

Report

Date July 17, 2024

File: 0550-20

Subject June 4, 2024 Accessibility Advisory Committee Recommendations

PURPOSE

To receive for information the draft minutes from the June 4, 2024, Accessibility Advisory Committee (Attachment 1) and consider the Committee's recommended actions.

BACKGROUND

At the June 4, 2024, Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting, staff presented the Committee with a report Removing Barriers to Committee Participation (Attachment 2). This was to ensure that public participation in Council Committees includes diverse perspectives and is accessible to anyone willing to contribute their time to improve North Cowichan.

At this meeting, the Committee passed the following resolution:

THAT the Accessibility Advisory Committee recommend that Council amend the Council Advisory Body Policy to include an Honorarium of \$40 per meeting for persons who are not compensated by their employer to participate in Committee meetings.

The Committee also discussed amending the Accessibility Advisory Committee Terms of Reference (Attachment 3), to reduce the number of meetings per year held to quarterly, considering that the Accessibility Plan has been adopted by Council.

The Committee passed the following resolution:

THAT the Accessibility Advisory Committee recommend Council amend the Terms of Reference for the Accessibility Advisory Committee by:

- 1. replacing the wording under the Staff Support heading with: "The staff liaison will serve the Committee and will notify Council in writing of any membership changes.", and,*
- 2. updating the Committee meetings to take place quarterly, or at the call of the Chair.*

DISCUSSION

There can be many barriers to public participation in committees. As the meetings are predominantly held during the week and during the regular work hours, some people:

- who are employed in a field unrelated to the committee business may have to take time off work;
- may need to arrange childcare;
- may not have a vehicle or be unable to drive, so may require assistance with travel; and,
- may be less likely to volunteer their time and energy to a committee if they incur a real cost.

The Terms of Reference for committees generally include a provision for electronic participation in meetings. This is one way to foster accessibility in that participation can occur without leaving the house or workplace. However, this does require the participant to have a computer or cell phone and an internet connection. Additionally, it takes away from the camaraderie experienced from participating in person.

Although the Terms of Reference will establish the meeting frequency (e.g., monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly), committees can set the dates and times that work best for the committee members. This could enable people who work during the day to attend meetings if they were held in the evening. However, the Large Committee Room is unavailable after 4:00 p.m., so meetings would have to take place in Council Chambers. Holding committee meetings in Council Chambers is challenging as IT staff would not be available to support any technology challenges and the requirements for staff to participate in meetings outside of regular work hours could result in additional costs.

OPTIONS

1. **(Recommended Option)** THAT Council:
 - (1) Receive the minutes of the June 4, 2024 Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting;
 - (2) Amends the Council Advisory Body Policy to include an Honorarium of \$40 per meeting for persons who are not compensated by their employer to participate in Committee meetings;
 - (3) Amends the Terms of Reference for the Accessibility Advisory Committee by:
 - a) replacing the wording under the Staff Support heading with: "The staff liaison will serve the Committee and will notify Council in writing of any membership changes.", and,
 - b) updating the Committee meetings to take place quarterly, or at the call of the Chair.
 - Staff will amend the Council Advisory Body Policy and the Terms of Reference.
2. If Council wants further analysis done on whether to provide an honorarium to Committee members, Council should first consider parts (1) and (3) of the recommended option noted above and then consider the following:

THAT Council refer the Committee participation honorarium item back to staff for additional analysis and summary of best practices.

- Staff will report back to Council with an additional analysis.

IMPLICATIONS

Providing the requested Honorarium of \$40 per meeting per committee member has a small financial cost yet will remove financial barriers to participate in Committees. The total financial cost would be approximately \$3,800/year, which would cover all committees. Updating the Terms of Reference simply brings them into alignment with current practice.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council

- (1) Receives the minutes of the June 4, 2024 Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting;
- (2) Amends the Council Advisory Body Policy to include an Honorarium of \$40 per meeting for persons who are not compensated by their employer to participate in Committee meetings; and
- (3) Amends the Terms of Reference for the Accessibility Advisory Committee by:
 - a) replacing the wording under the Staff Support heading with: "The staff liaison will serve the Committee and will notify Council in writing of any membership changes.", and,
 - b) updating the Committee meetings to take place quarterly, or at the call of the Chair.

Report prepared by:



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Approved to be forwarded to Council:



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Attachments:

- (1) June 4, 2024, Accessibility Advisory Committee draft minutes
- (2) Removing Barriers to Committee Participation Staff Report
- (3) Accessibility Advisory Committee Terms of Reference