

Staff Report

Report To: City Council
Report From: Briana Bloomfield, City Clerk
Meeting Date: December 12, 2022
Report Code: CR-22-106
Subject: 2023 Council and Committee Meeting Calendar

Recommendations:

THAT in consideration of Staff Report CR-22-106 respecting the 2023 Council and Committee Meeting Calendar, City Council:

1. Approves the 2023 Council and Committee Meeting calendar as attached to the report;
2. Directs staff to provide notice of a Procedural By-law amendment in accordance with the Notice By-law; and
3. Directs staff to bring forward a by-law to amend the Procedural By-law to:
 - a. give effect to the change in start time for Regular Council meetings from 7:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.;
 - b. give effect to the change in the order of the agenda for closed session moving to end of the agenda; and
 - c. change the time limit from 3.5 hours to 4 hours.

Highlights:

- The 2023 Council and Committee meeting calendar follows the same schedule as 2022 except for a recommended change to the Regular Council meeting start time.
- Additional meetings beyond the Regular Meetings in the calendar may be called as needed.

- Changes to the Procedural By-law requires that notice be provided in the Sun Times and on the City's website.

Strategic Plan Alignment:

This report supports the delivery of Core Service.

Previous Report/Authority:

[Board and Committee By-law](#)

[Notice By-law](#)

[Procedural By-law](#)

[Report CR-22-079 - 2023 Interim Council and Committee Meeting Calendar](#)

Background:

On an annual basis, City Council approves the Council and Committee meeting calendar for the following year.

At the September 12, 2022 City Council meeting, Staff Report CR-22-079 respecting the 2023 Interim Council and Committee Meeting Calendar was presented. This interim calendar followed the same schedule as the 2022 calendar with the exception of the Corporate Services and Operations Committees moving from Tuesdays to Thursdays (2nd and 3rd Thursdays, respectively).

An interim calendar was presented to allow the newly elected Council to approve the meeting dates and times from February to December 2023.

Analysis:

2023 Council and Committee Meeting Calendar Highlights

Attached is a draft of the 2023 Council and Committee meeting calendar. While reviewing the calendar, staff wish to highlight the following:

- Regular Council meetings have been scheduled on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month, where possible;
- The Special Council meetings are for budget meetings in February, July and December and continued education in January and June;
- A summer hiatus is included for the month of August;

- Major municipal conferences have been noted in the legend but have not been avoided in setting the calendar as there are a limited number of Council and staff members that participate;
- Board meetings that Council members are appointed to are noted in the legend;
- The River District Board meetings are set in accordance with their Constitution and noted on the calendar because City staff act as the administrator and liaison;
- Grey County Council and Board meeting dates/times have been avoided; and
- Meeting times are the same as in previous years except for City Council meetings being moved from 7:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

A similar number of meetings is being proposed for 2023 compared to previous years, as indicated in the chart below.

Year	Number of Regular Meetings
2018	21
2019	22
2020	20
2021	19
2022	19
2023	19

Committee meetings in the 2023 calendar follow a similar schedule as 2022 and are outlined in the chart below:

Committee	Day of the Month	Time
Community Services	3rd Wednesday of each month, except for August	5:30 p.m.

Committee	Day of the Month	Time
Corporate Services	2nd Thursday of each month, except for August	5:30 p.m.
Operations	3rd Thursday of each month, except for August	5:30 p.m.
Accessibility Advisory	4th Tuesday of every other month, beginning in January	1:00 p.m.
Community Development, Tourism and Culture Advisory	2nd Friday of each quarter, beginning in February	8:30 a.m.
Tom Thomson Art Gallery Advisory	1st Wednesday of every other month beginning in February	2:00 p.m.
River District Board	2nd Wednesday of every other month, beginning in January	5:30 p.m.
Committee of Adjustment	3rd Tuesday of each month, except January and August	3:00 p.m.

There are currently 90 Council and Committee meetings scheduled for 2023.

Once the 2023 calendar is approved, housekeeping changes to the calendar will be completed by staff with notice to Members and the public being provided through an update of the calendar on the website and an email to Members and the media.

Regular Council Meeting Start Time

Staff are recommending a change to the start time of Regular Council meetings.

Council has historically met at 7:00 p.m., with closed session occurring before 7:00 p.m. Of the eleven (11) closed sessions in 2022, the average start time was 6:00 p.m. (30-minute closed session).

Staff recommend that Council start at 5:30 p.m. with closed session, when required, occurring at the end of the meeting (following Notices of Motion in the agenda) rather than the start of the meeting.

Should Council prefer to continue having closed sessions prior to the recommended 5:30 p.m. start time, the start time of closed sessions, when needed, would be dictated by the number of items for consideration, and it is anticipated that the closed sessions would start at 4:30 p.m.

Below is a chart of Council meeting information from neighbouring municipalities for comparison purposes. Each municipality averages two meetings per month.

Municipality	Day	Time	Closed Session
Blue Mountains	Monday	9:30 a.m.	End of Meeting
Chatsworth	Wednesday	9:00 a.m. (1st meeting) 6:30 p.m. (2nd meeting)	End of Meeting
Georgian Bluffs	Wednesday	5:00 p.m.	End of Meeting
Grey County	Thursday	10:00 a.m.	End of Meeting
Grey Highlands	Wednesday	1:00 p.m.	End of Meeting
Hanover	Monday	4:00 p.m.	End of Meeting
Meaford	Monday	1:00 p.m.	End of Meeting
Southgate	Wednesday	9:00 a.m. (1st meeting) 6:00 p.m. (2nd meeting)	End of Meeting
West Grey	Tuesday	9:00 a.m. (1st meeting) 6:00 p.m. (2nd meeting)	End of Meeting

As the chart indicates, it is an anomaly to begin with closed session. The chart also shows that Council has the discretion to determine the start time of meetings.

Benefits of starting Regular Council meetings at 5:30 p.m. with closed session at the end of the agenda, include the following:

- the start time would align with the start time of standing committee meetings (ease of reference for Council, staff and public);
- the start time would always be the same each meeting (it currently fluctuates based on closed session);
- public transportation to the meeting would be available as City buses run until 6:00 p.m.;
- Rogers TV can accommodate the change and would continue to broadcast the meetings live;
- CTRE (live stream support) can accommodate the change;
- A.V. checks can be completed prior to 5:30 p.m. rather than between 6:30 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.;
- an earlier start would be easier for staff who do not regularly attend Council meetings to flex their day; and
- Council and staff will not have to begin a workweek with a fourteen (14) hour day and they would be able to get home earlier.

Should Council approve the change in start time and agenda order, the time limit for Council meetings will need to be amended in the Procedural By-law. Currently Council meetings can be a maximum of 3.5 hours long (not including closed session). It is very rare for Council meetings to go beyond 3 hours and closed session on average is 30 minutes long. Staff recommend that the time limit be adjusted from 3.5 hours to 4 hours and include both open and closed session. The Procedural By-law would continue to include the provision that a unanimous vote of the members present, could extend the 4-hour time limit.

Attached to this report is the revised agenda order, should Council approve moving closed session to the end of the Regular Council meeting.

Additionally, the start time of meetings is included in the City's Procedural By-law; if Council approves the change to the start time, notice of the Procedural By-law amendment will be placed in the Sun Times and on the City's website at least ten (10) days prior to the by-law being placed on the Council agenda. If comments are received on the proposed amendment they will be brought forward for Council's review, otherwise the by-law will be placed on the agenda following the required notice period.

Staff Time and Reports

This section includes statistics for Council's awareness. In 2020, staff that regularly attend Council, board, and committee meetings began tracking the number of hours spent at meetings.

Below is a chart that outlines staff hours at meetings for the City Manager, Directors, City Clerk, and Deputy Clerk. The average for each person on this list equates to approximately 4-6 weeks of full-time work dedicated to attending meetings. This does not include the other staff that attend meetings on a less frequent basis or any time spent in pre or post meeting work.

Staff Hours at Meetings*		
Year	Individual Monthly Total (average)	Yearly Total
July 2020 – July 2021	70 hours	740 hours
July 2021 – July 2022	59 hours	703 hours
*Staff included = City Manager, Directors, City Clerk, Deputy Clerk		

The number of staff reports written for Council, the River District Board and City Committees is tracked through eSCRIBE, the City's agenda management software. Below is a chart of the number of reports prepared by staff.

Staff reports		
Year	Monthly Average	Yearly Report Total
July 2020 – July 2021	32	385
July 2021 – July 2022	29	348

The volume of time and effort reinforces the value of having a summer break wherein other essential work can be completed by staff and vacations can be scheduled without impacting Council support.

Financial Implications:

None

Communication Strategy:

The calendar will be circulated to Mayor and Council, staff, the media and posted on the City's website.

Consultation:

City Manager, Directors, and Recording Secretaries

Attachments:

1. Draft 2023 Council and Committee Meeting Calendar
2. Draft Revised Agenda Order

Recommended by:

Briana Bloomfield, City Clerk

Kate Allan, Director of Corporate Services

Submission approved by:

Tim Simmonds, City Manager

For more information on this report, please contact Briana Bloomfield, City Clerk at bbloomfield@owensound.ca or 519-376-4440 ext. 1247.