



Legislation Text

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TAMRMS#: B06

Resumption of In-Person Council Meetings

Presented by: Percy Janke, Director of Emergency Management, EOC

RECOMMENDED MOTIONS

1. That meetings of Council and the Standing Committees resume in Council Chambers and the Douglas Cardinal Boardroom ("DCB") respectively effective August 17, 2020, with the option for Council members, Administrative staff and the public to continue attending these meetings by electronic means;
2. That Council approves implementation of the Controls and Procedures associated with resumption of Council and Committee meetings in the Chamber and the DCB, as set out in the report dated August 4, 2020 entitled "Resumption of In-Person Council Meetings"

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is:

- (a) to recommend that Council and the Standing Committees resume holding their meetings in the Council Chamber and the Douglas Cardinal Boardroom effective August 17, 2020 with the option for any attendee to participate in the meeting by electronic means, and
- (b) to further recommend that Council approve a suite of measures to reduce the risk of spreading the COVID-19 virus among those who participate in-person in these meetings.

ALIGNMENT TO PRIORITIES IN COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PLAN

N/A

ALIGNMENT TO LEVELS OF SERVICE DELIVERY

N/A

ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL DIRECTION OR MANDATORY STATUTORY PROVISION

N/A

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

In-person Council and Committee meetings while the COVID-19 pandemic continues carry health risks for all attendees that must be controlled to ensure that meeting spaces are reasonably safe for those in attendance. There is a risk of virus transmission whenever people come into contact with one another, share close physical space, and touch common surfaces. The standard of 2 m distancing that we have all been accustomed to hearing about over the past few months, should be considered a minimum standard for Council and Committee meetings since the risk of airborne transmission of COVID-19 increases when people are in the same room not for mere minutes but potentially for hours.

Hazard Summary

- Community transmission of COVID-19:
 - Exposure to other attendees who may be COVID-19 positive including those who may not have been tested or confirmed to have the virus
 - COVID-19 contamination of touchpoints
 - Inadequate knowledge by meeting attendees of safety procedures

Recommended Controls

- Staff and Council members planning to attend a meeting in person must complete a prescreening questionnaire before entering the meeting room
- Signage will be posted to instruct members of the public not to enter the meeting room if they are ill
- Maintain physical distancing:
 - Council seats distanced as much as possible
 - physical guards in place between individual Council members (NOTE: this may not always be practical in the DCB with its movable seating)
 - Staff seating reduced and distanced
 - Available seats in the public gallery of the Council Chamber, and in the public area of the DCB, reduced in order to promote distancing
- Foot operated hand sanitizer units placed at entrances.
- Use of signage to inform public of safety controls -- I.e. distancing, hand sanitizing, masks, cough etiquette

- Face coverings required in areas where the public is seated
- Face coverings required for Council members and Administration in their seating areas only if adequate physical distancing cannot be maintained (in most cases distancing should be achievable)
- Full janitorial service before and after meetings
- Physical guard installed at public podium to protect staff below from sneezing or spittle; cleaning product kept at the podium for wiping down the area after addressing Council.

Recommended Procedures

- Council and Administration would be required to wear face coverings while getting to their respective stations; once seated, face coverings could be removed.
- Administration would be limited to 6 spaces in the Council Chamber and 3 spaces in the DCB (CAO and/or DCAO to determine which Admin staff to allow to attend at any given meeting or for any given item on an Agenda)
- Staff members scheduled to present on an item but not given permission to attend the whole meeting, must wait in the hall (or in the Council Boardroom if not more than two persons are in that space at any one time)
- The public gallery in the Council Chamber and the public seating area in the DCB will be open to the public and the press; all persons seated in the public areas must at all times wear face coverings. In addition to mandatory face coverings, physical distancing in the public areas will be achieved by placing tape or signage on seats that are not allowed to be used. If surplus seating is required, it will be set up in the 2d floor hallway with sightlines to the television to the extent possible. Residents would be invited, and strongly encouraged, to make their presentations electronically from a remote location.
- Council Lounge will be not be used for informal socializing prior to meetings, for meals (which will no longer be served) or for *in camera* meetings. If the need arises to go *in camera* in the course of a meeting, the Chair will ask that the public and media leave the gallery and that all members of Administration not required *in camera* will leave the Council Chamber -- and the *in camera* meeting will proceed with Council still in their open meeting seats. A staff member will inform anyone waiting outside (or in the DCB), when the *in camera* meeting is over and they may come back into the public gallery or public seating area of the DCB as the case may be (this is also in compliance with the MGA stipulations for *in camera* meetings)
- Access will still be available for staff and Council members to the kitchen area and the washroom in the Council Boardroom however tables and chairs will not be accessible other

than 4 chairs for members of Administration waiting to present to Council.

STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATIONS OR ENGAGEMENT

Administration has requested information from other municipalities in the region regarding their current Council practices. Any details collected will be provided in the presentation to Council.

IMPLICATIONS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

Financial:

Modifications to the Council Chamber space were implemented with safety controls and information technology improvements.

Legal / Risk:

There should be little risk of liability to the City if Council and Committee meetings return to the Council Chamber and DCB subject to the protocols and procedures set out in this report.

Program or Service:

N/A

Organizational:

There could be risk to business continuity, should an outbreak of COVID-19 impact a meeting where all members of Council are physically in attendance and hence exposed.

ALTERNATIVES AND IMPLICATIONS CONSIDERED

Alternative 1. Council could continue all meetings virtually until further notice - this would be the most effective way to minimize the risk of spreading the COVID-19 virus

Alternative 2. Council meetings are conducted in-person in Chambers (with all attendees having the option to participate virtually) while Standing Committee meetings remain virtual only until further notice.

Report Date: August 4, 2020

Author: Percy Janke

Committee/Department: EOC

Deputy Chief Administrative Officer: Kerry Hilts

Chief Administrative Officer: Kevin Scoble