

To: COUNCIL

Meeting Date: 11/7/2023

Subject: Proposed 2024 Schedule of Meetings of Council

Submitted By: Danielle Manton, City Clerk

Prepared By: Michael Oliveri, Council Committee Services Coordinator

Report No.: 23-125-CRS

File No.: C1101

Wards Affected: All Wards

RECOMMENDATION(S):

THAT Report 23-125-CRS Proposed 2024 Schedule of Meetings of Council be received;

AND FURTHER THAT Council approve the Proposed 2024 Schedule of all Council and Committee meetings attached as Appendix 'A' to report 23-125-CRS.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with a proposed 2024 Schedule of Meetings.

The proposed schedule ensures the public is informed in advance of upcoming meetings for the year and allows staff to plan efficiently for Council meetings.

Key Findings

The Council for the City of Cambridge is required to set a Schedule of Meetings prior to each new year. Based on available key performance indicators, public participation has increased with virtual meetings and the continuation of hybrid meeting practices will provide further opportunities for accessible engagement with the public.

Financial Implications

Financial implications are not anticipated as a result of establishing the 2024 Schedule of Meetings of Council. Staff will advertise all meetings on the City's website in advance

of all meeting dates and on the City's calendar. The approved Schedule of Meetings will also be posted to the City's website.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT:

- ☐ Strategic Action
- ☒ Core Service

Objective(s): WELLBEING - Connect people to services that support individual and community wellbeing

Strategic Action: Not Applicable

Program: Council Services

Core Service: Council Support

By establishing a schedule of meetings for the year ahead, Council ensures effective and efficient operation for the City and provides clear direction to staff. Regular meetings of Council enable decisions to be made by those elected and provide for transparent and accessible information to the public.

The proposed schedule aligns with the City of Cambridge's Governance and Leadership goals, ensuring effective and efficient meeting management and providing a solid foundation to advance City business.

BACKGROUND:

The proposed 2024 Schedule of Meetings, as presented in Appendix 'A', outlines the schedule of all Council and Committee meetings for 2024, with the exception of Council Workshops that are scheduled as required.

The hybrid meeting procedure is one that most municipalities have adopted due to the increase in public participation throughout the pandemic, as well as to provide for flexibility around meeting attendance for members of Council. Over the course of the pandemic, Cambridge Council met virtually and saw an increase in the number of views and delegations.

The hybrid meeting format provides the public with the following options to facilitate accessible meeting participation: (1) delegate to Council in person; (2) submit an online Delegation Request Form to delegate via telephone; and (3) the public may opt to submit written correspondence for inclusion in the meeting minutes.

ANALYSIS:

The proposed Schedule of Meetings for 2024 incorporates Regional Council and Committee meetings, all Council meetings, statutory holidays and March Break. Council members may require time from the office to attend conferences throughout the year. Staff have taken into account the following two conferences when developing the proposed meeting schedule:

- Federation of Canadian Municipalities Conference (FCM) – June 6-9, 2024
- Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) – August 18-21, 2024

Proposed dates for review of the 2024 Budget are included in the proposed schedule and provide multiple dates for Council's review of the budget process beginning in February 2024.

Council will receive a presentation related to the operating and capital budgets in December 2023. Approval of the budget in February provides members of Council additional time for questions and review of the budget proposal from staff.

Where a matter of urgency requires a decision of Council at any time during the year, an Emergency or Special Council meeting may be arranged at the call of the Mayor in consultation with the City Clerk.

Meeting Times:

Staff are proposing that Council continue meeting at 6:30 p.m. for all meetings except for Budget and Audit Committee meetings. A 6:30 p.m. start time provides additional time and reduces the number of meetings extending beyond 11:00 p.m.

Budget and Audit Committee meetings are typically held only when the budget requires approval and requires the involvement of multiple staff areas and additional time for review of various parts of the budget. Therefore, staff recommend that Council consider keeping the 9:30 a.m. start time but hold an evening delegation budget meeting to ensure the public has ample opportunity to delegate.

Traditionally, evening meetings have favoured individuals working between nine (9) a.m. to five (5) p.m. and have disadvantaged those working evenings, afternoons, night shifts or individuals with less flexibility. As we emerge from the pandemic with video conferencing tools that allow meetings to be more accessible and available, providing individuals working in office-type environments to continue participating in meetings at earlier start times whilst further extending the opportunity to engage a wider demographic.

When considering the connection to cultural and religious days of significance, daytime meetings also provide flexibility for those participating in religious practices with an emphasis on sunset times (e.g., Ramadan).

Hybrid meetings increase accessibility and access for everyone, including the public, City Council and staff, to join and participate in Council meetings in-person or remotely over the phone, a mobile device or computer. The video conferencing tools used by the City make it easier to participate or delegate in meetings while juggling work, childcare, family and other responsibilities of modern life. Additionally, past shifts to earlier meetings resulted in increased public participation.

EXISTING POLICY / BY-LAW(S):

The City's Procedure By-law 23-035 is in effect.

Section 238(2) of the *Municipal Act*, 2001, provides that every municipality have a procedure by-law for governing the calling, place and proceedings of meetings. The proposed 2024 Schedule of Meetings reflects the need to call for meetings.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

It is essential that Council establish a meeting schedule to comply with the requirements of the municipality's Procedure By-law and provincial legislation. Setting dates for the annual Schedule of Meetings provides for transparent planning. The only financial impact for the proposed 2023 Schedule of Meetings is printing costs, which is funded through the Clerk's Operating Budget and is a necessary expense to continue forwarding City business.

PUBLIC VALUE:

Engagement:

The proposed 2024 Schedule of Meetings provides the opportunity to inform and engage the public. Upon approval of the Schedule of Meetings, staff will post all meetings on the City Meeting Calendar, ensuring that the public has a point of reference for upcoming meeting dates. The meeting agendas are posted on the City Meeting Calendar the week prior to the meeting. Public involvement is encouraged through the City's Delegation Request Form and guide that is also posted on the City's website. Statutory Public Meetings under the *Municipal Act*, 2001 and the *Planning Act* provide further opportunity for public involvement by way of statutory notices provided via postal mail and notice on the City's website for upcoming meetings.

It is essential that the public be provided with a wide range of methods that encourages active involvement in the decision-making process before Council.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE INPUT:

The proposed 2024 Schedule of Meetings only reflects meetings of Council. Citizen Advisory Committees establish their meeting schedules for the new year individually with the guidance of their staff liaison.

Staff did not consult advisory committees when setting the proposed 2024 Schedule of Meetings of Council as, pursuant to the Procedure By-law, these meetings are required to be set by Council.

Advisory Committees will schedule their meetings around the approved 2024 Schedule of Meetings of Council to ensure there are no conflicts for staff and Council representatives that support and work with the City's advisory committees.

PUBLIC INPUT:

The proposed 2024 Schedule of Meetings is reflective of the meetings of Council over the last several years. The City has anticipated the continuation of hybrid meetings to provide the public with the opportunity to participate in Council meetings both in-person and virtually, which will provide greater flexibility and increased public participation.

INTERNAL / EXTERNAL CONSULTATION:

Upon Council approval of the proposed 2024 Schedule of Meetings, staff will ensure the schedule is added to the City's meeting calendar and that all staff and Council receive meeting invitations for the 2024 meetings.

As agendas serve as notice of meetings, agendas and the City's website will continue to reflect the hybrid meeting structure of meetings of Council.

CONCLUSION:

The setting of the 2024 Schedule of Meetings provides Council, staff and the public with the opportunity to participate in the public process of Council meetings and provides increased accessibility to City meetings. Moreover, the recommendation strives to establish meetings that are efficient for moving City business forward and assist Council in effective meeting management.

REPORT IMPACTS:

Agreement: **No**

By-law: **No**

Budget Amendment: **No**

Policy: **No**

APPROVALS:

This report has gone through the appropriate workflow and has been reviewed and or approved by the following as required:

Director

Deputy City Manager

Chief Financial Officer

City Solicitor

City Manager

ATTACHMENTS:

1. 23-125-CRS Appendix A – Proposed 2024 Schedule of Meetings