

Report

Date December 6, 2023

File: 0570-01

Subject 2024 Regular Council and Committee of the Whole Meeting Schedule

PURPOSE

To consider rescheduling and/or cancelling the 2024 Council and Committee of the Whole meeting dates where conflicts exist and determine whether meetings shall continue to be conducted in a hybrid fashion (both in-person and by electronic means).

BACKGROUND

The Council Procedure Bylaw establishes the dates and times of regular meetings of Council and requires that:

- Council meetings be held on the first and third Wednesday of each month, beginning at 5:00 p.m., with the exception being that no meetings are held on the first Wednesday in January, July and August, or where part of the meeting is closed to the public then the meeting will begin at 4:00 p.m.;
- Committee of the Whole (CoW) meetings be held on the second Tuesday of each month, beginning at 5:00 p.m., except where part of the meeting is closed to the public, then the meeting will begin at 4:00 p.m.;
- the schedule of the dates, times and places of regular Council meetings be prepared on or before December 21, for the following year; and,
- Notice must be given that the schedule is available in accordance with Section 94 of the *Community Charter* [requirements for public notice] and the Public Notice Bylaw and made available to the public by posting it at the public notice posting places (i.e., the notice board at the main entrance of the Municipal Hall and the municipal website).

A resolution of Council, passed by a 2/3 vote, is required to cancel or reschedule a meeting to another date. However, the Mayor has the authority under the Council Procedure Bylaw to postpone a Council or CoW meeting.

If there were no changes required to the regular meeting dates of Council or CoW, the Corporate Officer would be authorized to publish the notice of the 2024 Council and Committee of the Whole Meeting schedule in accordance with Section 5(1)(d) of [Delegation of Authority Bylaw No. 3814](#), pursuant to Sections 94 and 127 of the *Community Charter* [notice of council meetings].

Conducting Regular Meetings (In-person or Electronic (Hybrid))

Pursuant to Sections [128](#) to [128.2](#) of the *Community Charter* and Section 7 of the Council Procedure Bylaw, if a regular meeting of Council or CoW is to be conducted by electronic means, then Council must pass a resolution at least 72 hours prior to the regular meeting that the meeting will be held by electronic means (i.e., via Webex) and notice must be given that it will be held electronically.

DISCUSSION

When a regular Council meeting or CoW meeting falls on a statutory holiday, the meeting must be held on the next business day that the Municipal Hall is open. When a regular Council meeting or CoW meeting conflicts with one of the conferences that Council is authorized to attend under the [Council Conference Attendance Policy](#), the past practice has been to reschedule the meeting to a different date. The survey that Council recently participated in found that:

- four out of the six Council members who participated in the survey indicated that they would like to see meetings that fell within the same week as the Federation of Canadian Municipalities conference be cancelled; and,
- six out of the six Council members who participated in the survey indicated they would like to see meetings that fell on the same week as the Union of BC Municipalities convention be cancelled.

2024 Conference Dates

The 2024 Council Conference Schedule is as follows:

- [Local Government Leadership Academy \(LGLA\)](#)
The LGLA Elected Officials Seminar will be held in Richmond at the Radisson Vancouver Airport Hotel from January 31 – February 2, 2024
- [Association of Vancouver Island Coastal Communities \(AVICC\)](#)
The AVICC AGM & Convention will be held in Victoria at the Victoria Convention Centre from April 12 - 14, 2024
- [Federation of Canadian Municipalities \(FCM\)](#)
The FCM Conference and Trade Show will be held in Calgary, Alberta at the Calgary TELUS Convention Centre from June 6 – 9, 2024
- [Union of BC Municipalities \(UBCM\)](#)
The UBCM Convention will be held in Vancouver at the Vancouver Convention Centre East from September 16 – 20, 2024
- [Vancouver Island Economic Alliance \(VIEA\)](#)
The VIEA Summit will be held in Nanaimo at the Vancouver Island Conference Centre from October 23 – 24, 2024

Meeting Date Conflicts

Staff determined that there are no meeting conflicts in 2024 with statutory holidays but did find conflicts with the following conferences:

- FCM conflicts with the first regular Council meeting in June [Wednesday, June 5] as it falls within the same week of the conference and impacts members of Council who need to travel to Calgary on June 5 in order to attend the four-day conference beginning on June 6
- UBCM conflicts with the second regular Council meeting in September [Wednesday, September 18] as it falls within the same week as the five-day convention beginning on September 16.

One additional conflict was found in May, the first of the month falls on a Wednesday, which creates back-to-back CoW and Council meetings, as follows:

- CoW on May 14 [second Tuesday] and Council on May 15 [third Wednesday]

Proposed Changes to the 2023 Council and CoW Meeting Dates

Staff is recommending that Council amend their 2024 regular Council and CoW meeting dates as follows:

- Reschedule the CoW meeting from Tuesday, May 14, 2024, to **Tuesday, May 7, 2024** to avoid back-to-back meetings with the regular Council meeting on Wednesday, May 15, 2024.
- Cancel the June 5, 2024 regular Council meeting to avoid the conflict with the first day of the FCM Conference.
- Cancel the September 18, 2024 regular Council meeting to avoid the conflict with the UBCM Convention.

The 2024 Council and CoW Meeting Schedule (Attachment 1) shows the above noted conflicts (highlighted in yellow) and illustrates the recommended changes.

Public Hearings

Public hearings are not illustrated in the 2024 Council and CoW Meeting Schedule as a public hearing will only be held on the third Wednesday of the month when the Director of Planning and Building has given notice in accordance with section 466 (1) of the *Local Government Act* and section 54 (4) of Council Procedure Bylaw. Therefore, it only appears as a notation in the bottom right-hand corner of the schedule (Attachment 1).

Conducting Regular Meetings (In-person, Electronic, or Hybrid)

In 2023, Council and CoW meetings were conducted using the hybrid model, which provided Council, staff, and members of the public the choice to attend either in-person or electronically. Continuing with this practice is consistent with the [Accessibility Action Plan](#), which provides members of the public who cannot be physically present in Council Chambers for whatever reason the ability to join electronically from the comfort of their homes to participate in the Public Input and Question Period. It also allows Council, staff, consultants, and delegations flexibility to participate electronically. Conducting meetings using the hybrid model is inclusive, convenient, and reaches far more citizens than in-person meetings. However, since the Council Procedure Bylaw has not established that Council and CoW meetings be conducted in a hybrid format, a resolution of Council is required for the meeting to be conducted by electronic means as only Council has the authority to participate electronically in the meeting otherwise.

OPTIONS

1. **(Recommended Option)** Endorse the proposed meeting changes for 2024 (Attachment 1) and authorize meetings to be conducted by electronic means.

THAT Council:

- (1) Reschedule the May 14, 2024, Committee of the Whole meeting to May 7, 2024;
- (2) Cancel the June 5, 2024, regular Council meeting;
- (3) Cancel the September 18, 2024, regular Council meeting; and,

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- (4) Direct that the regular Council and Committee of the Whole meetings for 2024 be conducted by electronic means.

Cancelling the June 5 and September 18 meetings means that only one Council meeting will be held in June, July, August and September, likely resulting in the need to hold a Special meeting or two during this time.

2. Choose alternative dates for meeting conflicts.

THAT Council:

- (1) Reschedule the May 14, 2024, Committee of the Whole meeting to *[insert new meeting date]*;
- (2) Reschedule the June 5, 2024 regular Council meeting to Tuesday, June 4, 2024;
- (3) Reschedule the September 18, 2024 regular Council meeting to Tuesday, September 24, 2024;
- and,
- (4) Direct that the regular Council and Committee of the Whole meetings for 2024 be conducted by electronic means.

Rescheduling the June 5 meeting to June 4 provides Council ample time to travel to the FCM Conference and ensures two Council meetings in June. Rescheduling the September 18 meeting to September 24 is consistent with what was done in 2023, and it ensures there are two Council meetings in September.

3. Do not make any changes to the schedule, regardless of meetings being back-to-back or conflicts with conferences, as members could attend electronically as the meetings do not start until 5:00 p.m.

THAT Council direct that the regular Council and Committee of the Whole meetings for 2024 be conducted by electronic means.

IMPLICATIONS

Depending on which option Council endorses, the Corporate Officer would then publish the schedule to the website and notice board immediately, publish a notice to social media beginning the week of December 25, 2023, and in the Cowichan Valley Citizen and Chemainus Courier on January 4, 2024.

The third option would result in conflicts with conferences and back-to-back meetings and may result in the failure to achieve quorum (after waiting 30 minutes) for the meeting.

A Special CoW meeting is scheduled for December 19, 2023, where a workshop and comprehensive review of the Council Procedure Bylaw will be conducted. Depending on the outcome of the workshop, the 2024 meeting schedule may be revisited in the new year after the new Council Procedure Bylaw is adopted.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council:

- (1) Reschedule the May 14, 2024, Committee of the Whole meeting to May 7, 2024;
- (2) Cancel the June 5, 2024, regular Council meeting;
- (3) Cancel the September 18, 2024, regular Council meeting; and,
- (4) Direct that the regular Council and Committee of the Whole meetings for 2024 be conducted by electronic means.

Report prepared by:



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Approved to be forwarded to Council:



Ted Swabey
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Attachment:

- (1) 2024 Council and CoW Meeting Schedule