeting practice.

The Procedural By-law provides for the calling of Special or Emergency Meetings to address matters of urgent or extraordinary nature.

The proposed amendments balance transparency, administrative feasibility, and public accessibility.

4. Implementation – Effective date June 15, 2026

As the Committee of the Whole (CofW) meeting structure was implemented during the current term of Council, it is appropriate that Council consider and, where necessary, refine the framework based on operational experience prior to the next term. This ensures the incoming Council begins the term with an effective meeting structure.

If adopted May 25, 2026:

- The Procedural By-law amendments are recommended to take effect June 15, 2026;
- The June 1, 2026 Committee of the Whole meeting will proceed as scheduled as the agenda for that meeting will be published prior to the effective date of the proposed amendments;

The 2027 Meeting Schedule is attached to provide clarity for the incoming Council; the schedule is subject to change by the new Council.

Staff will continue to monitor and identify opportunities for further refinement of the Procedural By-Law, which may be considered as part of a broader review in the next term of Council.

ALIGNMENT WITH THE TOWNSHIP OF WILMOT STRATEGIC PLAN:

Trustworthy Leadership

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

There are no direct financial implications associated with this report. The proposed amendments are expected to reduce administrative duplication and improve operational efficiency.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1 – Redlined By-Law 2024-42

Attachment 2 – Draft By-Law to amend By-law 2024-42

Attachment 3 – 2027 Council Meeting Schedule