

Report

Date December 1, 2021
Subject 2022 Council Meeting Schedule

File: 0570-01

PURPOSE

To consider:

- (1) cancelling or rescheduling Council and/or Committee of the Whole 2022 meeting dates where conflicts exist;
- (2) which meetings, if any, shall be conducted by electronic means (i.e., through Webex) in 2022.

BACKGROUND

Setting the Regular Meeting Schedule

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 1:30 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,
- the schedule be advertised in accordance with Section 94 of the *Community Charter* [requirements for public notice] 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).

In addition to the establishment of regular Council meetings, as noted above, Council resolved on June 17, 2020, that the Committee of the Whole would also meet on a regular basis, on the second Tuesday of every month at 6:00 p.m. Council also resolved on January 16, 2019, that public hearings in 2019 would be held on the third Wednesday of each month at 6:00 p.m., even though public hearings appear in the order of proceedings for regular meetings under Section 15 (1) of the Council Procedure Bylaw. This practice continued in 2020 and 2021.

If a meeting is cancelled or rescheduled to another date that is not due to a holiday, then Council must adopt a motion with a vote of at least 2/3 of members present for those changes to occur (i.e., if there are 7 members present then at least 5 must vote in the affirmative, if 5 or 6 members are present, then the vote must be at least 4 in favour to pass).

If there were no changes required to the regular meeting dates of Council or the Committee of the Whole, and the COVID-19 pandemic was not a factor impacting in-person meetings, the Corporate Officer would be authorized to publish the notice of the 2022 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)

Pursuant to Sections [128](#) to [128.2](#) of the *Community Charter* and Section 7 of [Council Procedure Bylaw No. 3602](#), if a regular meeting of Council or the Committee of the Whole 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 that it will be held electronically must be posted at the public notice posting places.

On October 7, 2021, after adopting an amendment to the Council Procedure Bylaw to authorize meetings to be conducted electronically or for members of Council to participate electronically, Council resolved that all Council and Committees of Council meetings held between October 8, 2021, and December 31, 2021, would be conducted by electronic means. Council must determine whether to conduct their meetings electronically or in person moving forward into 2022.

All Committees of Council, including the Committee of the Whole, also need to determine whether their meetings are held electronically or in person moving forward into 2022. Of note, the Environmental Advisory Committee already set their 2022 meeting schedule at their November 16, 2021 meeting and decided to continue to meet electronically for all their meetings in 2022.

Past Practice

Historically, Council has cancelled the first meetings in January, July and August, recognizing that there would likely be very little business included on those agendas due to the holiday season and summer vacations. The July and August meetings have the potential to be lengthy due to having only one scheduled meeting in each of those months. However, the following table (Table 1: Post-Consent Agenda Meeting Stats), which was presented to Council on September 21, 2021, as supplemental information for the Consent Agenda Policy, shows that although the July 21, 2021 meeting was the longest meeting of the year (up to September 1, 2021), it was not much longer than the meetings that were held on February 2, 2021, March 17, 2021, and May 5, 2021, during months where two meetings were held (meeting times for those meetings has been highlighted in yellow). Interestingly, the August 18, 2021 meeting was the third shortest meeting time during that same period. The meetings during those months (January, July and August) have also been highlighted in yellow to draw your attention to them.

Other changes to the schedule have occurred in the past where there has been a conflict between the meeting schedule and the FCM, UBCM, AVICC, and/or LGLA conference or seminar.

Table 1

Post-Consent Agenda Meeting Stats

Regular Council Meeting Date	Meeting Duration	Initial Agenda Items (excluding minutes and notices of motion)	Consent Agenda Items added to New Business	Total Agenda Items
October 21, 2020	4.1	11		11
November 4, 2020	3.6	13	1	14
November 18, 2020	6.5	17		17
December 2, 2020	5.5	18	1	19
December 16, 2020	4.5	18	2	20
January 20, 2021	7.1	20	4	24

Regular Council Meeting Date	Meeting Duration	Initial Agenda Items (excluding minutes and notices of motion)	Consent Agenda Items added to New Business	Total Agenda Items
February 2, 2021	8.3	20	6	26
February 17, 2021	3.2	14	3	17
March 3, 2021	5.8	14		14
March 17, 2021	8.0	15	4	19
April 7, 2021	7.7	17	5	22
April 21, 2021	4.2	16	1	17
May 5, 2021	8.6	17	3	20
May 19, 2021	7.1	21	6	27
June 2, 2021	6.1	14	6	20
June 16, 2021	7.7	18	6	24
July 21, 2021	9.6	28	6	34
August 18, 2021	3.7	16	8	24
September 1, 2021	6.3	16	6	22
Average	6.2	17.0	4.3	20.6

DISCUSSION

When a regular Council meeting falls on a statutory holiday, the meeting must be held on the next business day that the Municipal Hall is open, as per Subsection 7 (3) of the [Council Procedure Bylaw](#). Staff determined that there are no meeting conflicts in 2022 with statutory holidays or conferences that Council is authorized to attend under the Council Conference Attendance Policy for Council meetings. However, there is a conflict for the September Committee of the Whole (COW) meeting (UBCM) and the June COW meeting with the second regular Council meeting in June, as described further below.

2022 Conference and Other Important Dates

The 2022 Council Conference Schedule is as follows:

- Local Government Leadership Academy (LGLA)
The LGLA will be held in Richmond at the Radisson Airport Hotel from February 9 - 11, 2022.
- Association of Vancouver Island Coastal Communities (AVICC)
The AVICC will be held in Victoria at the Victoria Conference Centre from April 1 - 3, 2022.
- Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM)
The FCM will be held in Regina, Saskatchewan, from June 2 – 5, 2022.
- Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM)
The UBCM Convention will be held in Whistler from September 12 – 16, 2022.
- Alliance (VIEA)
The VIEA Summit is scheduled to be held from October 26 – 27, 2022. No further details are available at this time.

Other important dates to note in 2022 include:

- The General Local Election will be held on Saturday, October 15, 2022.

- The Inaugural Meeting of the newly elected Council will be held on Wednesday, November 2, 2022.

2022 Council and COW Meeting Schedule

The '2022 Council and COW Meeting Schedule with no Revisions' (Attachment 1) illustrate the meeting schedule based solely upon the dates established under the Council Procedure Bylaw, Council's June 17, 2020 resolution regarding Committee of the Whole meetings and Council's January 16, 2019 resolution to hold public hearings on the third Wednesday of each month.

2022 Meeting Dates for Consideration of Cancelling or Rescheduling

The following meeting dates, which are consistent with meetings that Council has cancelled or rescheduled in previous years, are for Council's consideration to cancel or reschedule in 2022:

- January
 - Cancel the first meeting in January to take into consideration the holiday season.
- June
 - Bring the COW meeting forward one week to Tuesday, June 7, 2022, as the second Tuesday in June (June 14) falls one day before the June 15 Council meeting. This would avoid back-to-back meetings and would move the COW meeting to fall between the two regular Council meetings.
- July/August
 - Cancel the first meeting each month to lessen the impact of Council and/or staff missing meetings while on summer vacation. Should an urgent matter arise that cannot wait until the next regular meeting, Council may call a Special meeting by giving at least 24-hours notice.
- September
 - Postpone the COW meeting by two weeks (to Tuesday, September 27, 2022), as the second Tuesday in September (September 13, 2022) conflicts with the UBCM Convention taking place September 12 – 16, 2022. Bringing the meeting forward one week to Tuesday, September 6, 2021, or postponing the meeting by one week to Tuesday, September 20, 2022 are potential options. However, as both of these dates fall on the day before a regular Council meeting, meaning back-to-back meetings and making timelines for agenda production tight, staff have recommended postponement by two weeks.
- October
 - Cancel the October 19, 2022, regular meeting which is scheduled to occur after the general local election on October 15, 2022 and before the inaugural meeting. Cancelling this meeting is consistent with past practice during an election year.

The '2022 Council and COW Meeting Schedule with Revisions' (Attachment 2) illustrates the above noted changes.

Public Hearings

If Council wishes to continue to hold public hearings during the second meeting of the month only, then Council should adopt a motion to do so in accordance with Subsection 15(3) of the [Council Procedure Bylaw](#). Otherwise, public hearings should be listed in the order of business for every Council meeting agenda.

Conducting Regular Meetings (In-person or Electronic)

Council needs to decide whether to continue conducting their regular meetings through electronic means into 2022 or return to in-person meetings. Council has heard from members of the public requesting that they return to in-person meetings; however, due to the ever-evolving safety issues related to the pandemic, staff are recommending that Council conduct all of their Council and Committee of the Whole meetings in 2022 by electronic means. This does not preclude a Council member or staff from physically attending Council Chambers and participating electronically at that location when it is safe to do so. It is important to note that [Section 128](#) of the *Community Charter* requires that the municipality provide facilities where members of the public may attend to watch and hear the meeting. On [October 8, 2021, notice](#) was given that space would be provided at the Municipal Hall for members of the public to observe meetings until the end of 2021. As the Corporate Officer must be in the same space provided for the public, Council Chambers has by default been deemed to be that location because it allows the greatest number of attendees in the space, compared to other spaces within the Municipal Hall.

Council can revisit their decision at any point in the future, and staff intend to advise Council of any forthcoming safety issues and/or changes to provincial health orders as they evolve throughout the year. This approach allows Council to factor in safety considerations related to the pandemic and other provincial orders as they arise in 2022. Under this model, members of the public will also benefit from having the choice to attend meetings either electronically or in person, which may result in increased participation by the public over time.

OPTIONS

1. **(Recommended Option)** Endorse the proposed meeting changes for 2022 and authorize meetings to be conducted by electronic means. The Corporate Officer would then publish the schedule, as illustrated in Attachment 2 to the website, notice board and newspaper. The meetings would continue to be conducted electronically using the Cisco Webex platform.

THAT Council:

- (1) Cancel the January 5, 2022, July 6, 2022, and August 3, 2022, regular Council meetings, and the October 19, 2022, regular Council meeting and Public Hearing;
- (2) Reschedule the June 14, 2022 Committee of the Whole meeting to June 7, 2022, and the September 13, 2022 Committee of the Whole meeting to September 27, 2022;
- (3) Hold public hearings on the third Wednesday of each month (excluding the October 19, 2022 meeting) at 6:00 p.m.; and,
- (4) Directs that the regular meetings of Council and the Committee of the Whole for 2022 be conducted by electronic means.

2. [Option 2] Endorse the proposed meeting changes for 2022 (the same as bullets (1) to (3) in the recommended option) and return to in-person meetings in January. The Corporate Officer would then publish the schedule as illustrated in Attachment 2 to the website, notice board, and newspaper. The meetings would return to being conducted in person, in Council Chambers.

THAT Council:

- (1) Cancel the January 5, 2022, July 6, 2022, and August 3, 2022, regular Council meetings, and the October 19, 2022, regular Council meeting and Public Hearing;

- (2) Reschedule the June 14, 2022 Committee of the Whole meeting to June 7, 2022, and the September 13, 2022 Committee of the Whole meeting to September 27, 2022; and,
 - (3) Hold public hearings on the third Wednesday of each month (excluding the October 19, 2022 meeting) at 6:00 p.m.
3. [Option 3] Proceed with all regular Council or COW meetings, as established under the Council Procedure Bylaw and previous direction by Council, in person. The Corporate Office would then publish the schedule as illustrated in Attachment 1 to the website, notice board, and newspaper. The meetings would return to being conducted in person, in Council Chambers.

IMPLICATIONS

If Council chooses the recommended option, there will only be one Council meeting held in January, July, August and October; if necessary, a Special meeting may be scheduled during those months to expedite any urgent business that may arise at that time. All regular Council and Committee of the Whole meetings would continue to be conducted electronically using the Cisco Webex platform. Individual Council members could choose to participate in the electronic meeting at Council Chambers if they are so inclined.

The implications for Council business would be similar in the second option as the recommended option, with the exception of meeting in person. Returning to in-person meetings may satisfy those residents who have urged Council to return to in-person meetings. However, it may pose a health risk to participants while hospitalizations in British Columbia remain high. It also has the potential to single out those members of Council and/or staff who may not be comfortable, for their own personal reasons, to return to in-person meetings.

The third option could result in meetings having to be cancelled due to quorum or insufficient business to bring forward on an agenda and would pose the same health risks as identified under option two above.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council:

- (1) Cancel the January 5, 2022, July 6, 2022, August 3, 2022, and October 19, 2022, regular Council meetings;
- (2) Reschedule the June 14, 2022 Committee of the Whole meeting to June 7, 2022, and the September 13, 2022 Committee of the Whole meeting to September 27, 2022;
- (3) Hold public hearings on the third Wednesday of each month (excluding the October 19, 2022 meeting) at 6:00 p.m.; and,
- (4) Direct that the regular meetings of Council and the Committee of the Whole for 2022 be conducted by electronic means.

Report prepared by:

[Tricia Mayea]

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Approved to be forwarded to Council:



Ted Swabey
Chief Administrative Officer

Report reviewed by:



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Attachments:

- (1) 2022 Council and COW Meeting Schedule with no Revisions
- (2) 2022 Council and COW Meeting Schedule with Revisions