



REPORT TO COUNCIL

To: **Mayor and Councillors**

Subject: Meeting Format for Council Meetings, Committee and Task Group Meetings, and Public Hearings

File #: 0110.00

Doc #:

From: Kelly Kenney
Corporate Officer

Date: April 7, 2022

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT the following resolution passed at the September 28, 2020 Regular Council Meeting be rescinded:

“Hold Committee/Task Group/Board of Variance Meetings electronically until such time as the City has implemented technology to permit combined in-person/electronic participation by Committee/Task Group members and members of the public.”

2. THAT, subject to compliance with the City of Langley COVID-19 Vaccination Policy and any current Public Health Orders, City Committees/Task Groups and the Board of Variance be permitted to conduct their meetings electronically or in-person until such time as the City has implemented technology to permit combined in-person/electronic participation by Committee/Task Group/Board members and members of the public.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to recommend that, subject to compliance with the City of Langley COVID-19 Vaccination Policy and any current Public Health Orders, City Committees/Task Groups and the Board of Variance be permitted to conduct their meetings either electronically or in-person until such time as the City has implemented technology to permit combined in-person/electronic participation by Committee/Task Group/Board members and members of the public.

POLICY:

Motion passed at September 28, 2020 Regular Council Meeting:

- Hold Regular Council Meetings electronically at 3:00 pm until such time as the City has implemented technology to permit combined in-person/electronic participation by Council members and members of the public.
- Hold Committee/Task Group/Board of Variance Meetings electronically until such time as the City has implemented technology to permit combined in-person/electronic participation by Committee/Task Group members and members of the public.
- Continue to hold Public Hearings electronically at 7:00pm until such time as the City has implemented technology to permit combined in-person/electronic participation by Council members and members of the public.

Motion passed at October 18, 2021 Regular Council meeting:

Effective November, 2021, unless otherwise resolved by Council, Regular Council Meetings be held electronically via video conferencing technology at 3:00 pm.

City of Langley COVID-19 Vaccination Policy:

The City requires committee members to provide proof of vaccination as a condition of membership on City committees/task groups and boards.

COMMENTS/ANALYSIS:

In 2020, due to the desire to protect individuals from the COVID-19 virus and the logistical challenges in holding in-person meetings during the COVID-19 Pandemic in compliance with changing Public Health Orders, the City's council meetings, committee meetings and public hearings were moved to electronic meeting format as permitted by special provincial order.

Since that time, these meetings have been held electronically. Some municipalities had the technological capability of holding "hybrid" meetings, wherein participation at the meeting by attendees could be both electronic and in person. City staff attempted to provide hybrid meeting capability in Council Chambers and the CKF Room with current technology and some modest technical upgrades but there were many issues encountered which could not be addressed without significant upgrades to the Council Chamber audio/visual technology.

As a result, staff's recommendation to Council was that all meetings either be held fully electronically or fully on-site until such time as proper hybrid meeting capability could be implemented. Council subsequently approved funding in the 2022 Capital budget to upgrade the audio/visual technology in Council Chambers.

The authority to hold fully electronic meetings began as a temporary measure permitted by special provincial order. However, in the Fall of 2021, partly in response to positive feedback received from municipalities that had been holding fully electronic or hybrid meetings for the past year and a half, the province passed Bill 10, which provides authority for local governments to conduct hybrid and fully electronic regular council and committee meetings, and public hearings on an on-going basis if so desired.

Some of the benefits experienced by the City in holding electronic meetings has been the increased flexibility and ease of access for both Council members and members of the public to attend meetings. The City has seen an increase in number of members of the public attending regular council meetings, committee meetings, and public hearings since moving to an electronic meeting format.

However, some of the negatives expressed by some committee members has been the sense of disconnection and lack of cohesiveness felt in not being able to be present together in one room. As a result, some committees and task groups have expressed the desire to return to in-person meetings now that most Public Health Orders have been removed by the Provincial Medical Health Officer.

Accordingly, it is recommended that, as long as Committee/Task Group, and Board members are in compliance with the City's COVID-19 Vaccination Policy, and any current Public Health Orders are followed, that individual Committees/Task Groups and Boards be permitted to hold their meetings fully in-person if they so choose.

Given that little to no negative feedback has been received with respect to holding Regular and Special Council meetings and Public Hearings by electronic means, no change from Council's previous direction, as referenced in this report, is being sought at this time.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS:

Council approved \$120,000 in the 2022 budget for updates to the Council Chambers' audio/visual systems to provide for proper hybrid meeting capability.

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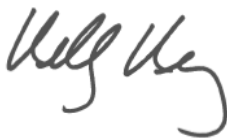
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ALTERNATIVES:

Council may choose not to rescind its current direction that committee/task group and Board of Variance meetings be held electronically.

Council may provide additional/alternate direction.

Respectfully Submitted,



Kelly Kenney
Corporate Officer

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S COMMENTS:

I support the recommendation.



Francis Cheung, P. Eng.
Chief Administrative Officer