Minute No. 689
Report – Governance Committee of Council – July 6, 2022

Item No. 1 2023 Schedule of Meetings and Update on Remote Participation in Council and Committee Meetings

COUNCIL DECISION:

Council concurred in the recommendation of the Governance Committee of Council and adopted the following:

1. That the schedule of meetings, attached as Appendix A, for the period of January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023, be approved and that Council prorogue for the period of July 24, 2023 through August 31, 2023.

2. That the Procedure By-law No. 50/2007 (draft by-law attached as Appendix B) be amended as follows:

   A. With minor changes, to incorporate the substance of the provisions contained in the Meetings of Council by Communication Devices By-law No. 41/2020 on a permanent basis.

   B. To require members of Council to participate in Council and Committee meetings in-person unless a motion allowing a member to participate remotely is adopted at the Council or Committee meeting by the majority of members present, including the member seeking permission to participate remotely.

   C. To allow for delegations to participate in Council and committee meetings either in-person or remotely.

   D. To authorize the Mayor or a majority of Council members to call additional meetings of Executive Policy Committee, Standing Policy Committees and Community Committees not listed in the Council adopted annual schedule of meetings.

   E. To delegate the authority over scheduling of meetings of committees other than Council, Executive Policy Committee, Standing Policy Committee and Community Committees, to the City Clerk.

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COUNCIL DECISION (continued):

3. That, subject to Council's concurrence with Recommendation 2, the Meetings of Council by Communication Device By-law No. 41/2020 be repealed.

4. That the current temporary Audio/Visual Technician position which was previously approved to address the increased demands required for the facilitation of remote participation by Citizens and members of Council, as well as other audio/visual needs required to facilitate press conferences and events involving members of Council, be approved as a permanent position within the City Clerk's Department.

5. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

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DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

Moved by Councillor Chambers,

That the recommendation of the Governance Committee of Council be adopted by consent.

Carried

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On July 13, 2022, the Executive Policy Committee concurred in the recommendation of the Governance Committee of Council and submitted the matter to Council.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On July 6, 2022, the Governance Committee of Council concurred in the recommendation of the Winnipeg Public Service and submitted the matter to the Executive Policy Committee and Council.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Title: 2023 Schedule of Meetings and Update on Remote Participation in Council and Committee Meetings

Critical Path: Governance Committee of Council – Executive Policy Committee – Council

AUTHORIZATION

Author	Department Head	CFO	CAO
A. Poitras	M. Lemoine	N/A	N/A

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Prior to January 1st of each calendar year, Council is required to adopt an annual schedule of meetings. This schedule is typically brought forward for consideration in October. As 2022 is an election year and in keeping with past practice, the schedule is being submitted earlier to ensure a smooth transition.

The schedule of meetings attached to this report proposes that most meetings continue to be facilitated in the Council Chamber due to the uncertain nature of the on-going COVID-19 pandemic and the flexibility in which that meeting space provides. The exception to this is for smaller committees including Community Committees, which often require less space and can be accommodated in the smaller West Committee Room. The schedule proposes having two Community Committee meetings per month in the West Committee room on a rotational basis.

Over the past two years the authority to call special meetings of the Executive Policy Committee, Standing Policy Committees and Community Committees has been delegated to the Mayor or a majority of Council members, similar to the provision in the City of Winnipeg Charter with respect to special Council meetings. Authority over scheduling the dates, times and locations of special meetings of other committees was delegated to the City Clerk to ensure such meetings can be physically accommodated and resource supported. This approach has been successful and is being recommended to continue on a permanent basis.

On April 20, 2020, City Council enacted the Meetings of Council by Communication Devices By-law No. 41/202. This by-law was enacted in response to the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic and allowed for members of Council to participate in meetings remotely when necessary. At the time of enactment, the ability to attend meetings remotely was also offered to members of the public which allowed them to appear in delegation when City Hall was closed. Although City Hall has since reopened, remote participation continues to be offered as it provides greater access and flexibility to the public. Support from the public regarding service this has been overwhelmingly positive.

Although the Province of Manitoba has lifted all previous health orders related to mask and vaccination requirements as well as social distancing recommendations imposed as a result of the pandemic, it is beneficial to have measures in place to ensure that members of Council can also continue to participate in meetings remotely if needed. As such, this report recommends to formalize a process by by-law, which would allow members of Council to participate in meetings remotely when required.

The ability to participate in Council and committee meetings remotely has led to an increased demand and reliance on the departments Audio/Visual Technicians. These staff members operate cameras, microphones, configure YouTube and Zoom settings before and after meetings and troubleshoot when required. After meetings they are required to edit and upload videos to DMIS and YouTube as well maintain and upgrade existing equipment. They are also required to attend media briefings, press conferences, and set up and run other events initiated by members of Council which often coincide with committee meetings. Due to the increased demand in this regard, Council approved a temporary Audio/Visual Technician in September 2020 to continue until December 31, 2022. It is being recommended that this position be made permanent in order to continue to offer remote participation to both citizens and elected officials after that date.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the schedule of meetings, attached as Appendix A, for the period of January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023, be approved and that Council prorogue for the period of July 24, 2023 through August 31, 2023.

2. That the Procedure By-law No. 50/2007 (draft by-law attached as Appendix B) be amended as follows:

    A. With minor changes, to incorporate the substance of the provisions contained in the Meetings of Council by Communication Devices By-law No. 41/2020 on a permanent basis.

    B. To require members of Council to participate in Council and Committee meetings in-person unless a motion allowing a member to participate remotely is adopted at the Council or Committee meeting by the majority of members present, including the member seeking permission to participate remotely.

    C. To allow for delegations to participate in Council and committee meetings either in-person or remotely.

    D. To authorize the Mayor or a majority of Council members to call additional meetings of Executive Policy Committee, Standing Policy Committees and Community Committees not listed in the Council adopted annual schedule of meetings.

    E. To delegate the authority over scheduling of meetings of committees other than Council, Executive Policy Committee, Standing Policy Committee and Community Committees, to the City Clerk.

3. That, subject to Council's concurrence with Recommendation 2, the Meetings of Council by Communication Device By-law No. 41/2020 be repealed.

4. That the current temporary Audio/Visual Technician position which was previously approved to address the increased demands required for the facilitation of remote participation by Citizens and members of Council, as well as other audio/visual needs required to facilitate press conferences and events involving members of Council, be approved as a permanent position within the City Clerk's Department.

5. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

REASON FOR THE REPORT

Council is required to adopt the annual schedule of meetings, to repeal and amend by-laws and approve an increase of 1 permanent FTE (currently a temporary FTE) to the operating budget.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

If adopted, By-law No. 41/2020 will be repealed, By-law No. 50/2007 will be amended, the 2023 annual schedule of Council and Committee meetings will be approved and the previously approved temporary Audio/Visual Technician position within the City Clerk's Department will become permanent.

HISTORY/DISCUSSION

Annual Schedule of Meetings

In accordance with the Procedure By-law No. 50/2007, Council is required to adopt an annual schedule of meetings each year prior to January 1st. With this year being a general election year and in accordance with past practice, this report is being submitted earlier than it typically would in a non-election year to ensure a smooth transition to a new Council. Council may at any point revisit and revise the adopted schedule.

Prior to 2020 and the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the majority of Council and Council committee meetings were facilitated in the North and West Committee rooms. The pandemic caused all meetings to move into the larger Council Chamber in order to accommodate committee members, the Public Service and the public in a more spacious environment consistent with social distancing requirements and recommendations.

The proposed schedule of meetings takes a cautious approach and continues to recommend that most committees continue to meet in the Council Chamber. It is also being recommended that Community Committees meet in the West Committee Room on a rotational basis. The recent removal of health orders related to mask and vaccination requirements as well as social distancing recommendations allow for this room to be a viable option for some meetings.

Community Committees were chosen for this as they have fewer members and typically have fewer in-person delegations than other committees. The Riel Community Committee is required to offer simultaneous French translation which can only be accommodated in the Council Chamber, therefore it will continue to meet in that space for all meetings.

Having two meetings of Community Committee on the same day has also allowed for more flexibility in the schedule. To that end, the new schedule addresses a problem that had existed where Standing Policy Committee meetings could not be scheduled four business days prior to Executive Policy Committee. This often resulted in items from Standing Policy Committees having to wait until the next month or Executive Policy Committee having to suspend the rules to allow time sensitive items to be considered with less than four business days' notice. The new schedule addresses this in most months of the schedule for 2023, allowing greater openness and transparency for both citizens and decision makers and greater adherence to the By-law.

Finding available meeting space to accommodate all meeting requests during the pandemic has been difficult. Adding two meetings per month to the West Committee Room creates additional free calendar days for other committees including the Human Rights Committee, Winnipeg Food Council, Housing Steering Committee, etc., to schedule meetings on a more consistent basis.

Technical upgrades to the North and West Committee Room are now complete and these rooms offer the same remote meeting options as the Council Chamber. These meeting rooms will continue to be available for special meetings as required, however, the North Committee Room will be used to facilitate Board of Revision assessment appeals through the second quarter of 2023.

Procedure By-law No. 50/2007 Amendments

The City of Winnipeg Charter requires that in order for members of Council to participate in meetings remotely, Council must adopt by-law authorizing this. At the onset of the pandemic in 2020, Council adopted the Meetings of Council by Communication Devices By-law No. 41/2020 to allow for remote participation in meetings of Council and its committees. Initially, participating in meetings remotely was seen as a temporary measure which could be appropriately governed by a stand-alone by-law that could be easily repealed when no longer needed. However, as remote participation in meetings of Council and Council committees is proposed to be allowed indefinitely, this report proposes that these provisions should be included as part of the omnibus Procedure By-law No. 50/2007. As such, it is recommended that, with only minor changes, the substance of the provisions of the Meetings of Council by Communication Device By-law be incorporated into the Procedure by-law.

It is also being recommended that a rule be established which would require members of Council to participate in meetings of Council and its Committees in-person as a default setting. Acknowledging that there are many reasons as to why a Member may not be able to participate in a meeting in-person, including being ill or being away on City business, it is recommended that members of Council still be able to participate remotely for any reason so long as they receive support by way of motion at the start of each meeting passed by the majority of members present at that Council or Committee meeting, including the member seeking to participate remotely. If a member of Council is participating remotely, a motion would need to be moved and approved by the majority of Council or the Committee who are present, including the member seeking to participate remotely, prior to any further participation by the member remotely. If the motion is lost, the member would have the option of participating in-person.

Additionally, it is being recommended that Council formalize the ability for the public to appear in delegation remotely. Over the past two years members of the public have been able to appear in delegation at meetings of Council and Council committees remotely; however, there is no formal provision for this in the Procedure By-law. Adding provisions to the By-law formalizes this process which has been overwhelmingly well received by the public as it provides more flexibility and access to the meetings by the public.

The final amendment being proposed is to formalize the process for calling additional meetings of the Executive Policy Committee, Standing Policy Committees and Community Committees. This authority was delegated to the Mayor or the majority of Council members and was established by Council in April 2020 and further extended until December 31, 2022. Authority was also granted to the City Clerk to schedule the date, time and location of all other committee meetings and is being proposed as well. Adding these provisions to the Procedure By-law will ensure this process aligns with Section 79 of the City of Winnipeg Charter with respect to Council meetings.

Audio/Visual Requirements

Providing the ability for members of Council and delegations to participate remotely requires more staff to facilitate meetings than it did in the past. Prior to remote participation, a typical meeting in a committee room required one clerk. For most remote meetings in the Council Chamber up to four staff are required. Specifically, each meeting requires a clerk, Zoom operator, microphone operator and a camera operator.

In addition, Audio/Visual technicians edit and post all meetings to the Decision-Making Information System (DMIS) and YouTube and are responsible for maintaining and upgrading all of the audio/visual equipment in all 6 public meeting rooms used by Council and the City Clerk's Department. Audio/Visual Technicians also attend media briefings, press conferences and set up other events initiated by members of Council which often coincide with committee meetings.

In September 2020 Council approved an additional Audio/Visual Technician on a temporary basis and further approved funding for this position through 2022. Funding for this additional position expires on December 31, 2022. In order to continue to provide remote access to Council and Committees for citizens and elected officials and provide a continued level of service to Council, it is recommended that this position be made permanent. Provision of remote meetings will not be able to be extended beyond December 31, 2022 without this position.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Financial Impact Statement

Date: June 1, 2022

Project Name:

First Year of Program **2023**

2023 Schedule of Meetings and Update on Remote Participation in Council and Committee Meetings

	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Capital					
Capital Expenditures Required	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Less: Existing Budgeted Costs	-	-	-	-	-
Additional Capital Budget Required	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Funding Sources:					
Debt - Internal	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Debt - External	-	-	-	-	-
Grants (Enter Description Here)	-	-	-	-	-
Reserves, Equity, Surplus	-	-	-	-	-
Other - Enter Description Here	-	-	-	-	-
Total Funding	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Total Additional Capital Budget Required	$ -				
Total Additional Debt Required	$ -				
Current Expenditures/Revenues					
Direct Costs	$ 66,224	$ 67,630	$ 68,605	$ 69,977	$ 71,377
Less: Incremental Revenue/Recovery	-	-	-	-	-
Net Cost/(Benefit)	$ 66,224	$ 67,630	$ 68,605	$ 69,977	$ 71,377
Less: Existing Budget Amounts	-	-	-	-	-
Net Budget Adjustment Required	$ 66,224	$ 67,630	$ 68,605	$ 69,977	$ 71,377

Additional Comments:

Direct costs above represent the estimated salary and benefits for an Audio/Visual Technician position to be added permanently to the City Clerk's Department operating budget.

The recommendation to make this position permanent in combination with the approval of this Administrative Report will ensure that increased demands required for the facilitation of remote participation by Citizens and Members of Council, as well as other audio/visual needs to facilitate press conferences and events involving Members of Council continue to be met.

Jocelyn Peters - June 1, 2022

Jocelyn Peters, CPA, CGA
Manager of Finance & Administration (Campus)
Corporate Finance Department

CONSULTATION

Legal Services (as to legal issues)

OURWINNIPEG POLICY ALIGNMENT

The recommendations contained in this report align with OurWinnipeg goals 1.10 and 1.11 Representative and Participatory Democracy

WINNIPEG CLIMATE ACTION PLAN ALIGNMENT

N/A

WINNIPEG POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY ALIGNMENT

N/A

SUBMITTED BY

Department: City Clerk's
Division: Central
Prepared by: A. Poitras
Date: June20, 2022
File No:

Attachments:

Attachment A – 2023 Annual Schedule of Meetings

Attachment B – Draft By-law