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Staff Report CL2022-034

Title of Report: CL2022-034 – 2023 Council Calendar

Recommendation

Department: Clerks

Branch: Legislative and Council Services

Council Date: December 7, 2022

Recommendation:

Be it resolved that Council receive Staff Report CL2022-034 for information; and
That Council provide direction to staff on 2023 Council meeting times.

Background:

In accordance with the Procedural By-law, every year Council approves a Council Meeting Calendar that sets the date and time for every Council meeting for the upcoming year. Historically, Council has always met on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month, for regular Council meetings.

Prior to 2021, the meeting times were 9am and 7pm consecutively. In 2021, Council changed the second monthly meeting to being at 6pm rather than 7pm. When COVID-19 and lockdowns hit the Province, all Council meeting went virtual. For most of this time, Council changed the meeting time of the second monthly meeting to begin at 1pm rather than at night due to connection concerns related to online technology.

Staff Comments:

Staff are looking for feedback from Council on meeting times and the possibility of not moving forward with night meetings and changing the second meeting of the month to begin at 1 pm. In recommending this change, staff are taking into consideration a number of factors.

The public's attendance at both day or night meetings historically has been very low. Most meetings do not have any public attendance, or at the most 1 or 2 people may attend. Anytime we see attendance by the public, it is usually because that person may have a planning application or something similar being considered by Council. Having meetings at night when the public is more apt to be available to attend has not seen an increase in their attendance. Moving forward our meetings will be live streamed, which will give the public a greater opportunity to watch the meetings either while they are being streamed or after the meeting. Staff will also be able to have the proceedings available online much sooner following the event than in the past so the public can watch immediately following the Council meeting. If a member of the public would like to attend to speak at open forum or to

delegate that can be accommodated virtually if they aren't able to make it to the Council chambers in person.

Staff are also taking into consideration that live streaming meetings puts a larger strain on the network and internet capabilities and are cognizant that live streaming night meetings while other residents in the Holstein area are more apt to also be using the internet in a higher capacity than during the day may cause unwanted service interruptions and delays.

The current need is for several staff to bank time after hours to attend Council meetings which comes with a cost. To date in 2022, one staff member has banked a total of 59.25 hours (39.5 at 1.5 rate) attending Council/Committee meetings after hours. Banking time takes staff members away from the office for additional days off outside of vacation days and sick time to use up the hours they banked attending night meetings. On average, there are 3-4 staff members attending night meetings that bank their time.

Staff that are attending night meetings are still starting their workdays at their normal scheduled times, which means on average a 12-14-hour day for staff depending on the length of the meeting as most staff opt to continue working in between the workday end and meeting start time as the break in between does not allow enough time for anything personal that staff may need to attend to. Following a night meeting, regardless of the time it ends, staff are expected back the next day for their scheduled start time. Moving to day meetings only would provide a better work/life balance for staff.

Another consideration that Council has discussed in the past is driving at night, especially in the winter months that may pose a safety risk for members and staff.

Staff do recognize that some Council members may have other job commitments during the day and this change would bring a need for those members to adjust their schedules. During the COVID-19 pandemic when we continued with meetings beginning at 9am and 1pm staff felt that worked very well for everyone at that time, and we didn't run into any scheduling and/or quorum issues.

We are looking for members to take the reasons provided into consideration and discuss meeting times moving forward to provide staff with direction on completing the 2023 Council Calendar. If a change is approved, staff would bring forward the necessary amendments to the Procedural By-law to include the meeting times moving forward and present that for approval.

At this time, staff will not be including Committee and Board meeting dates in the calendar. The first meeting with each committee and board will be scheduled following historical meeting days and times to then allow the committee to discuss and approve a calendar moving forward at their first meeting so members have an opportunity to provide feedback and figure out what works best for each

committee/board. The Committee/Board meetings will be added to the Council meeting calendar and staff will provide an updated calendar once each committee has decided on a schedule. The Public Planning and Committee of Adjustment meetings will continue to be included with the Council calendar.

Financial Implications:

There are no financial implications to the Township as a result of this report.

Communications & Community Action Plan Impact:

This report has been written and presented to Council to communicate accurate information to the public.

Concluding Comments:

That Council provide direction to staff on the 2023 Council meeting times.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dept. Head: *Original Signed By*
Lindsey Green, Clerk

CAO Approval: *Original Signed By*
Dave Milliner, CAO

Attachments: None