



Information Report

File Number: 0530-01

DATE OF MEETING | SEPTEMBER 30, 2019

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SUBJECT | **AGENDAS COMMITTEE**

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report:

To provide the Governance and Priorities Committee with a report regarding the Agendas Committee.

BACKGROUND

|At the Governance and Priorities Committee (GPC) meeting held 2019-JUL-15, Staff presented the GPC with an agenda planning document in order to facilitate the coordination of meeting topics and dates. The purpose of the document was to provide the GPC with a list of topics as suggested by Staff for future GPC meetings and request that the GPC prioritize the order in which items would come before the committee. The GPC, by unanimous consent, approved nine meeting dates between July and December 2019 and asked Staff to explore an Agendas Committee. The committee was to consist of the Mayor, Acting Mayor, next Acting Mayor in rotation, CAO and City Clerk.

DISCUSSION

In accordance with "Council Procedure Bylaw 2018 No. 7272" and the Council approved Committee Operating Guidelines, the Corporate Officer is responsible for preparing meeting agendas. In order to meet this obligation the Legislative Services Department has developed an operational process to ensure that reports are reviewed in a timely manner and included in the appropriate agenda. Until the agenda is presented to Council, preparation of the agenda is a largely operational process with limited options for council input.

Items on Regular Council agendas are either recommendations previously approved by committees, legislated items that must be brought before Council within a specified timeframe, reports requested by Council or emerging issues that are urgent in nature and should not be delayed.

Finance and Audit Committee agendas contain reports which:

- provide notification of increases to project budgets,
 - request funding expenditures for City projects,

- recommend the allocation and disbursement of funding requests to community organizations,
- recommend to Council best practices that ensure integrity of financial statements,
- recommend best practices and policies relating to community investment for Council's consideration with regard to general financial grants to community organizations and non- statutory tax exemption (Permissive Tax Exemptions under Section 224 and 227 of the *Community Charter*)

Finance and Audit Committee agenda items are usually time sensitive and projects may be compromised if reports are deferred to future meetings after they are ready to present to the committee. Based on the above, Staff do not recommend Finance and Audit or Council agendas be included in an agendas committee, should that be the direction from Council.

Staff recommend that at each Governance and Priorities Committee meeting, the GPC have the opportunity to review the future GPC schedule and make decisions, by resolution, for future agenda topics. In addition, staff will continue to bring forward work plan issues which require council briefing and/or discussion in a committee format.

As with all committee recommendations, that recommendation would be forwarded to Council for final approval. Staff brought this process forward for the first time at the July 15, 2019 GPC Meeting. Staff recommend Council continue to bring forward to each meeting the updated list of topics for the GPC's consideration. All members of Council sit on the Governance and Priorities Committee, which allows all of Council to be aware of GPC agenda planning and participate in discussion regarding issues they would like to see come forward.

If an agendas committee were to be struck there may be overlapping responsibilities between the agendas committee and the GPC. The Terms of Reference for the Governance and Priorities Committee state that the GPC is required to "Act as an advisory to Council by discussing and considering all governance issues prior to being placed before Council."

A logistical challenge of using an agenda committee or task force format to review agendas is that all City of Nanaimo committees are required to have notice of meetings posted, agendas and minutes published and prepared. This is to provide transparency to the public and have a record of the meeting. In an agendas committee context, this means that prior to reviewing items for Council agendas an agenda's committee agenda would need to be created. A recording secretary would need to attend the meeting to take minutes and any recommendations regarding agenda content would be forwarded to a Council meeting for approval, prior to an item being included in a Council agenda. Staff anticipate that this would create a backlog of reports and unnecessary delays.

Council's ability to strike an informal agendas committee or working group is limited as the *Community Charter* does not provide this option of governance. Direction to Staff is given through motions made by Council as a whole, and Staff are not able to take direction from individual Council members. Furthermore, an agendas committee limits all of Council from participating in agenda planning due to the composition of the proposed committee.

Staff contacted Abbotsford, Campbell River, Saanich, Victoria and Whistler to determine if comparable practices exist elsewhere. None of the municipalities had a similar committee. |

CONCLUSION

Due to logistical and legislative restrictions Staff recommend that Council continue to utilize the Governance and Priorities Committee meetings for GPC agenda planning.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Council directed staff to bring forward options for an agendas committee.
- Staff found logistical and legislative issues regarding the committee.
- Staff recommend the Governance and Priorities Committee continue to update and schedule the list of potential topics to be brought forward to the GPC.

Submitted by:

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