



STAFF REPORT

SUBMITTED BY: Chris Frotten

DATE: February 14, 2022

SUBJECT: Expanded Service Hours and Compressed Work Week Policy

ORIGIN

Compressed (4-day) work weeks are becoming more and more common, in part as a result of changing work arrangements during the worst of COVID-19. Employees and employers are seeing workplace arrangements and work/life balance differently, and some employees are making career choices based as much on the work arrangements as the job and location. In light of many municipalities transitioning to compressed work weeks and to ensure the Municipality stays relevant, this report outlines how such a policy could be implemented in our Municipality and seeks direction from Council on whether to pursue it.

BACKGROUND

A four-day workweek, or a compressed work schedule, is an arrangement where a workplace has its employees work over the course of four days in the week rather than the more customary five. This arrangement can be a part of flexible working hours, and is sometimes used to cut costs, as seen in the example of the so-called "4/10 work week," where employees work a normal 40 hours across four days, i.e. a "four-ten" week. However, a four-day week can also be a fixed work schedule.

The push towards implementing the four-day week has remained loosely relevant within the contemporary workplace due to the various possible benefits it may yield. Although mostly untested, these benefits mainly lie within increased cost-cutting, productivity, and work-life balance. The theory behind this is that by having employees work one less day a week, then they will have additional time to pursue hobbies, spend time with family, get more sleep and increase overall morale. There are several ways the four-day week can take shape. Taking Fridays off, half days, and different days off for different employees are all options that are considered when starting a four-day week. Consequently, the theory is that employees will be more productive and refreshed for working, which will make up for the lost day where they would otherwise be overworked and/or overtired.

Back in 2020, made its rounds in the local and national media for starting a four-day work week nine-month pilot program. (<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/municipality-guysborough-4-day->

[work-week-1.5609703](#)). 60 municipal employees were given the opportunity to take either Monday or Friday off every week. After the nine-month pilot project ended in April 2021, Council approved a policy to keep the four-day work week in place. It is set to be revisited in another year, but officials say it's likely to eventually become permanent (<https://www.1015thehawk.com/2021/04/22/four-day-work-week-remains-in-guysborough/>).

DISCUSSION

As with any fundamental change to modus operandi, it is important to consider all factors and ensure proper communication all along the way. There are several elements that should be considered when an organization is determining whether it is able to move forward with a four-day work week.

Staff Levels

The implementation of a four-day work week should not decrease the level of service to our residents and should only be considered if our facilities remain open for at least their existing "normal" hours of operation. It is essential to have enough staff at the various positions for it to work.

Staff Buy-In

A four-day work week will be successful only if every staff member participates. It will be important to include all of staff in the consideration of a four-day work week to ensure all are interested in moving forward. We further have met with individual teams (e.g., front counter staff) to talk about issues and how to address them. One or two staff members who are not willing to cooperate or make sacrifices can cause it all to fail.

Council/Board Buy-In

Those who make the decisions and evaluations also need to have bought-in to the idea to ensure it has a chance to succeed. For instance, our Council normally meets on Mondays. To make it fair for those staff who need to attend meetings but will be off work on Monday, consideration may have to be given to switching to another day.

Contingency Planning

You need to plan for the worst-case scenarios. This includes vacations, sick time, lunches, and holidays. Staff levels will be reduced for two days each week and you need to know how to deal with those situations. Communication amongst staff is crucial in making sure everyone is aware of how those scenarios will be addressed and it is essential that all are willing to assist (i.e., scheduling in advance to cover shifts, covering different departments)

In our case, a four-day work week could work similarly as it does in the Municipality of Digby and Guysborough. Staff could be separated into two teams and the teams could be separated in a way that

ensures each team has an adequate number of frontline, management, development, recreation and property services staff. Team A could work Monday to Thursday. Team B could work Tuesday to Friday. That schedule could then rotate every three or four months so that each team has its fair share of Mondays or Fridays off. Each staff member would work four days a week for a nine-hour, 15-minute day with a 30-minute unpaid lunch. The total hours for each staff member per week would remain at 35 hours. Salaries would remain the same because the hours of work will not change.

The public, in turn, would receive the benefit of expanded service hours each day which would be one of the most significant benefits of transitioning to a four-day work week. For example, the Administrative Centre could be open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. from Monday to Friday. This would be an increase from the current office hours which are 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. noon and 1:00 to 4:30 p.m.

The other two benefits would be the likely improvement of staff morale and the creation of an incredible employee recruitment and retention tool. First, in Yarmouth, Digby and Guysborough, this as an optional work schedule for their employees and all units have experienced 100% adoption by their workforce and report a high level of satisfaction and improvements in staff morale. We would likely make it optional as well and are hope is that all staff members, that can, would participate. Second, employee recruitment and retention has been raised in our strategic planning discussions and this would be a great tool to help with it. Our rural Municipality is located on the far geographic end of our province. When specific technical positions become available, it can take months, and sometimes longer, to fill vacancies. A four-day work week is seen as a desirable arrangement by employees and future prospective employees because it puts work/life balance in a favourable place. Being a leader in implementing this sort of policy may allow us to retain talent longer, and fill vacancies more quickly when they occur.

The biggest drawback would be that the four-day work week may not be possible for some employees due to their facility's staff complement or their duties. This is not an unsurmountable hurdle as it can be solved with open lines of communication and being open to certain customizations. Another challenge faced by some of the units that have implemented

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct budget implications. Employee hours would remain the same, but it is possible that we might experience less absenteeism as we improve the work/life balance. It is also possible that we experience higher success in attraction and retention of employees, thereby reducing transitional costs.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

N/A

PUBLIC CONSULTATION/COMMUNICATIONS

In the event our hours of operation would change, we would communicate that to the public through our normal means; social media, website, radio, word of mouth and in-office signage. Otherwise, there should

be no change to the level of service to our residents therefore no other communication would be necessary.

RECOMMENDATION

In summary, a four-day work week would be an attractive talent attraction and retention tool, a progressive work/life balance policy and an opportunity to expand business hours of some of our facilities.

A four-day work week is not a reduction in work hours for employee nor would it decrease the level of service to the public.

For these reasons, it is recommended that staff be directed to draft a policy to permit expanded service hours and a compressed work week as an option for municipal employees.

SUGGESTED MOTION

Move to recommend to Council that staff be directed to draft a policy to permit expanded service hours and a compressed work week as an option for municipal employees.

ALTERNATIVES

- Pilot a compressed work week for a period of 6-9 months before implementing it permanently.
- Postpone a decision until a later date of until more information can be gathered and considered.
- Not pursue this at all.

ATTACHMENTS

- Town of Yarmouth – Compressed 4-Day Work Week Policy
- Municipality of Digby – Expanded Service Hours and Four-Day Work Week Policy
- Municipality of Shelburne – Four-Day Work Week Arrangement
- Municipality of Guysborough Expanded Service Hours / 4-Day Compressed Work Week webpage: <https://modg.ca/residents/news/4dayworkweeksurvey>

Town of Yarmouth
COMPRESSED 4-DAY WORK WEEK POLICY

Effective: August 19th, 2021
TOY 61



1.0 Purpose

To outline the terms and conditions of the for the implementation of a compressed 4-day work week arrangement.

2.0 Objectives

The Town of Yarmouth values a highly dedicated and skilled workforce. Many public sector workplaces offer a compressed 4-day work week alternative to their employees in order to improve the attractiveness of the employer, maintain high levels of employee satisfaction and commitment, provide greater work-life balance and maintain a productive workplace. A compressed 4-day work week compresses the hours of work into 4 days, providing the potential for expanded hours of operation and overall increase in hours of service to the public.

3.0 Workplaces

The Town of Yarmouth has several operational divisions and workplaces. This policy applies to all non-unionized employees of the Town of Yarmouth. Directors considering implementing a compressed 4-day schedule may do so subject to the eligibility and operational requirements of this Policy, and approval of the CAO.

Alternative forms of compressed work week schedules may be considered for Town of Yarmouth workplaces where a compressed 4-day work week schedule is not practical to implement.

3.1 Operational requirements of each department must be met. Where an employee is working a compressed 4-day work week, their workplace shall be open to the public for all scheduled work hours.

3.2 Service to the customer must be maintained or improved. Some services are provided by a single individual. Under a compressed 4-day work week those services must still be available the same number of hours/week. However, those hours will be compressed into 4 days.

3.3 Costs to the Town of Yarmouth will not be increased.

4.0 Shifts

In a workplace implementing a compressed 4-day work week, participating employees will work under a two-shift system with employees divided into "Team A" and "Team B".

- 4.1 Commencing September XX, 2021, “Team A” employees will work Monday to Thursday and “Team B” employees will work Tuesday to Friday.
- 4.2 Employees joining on any other date will be assigned to a team by their director, and subject to standard shift change dates.
- 4.3 Shift Change Dates: Shifts will be reversed on a regular schedule to be determined by the CAO.

5.0 Eligibility

Candidates with one or more of the following characteristics may be considered for compressed work week arrangement:

- a. Full-time, non-unionized employees;
- b. Passed the probationary period as specified in the employment agreement;
- c. Good past performance appraisals demonstrating the ability to meet job expectations;
- d. Able to work independently without constant supervision from his/her supervisor;
- e. Strong self-discipline and good time management skills.

6.0 Application and Approval

Employees can apply for the arrangement using the Compressed 4-day Work Week Arrangement Proposal Form (refer to Appendix 1).

- 6.1 The application of the compressed 4-day work week arrangement must be submitted to their director for consideration.
- 6.2 Directors will review applications and consider the operational impacts of approving a 4-day schedule.
- 6.3 The approval of the compressed 4-day work week application is through the director, in consultation with the CAO.
- 6.4 Directors are encouraged to approve employees' requests for compressed workweek whenever it is possible to do so without compromising the organization's service levels.
- 6.5 If compressed work week application is approved, the employee and the employer shall determine the start date and the director shall assign the employee to the most appropriate team.
- 6.6 Some services may not be available during extended hours, (before 8:30 and after 4:30), if the individuals providing those services are not participating in the compressed work week.

7.0 General Considerations

Compressed 4-day work week schedules will not diminish the ability of the Town of Yarmouth to assign responsibility and accountability to individual employees for the provision of services and performance of their duties.

- 7.01** No day swapping or shift changes are permitted between the teams.
- 7.02** Employees who are called in to work on their regular day of rest will be entitled to lieu time that can be taken on either a Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday.
- 7.03** Sick leave and vacation will be applied on a per hour basis versus a per day basis. Compressed work week employees' salary, compensation and benefits do not differ from standard full-time employees.
- 7.04** Employees must have their vacation and/or use of overtime or lieu time approved by their director to ensure that shifts are always appropriately covered.
- 7.05** Vacation requests submitted by January 31 of each year will be considered by seniority, and subject to operational requirements of each department.
- 7.06** Banking lunch breaks will not be permitted.
- 7.07** Employees will still be entitled to all regular paid holidays. If a holiday falls on a regular day of rest (i.e., Monday) the employee shall take Tuesday off with pay. If a holiday falls on a regular day of rest (i.e., Friday) the employee shall take Thursday off with pay.
- 7.08** For holidays that fall on Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday, the day off shall be that day.
- 7.09** Compressed 4-day work week arrangements shall be initiated on a trial basis, and may be discontinued at any time at the request of either the employee or supervisor/department head. Units and department reserve the right to immediately suspend the arrangement in case of unanticipated circumstances regarding employee performance or operational needs.
- 7.10** Agreements shall be time-specific with a date for review and reconsideration. Modifications and/or renewals also shall be documented appropriately. The original shall be maintained in the employee's personnel file with copies to the employee and supervisor/department head.
- 7.11** The employee shall work the hours agreed upon and obtain approval from the supervisor/department head in advance of working any overtime.
- 7.12** The supervisor/department head shall maintain open communication, ensure that the employee's hours of work do not fall below the normal work week hours and discuss with the employee any concerns as they arise.
- 7.13** A compressed 4-day work week arrangement does not change the employment contract.

Clerk's Annotation for Official Policy Book

Date of Adoption: August 19th, 2021

I certify that this 'Compressed Work Week Policy' was adopted by Council as indicated above.

Town Clerk:

Date:

APPENDIX A – COMPRESSED WORK WEEK ARRANGEMENT PROPOSAL FORM

This form is used for the purposes of requesting, reviewing, and modifying compressed work week work arrangement.

To be filled out by the employee:

Employee Name : _____

Job Title: : _____

Employee Email : _____

Department : _____

Supervisor Name : _____

Supervisor Email : _____

Proposed Start Date : _____

I understand that the approval of a compressed work week arrangement does not amend my employment contract.

I understand that the compressed work week arrangement is subjected to the discretion of my Director and the CAO and may be suspended and terminated for any reason.

Employee Signature : _____

Director Signature : _____

Date : _____

<p>To be filled out by the supervisor:</p> <p>Compressed work week arrangement is <input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected</p> <p>If approved, the employee will be able to start : _____</p> <p>If rejected, state the reasoning why : _____</p>
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		POLICY # 3.006
EXPANDED SERVICE HOURS AND FOUR-DAY WORK WEEK	EFFECTIVE DATE APRIL 2021	REVISION DATE

Purpose

To outline the terms and conditions of the expanded service hours and four-day work week.

Objectives

The Municipality of the District of Digby desires to provide the best possible service to its residents and aims to create a happy, healthy, and productive workplace. Expanded service hours will benefit residents as it will increase their ability to access the municipal office. The four-day work week will improve the work-life balance and mental health of employees. It is proven to reduce stress, increase happiness, and increase productivity.

Policy

1. The Municipal Office hours of operation will be expanded effective April 5, 2021. The new hours of operation shall be 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday to Friday.
2. This policy applies to all permanent full-time employees with the exception of those who are employed as dispatchers.
3. Employees will work under a two-shift system with employees divided into “Team A” and “Team B”.
4. Commencing April 5, 2021, “Team A” employees will work Monday to Thursday and “Team B” employees will work Tuesday to Friday. These shifts will reverse between the teams approximately every four months. No day swapping or shift changes are permitted.
5. Full time salaried employees who previously worked 35 hours per week from Monday to Friday will now work four 9-hour shifts per week (vs. five 7-hour shifts) with a half hour of paid lunch included.
6. Employees who are called in to work on their regular day of rest will be entitled to lieu time that can be taken on either a Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday.
7. Sick leave and vacation will be applied on a per hour basis versus a per day basis. Entitlements will remain the same.
8. Employees must have their vacation and/or use of overtime or lieu time approved by their supervisor and the leader of their team to ensure that shifts are always appropriately covered.

9. Banking or combining lunch and/or breaks will not be permitted.
10. Employees will still be entitled to all regular paid holidays. If a holiday falls on a regular day of rest (i.e., Monday) the employee shall take Tuesday off with pay. If a holiday falls on a regular day of rest (i.e., Friday) the employee shall take Thursday off with pay.
11. For holidays that fall on Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday, the day off shall be that day.
12. This policy shall be for a nine (9) month pilot program pending a review to be conducted at the eight-month mark to determine whether it should continue on a permanent basis.



IBEW Local 1928 and Municipality of the District of Shelburne

Collective Agreement Addendum

Four Day Work Week:

Pursuant to section 14.1 (a) of the Collective Agreement, the Municipality would like to offer certain employees the option of a four day work week. Office hours open to the public would remain at 9:00 am to 4:30 pm, Monday to Friday.

A four day work week will not be possible for all unionized employees, due to organizational requirements and other considerations as determined at the sole discretion of the Municipality. Each employee who wants to work a four day work week must apply in writing to the CAO who, after considering all relevant information, will accept or reject the request to work a four day work week. The denial of an employee's application to work a four day work week is not subject to the grievance process.

The expectation for employees working a four day work week is that those employees will work 32.5 hours per week over four days, instead of five – Monday through Friday, between the hours of 7:00 am and 5:00 pm. Hours worked outside of this timeframe would constitute overtime as per the collective agreement. More specifically, this means 8.125 hours of actual work per day, or 8 hours and 7 minutes, which includes two 15 minute breaks. Lunch breaks are not included in the calculation of this actual working time.

If an employee who has been approved for a four day work week determines themselves that they are required in the office for all five days of a particular week, that employee should provide advance notice of this requirement to their departmental director no later than a week before the five day work week is required. Where advance notice of the need for a five day work week is provided, the departmental director will arrange for the employee to work a standard five day work week, consisting of five days with 6.5 hours of actual work per day. Lunch breaks are not included in the calculation of this actual working time. Following the completion of this temporary five day work week, the employee will then return to their previously approved four day work week.

If an employee determines themselves that they are required to work a five day work week and advanced notice is not possible, operational requirements may dictate that the employee is required to work full days based on a four day work week; that is, five days of 8.125 hours of actual work. In this scenario, the employee and departmental director shall make reasonable efforts to adjust the employee's schedule the following week, resulting in 65 hours of actual work over a two week period. If this is not possible, any time worked in excess of 65 hours over the two week period will be banked and can be carried forward for future use. For clarification, the fifth day worked during the first week would not constitute overtime but would be recorded as straight banked time for later use.

If the Municipality requires an adjustment to an employee's four day work week schedule, the Municipality will provide the employee with at least fourteen days' notice of the change.

If a scheduling change is required in order to meet operational requirements, for which the Municipality is unable to provide fourteen days' notice (for example: if an employee calls in sick or has some other unplanned absence from work) the departmental director and/or CAO may ask other qualified employees to volunteer to accept the schedule change on short notice.

All portions of the Collective Agreement that refer to "days" will be converted to hours to reflect the change from a five day work week to a four day work week. For example, under a five day work week, five vacation days equals 32.5 hours based on 6.5 hours of actual work per day. Similarly in a four day work week, four vacation days equal 32.5 hours based on 8.125 hours of actual work per day. As another example, a sick day during a five day work week would be recorded as 6.5 hours, however a sick day during a four day work week would be recorded as 8.125 hours.

If an employee's scheduled day off falls on a holiday, the employee will be given time off in lieu (straight banked time) for that holiday and the employee will take the next day off, where practical, as agreed upon by management. For example, if a holiday falls on a scheduled day off, the employee must complete a bi-weekly time sheet, indicating the hours to be banked in the appropriate column. This time sheet must be approved by the departmental director who will then schedule with the employee an alternate day off. The departmental director will take into consideration the preference of the employee where possible, but the departmental director retains ultimate discretion to determine the employee's alternate day off in lieu of the holiday.

If an employee's scheduled day off falls on a snow day, the employee is not entitled to time off in lieu of that snow day, with the exception of public works staff required for snow removal purposes. This is not subject to the grievance process.

Each employee will be required to request their preference for their weekly scheduled day off when applying to work a four day work week. The employee's preference will be taken into consideration, however, scheduling decisions will ultimately depend on the needs of the employee's department, the employee's job duties, and the operational requirements of the Municipality. The departmental director will recommend a scheduled day off for each employee based on the factors outlined above to the CAO for consideration. The departmental director's recommendation is subject to the approval of the CAO.

The Municipality will offer employees consistency in their scheduled day off where possible, however, the Municipality, at its sole discretion, retains authority to determine and schedule each employee's scheduled day off for any given week when that employee has been approved for a four day work week.

Should an employee wish to discontinue or no longer participate in a four day work week, the employee can revert to a five day work week, with approval of their departmental director and the CAO. Should an employee opt out of the four day work week and later want to participate, the employee will be required to reapply to the CAO in accordance with this policy. The decision of the CAO in relation to an employee's application to work a four day work week is not subject to the grievance process.

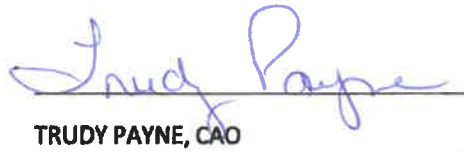
The CAO has the authority to end the four day work week policy with fourteen days' notice. This includes denying an employee's application to work a four day work week; revoking an employee's approval to work a four day work week; requiring the employee to work a five day work week temporarily,

occasionally, or regularly; terminating the policy entirely; or, any other change to the policy made by the CAO. The denial or revocation of an employee's application to work a four day work week is not subject to the grievance process. The elimination of the four day work week policy, or any changes to the policy, are not subject to the grievance process.

SIGNED AT SHELBURNE, NOVA SCOTIA ON July 20, 2021

MUNICIPALITY OF THE DISTRICT OF SHELBURNE

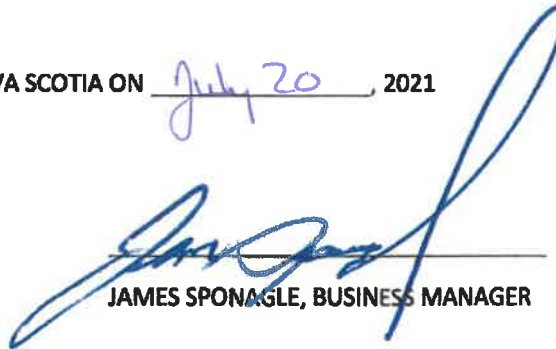

ERIN HARTLEY, MUNICIPAL CLERK


TRUDY PAYNE, CAO

SIGNED AT Shelburne, NOVA SCOTIA ON July 20, 2021

IBEW LOCAL 1928


DAN VINCENT, SHOP STEWARD


JAMES SPONAGLE, BUSINESS MANAGER