

Council Meeting Best Practices - Continued**Report Purpose**

To provide recommendations to Council on improving Council meeting processes.

Recommendation

THAT Administration prepare by the first quarter of 2019, a bylaw for the establishment of a revised and update Mayor's Executive Committee, including the improvements noted in the December 11, 2018 Legislative and Legal Services report.

THAT Administration, in consultation with the Governance Advisory Committee, undertake a comprehensive review and update of the Meeting Procedures Bylaw; and that a new proposed Meeting Procedures Bylaw be presented to Council for consideration by the first quarter of 2020.

Our Prioritized Strategic Goals

Continuously improving the way we work, as one organization, in an agile and sustainable manner

Report

In May of 2017, Council had directed Administration to prepare a report on council meeting best practices. That report was presented to Council on September 5, 2017 (see Enclosure 1). As part of this report, Administration highlighted some possible areas for amendments to the Meeting Procedures Bylaw. Having considered the report, Council directed administration to prepare possible Meeting Procedures Bylaw amendments to address the following:

- Increasing the use of the consent agenda;
- Including mandatory adjournment times for Council meetings; and
- Considering the feasibility of holding public hearings once per month.

In addition to these changes, Council also directed administration to review the terms of reference for the Mayor's Executive Committee.

Consent Agenda:

While the consent agenda is already used by Council to approve annual items or items that are non-contentious, it would be possible to modify the consent agenda process in order to ensure greater efficiency and better use of resources. For example, the Mayor's Executive Committee could be utilized to identify all reports that could be included on the consent agenda. These reports would be identified on the agenda and dealt with at the beginning of the open session. Any report pulled from the consent agenda would be addressed as the next order of business following the approval of consent items. The rationale for this change is that often when items are pulled from the consent agenda it is to enable a member of Council to seek clarification on one or two points or to make a brief comment on the report. Typically, the items that are pulled from the consent agenda are not time consuming and thus addressing them early in the meeting would mean that fewer staff members are required to stay for the entire duration of a council meeting, which in many instances may be several hours. Finally, such a change would be a benefit to Council since it would allow Council to address routine or less complicated items quickly and efficiently. On a final note, this change would not infringe on any councillor rights since the ability to add or remove an item from the consent agenda would be retained. Making this change would require

amendments to the current Meeting Procedures Bylaw, changes to the Mayor's Executive Committee Terms of Reference, and some minor administrative process adjustments.

Mandatory Adjournment Times:

Several municipalities have provisions in their respective meeting procedures bylaws that mandate their regular council meeting start and adjournment times. For example, the City of Calgary's procedures bylaw prescribes standard recess times and fixed adjournment times. Likewise, the City of Edmonton's procedures bylaw requires that regular council meetings end by 5:30 p.m. unless a 2/3 vote of council agrees to extend the time. The advantages of mandatory adjournment times include certainty for elected officials and staff in terms of time commitment, alleviation of fatigue associated with long meetings, and general emphasis placed on efficient time allocation. Should Council wish to include mandatory adjournment times, changes would be required to the current Meeting Procedures Bylaw as well as clearer direction in the Mayor's Executive Committee Terms of Reference to ensure that agendas are reviewed from the perspective of time allocation. Finally, a process for addressing any unfinished items would need to be addressed. Alberta's *Employment Standards Code*, RSA 2000, c E-9 requires that work be confined to 12 consecutive hours in a day (there are some exemptions provided for emergency situations and provisions that allow for compressed work weeks under strict guidelines).

Public Hearings:

Administration considered the feasibility of holding public hearings once per month as separate from Council meetings. While such a change may shorten the length of regular Council meetings, upon consultation with Planning and Development Services such a change would not be recommended. The current flexibility to hold public hearings in conjunction with regular Council meetings provides more opportunities to address land use planning changes and amendments in a more agile way. Another option could be to consider a separate day for public hearings. For example, public hearings could be held on Mondays or Wednesdays. These meetings would then be cancelled if no public hearings were required. This type of process change has the advantage of shortening Council meetings but has the disadvantage of requiring more time holds in elected officials' calendars.

Mayor's Executive Committee:

The current Mayor's Executive Committee is established by Bylaw 46-2015, Boards and Committees bylaw. The Committee's Terms of Reference (TOR) are provided in a schedule that is a part of the bylaw. The current TOR are out of date and broad. The role of the Committee in managing Council agendas is not as clearly set out as it could be. With this in mind and with the proposed changes noted above, Administration would recommend the following changes to the Mayor's Executive Committee:

1. Create a stand-alone bylaw to establish the Mayor's Executive Committee or include it in Meeting Procedures;
2. Update the duties of the Committee to ensure clarity in terms of its role in managing the agendas for Council and Priorities Committee meetings (this includes adding clarity in terms of the Committee's ability to identify items for the consent agenda and to manage the allotment of time);
3. Delegate the authority to amend the date, time, or place of a regular Council meeting or Priorities Committee meeting to the Mayor's Executive Committee (currently this type of change must be done by Council motion); and
4. Ensure the new bylaw provisions are in plain language (this includes the concept of reader-friendly formatting).

Council and Committee History

June 19, 2018	THAT the follow up report to Council Meeting Best Practices be brought back to Council on the revised date of November 27, 2018.
September 5, 2017	THAT Administration prepare for Council's consideration, by the end of the second quarter of 2018, amendments to Bylaw 20-2015 as described in numbers 2; 4, to review the Terms of Reference for Mayor's Executive; and 5 of the chart entitled "Possible Meeting Procedures Bylaw Amendments", in the September 5, 2017 Legislative and Legal Services report.
May 9, 2017	THAT Administration prepare a report by September 12, 2017, that outlines the trends and best practices in terms of municipal council meeting practices and duration in Alberta; includes information on studies done with respect to conditions for effective decision-making; and provides recommendations for Council's consideration on enhancing Council meeting effectiveness.

Other Impacts**Policy:** n/a**Legislative/Legal:** Section 145(b) of the Municipal Government Act provides that a council may pass bylaws in relation to the procedure and conduct of council, council committees, and other bodies established by the council, the conduct of councillors and the conduct of members of council committees and other bodies established by council.**Interdepartmental:** LLS worked with the Chief Commissioner's Office.**Master Plan/Framework:** n/a**Enclosures**

1	September 5, 2017 Council Meeting Best Practice Report
2	Council Meeting Best Practice (continued) – Presentation