



STAFF REPORT

SUBMITTED BY: Chris Frotten

DATE: October 6, 2023

SUBJECT: Agenda Preparation and Publication Standard Operating Procedure

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE: N/A

ORIGIN

This report outlines the proposal to implement a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the preparation and publication of Committee of the Whole (COW) and Regular Council meeting agendas. The objective of this SOP is to put current practices in writing and to expand on certain areas to streamline the agenda creation process and improve overall efficiency in Council operations.

BACKGROUND

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are detailed, written instructions that outline the steps, processes, and protocols required to perform specific tasks or activities within an organization. They serve as a reference guide to ensure consistency, quality, and safety in the execution of routine operations. SOPs are a fundamental component of organizational governance and are widely used across various industries and sectors.

SOPs are clear, concise, and specific in detailing each step of a particular process. They leave little room for interpretation or ambiguity. They are typically organized in a logical, sequential order, providing a step-by-step guide to follow when carrying out a task or activity. SOPs also outline the roles and responsibilities of individuals or teams involved in carrying out the procedure. This helps ensure accountability and clarity about who is responsible for what. Finally, SOPs often include references to relevant laws, regulations, and industry standards that must be adhered to during the execution of the procedure. This helps ensure legal and regulatory compliance.

We currently follow an established practice for the preparation of Committee of the Whole (COW) and Regular Council meeting agendas. This includes, among other things, a requirement to provide supporting documents for agenda items, timeframes for providing this information and a standard format for agendas.

DISCUSSION

The existing practice for agenda preparation and publication have served as a foundation for COW and Regular Council meetings. However, in response to changing needs, to align with best practices and to further enhance the effectiveness of our operations, we believe it is important to establish a clear written procedure. The proposed SOP addresses the following critical components:

- 1. Standardization and Consistency:** The adoption of a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) will establish clear and standardized guidelines and timelines for the preparation of Committee of the Whole (COW) and Regular Council agendas. This will help in presenting information in a clear, organized, and professional manner.
- 2. Improved Efficiency and Time Management:** With defined procedures in place, the agenda preparation process will become more streamlined and efficient. Requests for agenda items will be submitted within a specified timeframe, allowing ample time for review, prioritization, and compilation. This will help avoid last-minute additions and revisions, reducing stress on the Municipal Clerk and ensuring that all items receive the attention they deserve.
- 3. Enhanced Accountability and Responsibility:** The SOP will delineate specific roles and responsibilities for individuals involved in the agenda-setting process. This clarity of roles will promote accountability among Council members, municipal staff, and stakeholders. Each party will understand their respective contributions to the process, reducing the likelihood of miscommunication or duplication of efforts.
- 4. Adaptability to Changing Circumstances:** SOPs can be updated or adapted in response to changing circumstances, such as shifts in local governance practices, legal requirements, or technological advancements. This flexibility allows organizations to remain current and responsive to evolving needs.
- 5. Training and Guidance:** The SOP can serve as a valuable training tool for new elected officials and staff involved in agenda preparation. It offers a clear roadmap of the steps involved and can be used for onboarding and training purposes.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

The implementation of the proposed SOP is not expected to incur any additional costs. Any potential expenses related to future technological upgrades would be considered during budget deliberations.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

When implementing SOPs for agenda preparation and publication, it is crucial to consider various legal implications. These include compliance with local open meeting laws to ensure transparency and public participation, adherence to public records laws for the proper management of agenda-related documents, ensuring accessibility for individuals with disabilities in accordance with applicable regulations, and

establishing basic guidelines for ethical conduct. It is worth noting that our municipal solicitor has thoroughly reviewed this standard operating procedure, and their suggested edits and comments have been thoughtfully incorporated, further ensuring legal compliance and sound practice.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION/COMMUNICATIONS

N/A

RECOMMENDATION

I believe the SOP will contribute to more effective and transparent Council/municipal operations. I therefore recommended to approve the proposed Standard Operating Procedure for the preparation and publication of Committee of the Whole and Regular Council agendas and implement it as of January 1, 2024.

SUGGESTED MOTION

Move to recommend to Council to approve the Standard Operating Procedure for the preparation and publication of Committee of the Whole and Regular Council meeting agendas, as presented, and implement it as of January 1, 2024.

ALTERNATIVES

- Revise Policies 52 and 59 to implement sections relating to the preparation and publication of agendas.

ATTACHMENTS

- Draft Agenda Preparation and Publication Standard Operating Procedure

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

Committee of the Whole and Regular Council Agenda Preparation and Publication

Purpose:

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) outlines the steps and responsibilities for the preparation and publication of the Municipality's Committee of the Whole and Regular Council meeting agendas.

Scope:

This SOP applies to all municipal elected officials and staff involved in the preparation and publication of Committee of the Whole and Regular Council meeting agendas.

Responsibilities:

1. Chief Administrative Officer (CAO):

- Oversees the overall administration and operations of the municipality, including agenda preparation and publication.
- Provides guidance and support to the Municipal Clerk and Directors in agenda-related matters.
- Ensures that agenda items align with the municipality's strategic goals, priorities and policies.
- Ensures compliance with legal requirements.

2. Municipal Clerk:

- Oversees the agenda preparation and publication process.

3. Directors:

- Responsible to submit agenda items and supporting documents within the specified deadlines.

4. Committee and Council Members:

- Responsible to submit agenda items and supporting documents within the specified deadlines.

Procedure:

1. Agenda Request Submission:

1.1. Request Initiation:

- 1.1.1. Elected Officials and Directors submit agenda items and supporting documents to the Municipal Clerk, utilizing pre-established forms and templates. In some cases, requirements outlined in policies 52 and 59 will also be applied.

1.2. Submission Deadline:

1.2.1. Agenda items must be submitted to the Municipal Clerk no later than 6 days before the scheduled meeting date.

1.3. Completeness Check:

1.3.1. Other than for minor corrections, the Municipal Clerk is not responsible for checking the completeness of agenda items. The Elected Official or Director is responsible for ensuring that each submission includes all required documents and information.

2. Compilation and Review:

2.1. Agenda Compilation:

2.1.1. The Municipal Clerk compiles all agenda items, ensuring they are organized in a logical sequence.

2.2. Review by the Chief Administrative Officer:

2.2.1. The Chief Administrative Officer reviews the compiled agenda for completeness, and relevance to municipal strategy and objectives.

3. Legal and Compliance Review:

3.1. Legal Review:

3.1.1. If required, the municipal solicitor reviews agenda topics for legal compliance and adherence to local laws and regulations.

3.2. Compliance Verification:

3.2.1. The Municipal Clerk ensures that all agenda items comply with open meeting and public notice requirements, as set out in the Municipal Government Act.

4. Agenda Formatting and Distribution:

4.1. Agenda Formatting:

4.1.1. The Municipal Clerk formats the agenda, ensuring a consistent and professional appearance.

4.2. Distribution:

4.2.1. The final agenda, along with supporting documents, is distributed to Committee of the Whole and Council members a minimum of 3 days before the meeting.

5. Public Notice and Publication:

5.1. Public Notice:

5.1.1. The Municipal Clerk ensures that the meeting date, time, and location are posted in accordance with the Municipal Government Act.

5.2. Website Publication:

- 5.2.1. The Municipal Clerk will upload the agenda, without supporting documents, to the municipality's website in a prominent and easily accessible location a minimum of 3 days before the meeting.
- 5.2.2. The Municipal Clerk will upload the agenda's supporting documents to the municipality's website in a prominent and easily accessible location no less than 30 minutes before the meeting.

5.3. Additional Notification (if required):

- 5.3.1. The Municipal Clerk will send email notifications or other forms of communication to interested parties, stakeholders, and the public as necessary.

6. Meeting Facilitation:

6.1. Meeting Setup:

- 6.1.1. The Municipal Clerk will ensure that the meeting room is properly set up, technical equipment is functioning, and necessary materials are available.

6.2. Chairperson's Responsibilities:

- 6.2.1. The Chairperson of the Committee of the Whole or Regular Council leads the meeting, following the established agenda.

7. Post-Meeting Actions:

7.1. Minute Preparation:

- 7.1.1. The Municipal Clerk prepares and distributes minutes of the meeting within 10 days.

7.2. Archiving:

- 7.2.1. The Municipal Clerk archives agenda, minutes, and supporting documents for future reference and compliance with record-keeping requirements.