

Staff Report

Report To: City Council
Report From: Allison Penner, Deputy Clerk
Meeting Date: October 7, 2024
Report Code: CR-24-101
Subject: 2025 Board and Committee By-law Housekeeping

Recommendations:

THAT in consideration of Staff Report CR-24-101 respecting 2025 Board and Committee By-law Housekeeping, City Council provides direction on the application evaluation process to be utilized as part of the 2025 committee recruitment and included in the 2025 Board and Committee By-law.

Highlights:

- No changes are being recommended for the 2025 committee structure.
- Staff are seeking direction with respect to the process for evaluating public applications to boards and committees.
- Board and committee public member recruitment for 2025 will begin in October 2024.

Strategic Plan Alignment:

This report supports the delivery of Core Service.

Climate and Environmental Implications:

There are no anticipated climate or environmental impacts.

Previous Report/Authority:

[Board and Committee By-law](#)

[Inclusion Strategy 2023-2028](#)

Background:

Each year, City Council revisits the Board and Committee By-law to ensure its structure continues to serve the needs of the City. As part of that process, City Council considers public appointments to boards and committees based on expiring terms of service and vacancies.

In 2023, City Council adopted a scoring tool for public applications. This scoring tool was completed by each Council member and then sent to the Deputy Clerk for collating. The lowest and highest scores for each applicant were removed so as not to skew the results, and then an average was taken from the remaining scores. The Deputy Clerk presented these results to Council during a closed session for their consideration. At the time of implementing the scoring tool in 2023, staff advised that the process would be re-assessed in 2024.

Boards

The City currently appoints Council members to five boards:

1. River District Board of Management.
2. Grey Sauble Conservation Authority Board.
3. Owen Sound & North Grey Union Public Library Board.
4. Owen Sound Police Services Board.
5. Owen Sound Municipal Non-Profit Housing Corporation (OSMNPHC) & Owen Sound Housing Company (OSHC).

Public members appointed to the City's boards, except for the OSMNPHC and OSHC, are serving four-year terms that coincide with the term of Council expiring November 14, 2026.

Public members to the OSMNPHC and OSHC serve staggered three-year terms. The terms of two public members will expire on January 31, 2025. The new board members will have a term that begins February 1, 2025, and expires on January 31, 2028. The Board will provide recommendations to Council to fill those positions.

Standing Committees

The City currently has three standing committees: Community Services, Corporate Services, and Operations.

The terms of two public members on each of the Community Services Committee and Operations Committee, as well as one public member of the Corporate Services Committee will expire on January 31, 2025, for a total of five vacancies to be filled. The new committee members will have a term that begins on February 1, 2025, and expires on January 31, 2028.

Advisory Committees

The City currently has one advisory committee, the Tom Thomson Art Gallery Advisory Committee (TTAGAC). The terms of two public members will expire on January 31, 2025. The new committee members will have a term that begins on February 1, 2025, and expires on January 31, 2028. Additionally, one public member resigned from TTAGAC effective November 7, 2024. A new member recruited to fill this vacancy will serve a two-year term that begins on February 1, 2025, and expires on January 31, 2027.

The City participates in the County of Grey Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee, public appointments for which are made by the County of Grey.

Ad Hoc Committees

The City currently has two ad hoc committees. The Service Review Implementation Ad Hoc Committee is the oversight committee responsible for the implementation of the [Service Review Priority Opportunity Action Plan](#) is composed of the Mayor, as well as the Chair or Vice-Chair of each of the standing committees. The Council members sitting on this committee may change if there are changes to the Chair or Vice-Chair of any of the standing committees.

The Strategic Planning Ad Hoc Committee provides advice to steer the strategic planning process and the development of [Strategic Plan 2050](#), with the fixed term for Council and public members expiring in 2026.

Community Organizations

The City currently appoints Council members to four community organizations:

1. Bruce Grey Poverty Task Force.
2. Owen Sound Fund Committee.

3. Municipal Accommodation Tax Stakeholder Committee.
4. Community Safety and Well-Being Committee.

The Bruce Grey Poverty Task Force made a deputation to Council on September 9, 2024, and submitted a letter outlining their request for the renewal of formal representation on the task force. The request letter is included as Attachment 1 to the report.

The Owen Sound Fund Committee is a community committee established pursuant to a Donor Advised Fund Agreement between the City and Community Foundation Grey Bruce to oversee granting of funds to not-for-profit organizations working to enrich quality of life for people in the City of Owen Sound. The Agreement states that one member of the committee is to be a member of City Council.

Both the Municipal Accommodation Tax Stakeholder Committee and Community Safety and Well-Being Committee are legislated committees and Council representation is required.

Analysis:

Board and Committee Structure

In reviewing the Board and Committee By-law, staff recommend keeping the existing board and committee structure for 2024-2025. Should Council wish to add or remove a committee, a motion would be required.

Board and Committee Public Application Process

The City implemented an application scoring tool during the 2023-2024 public appointee recruitment process. Based on feedback and lessons learned during the first year of using the scoring tool, staff are proposing that the scoring tool either (1) be enhanced with the addition of a scoring guide including priority skills or (2) be eliminated from the application process, as outlined below.

1. Enhance the application and scoring process

Council may wish to maintain its current practice of each member completing the scoring tool and providing those scores to staff for collation. Staff provide the collated scores back to Council for discussion during a Closed session of Council.

Staff have developed additional resources to support Council's use of the scoring tool in the evaluation of applicants: a scoring guide with embedded priority skills, and an updated application form.

Scoring Guide

The application scoring guide (Attachment 2) provides criteria to translate information submitted by applicants into numerical scores to be inputted into the public application scoring tool (Attachment 3). Having a scoring guide in place before applications are evaluated improves objectivity in the process because the scoring metrics are agreed upon in advance. The practice of preparing a guide to score applications against is aligned with the staff hiring practices of the City's Human Resources division.

The addition of the scoring guide is not intended to be a barrier to potential applicants, but instead to clarify the skills committee members apply in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities. The scoring guide will allow applicants to tailor their applications to the assessment criteria. Using the information provided in the scoring tool applicants can relay their diverse skills and experiences through the lens of skills sought in committee members.

Priority Skills

Embedded within the scoring guide are priority skills that make explicit the skills and experience the City is seeking in applicants thereby increasing transparency in the recruitment process. The priority skills have been developed by staff in the Clerks and Human Resources divisions, with input from the staff liaisons (Directors) associated with each committee.

For 2024-2025, the priority skills for all committees are: experience, analytical abilities, collaborative spirit, and commitment. In keeping with the Inclusion Strategy, the priority skills highlight that applicants do not need to have specific technical expertise to provide valuable advice on behalf of the community they represent. A detailed description of each priority skill is included in the scoring guide (Attachment 2). The priority skills will be posted alongside the Committee Vacancies page of the City's website.

Application Form

To facilitate the implementation of the scoring guide and priority skills, the format of the application form has been updated to allow

applicants applying to more than one committee to tailor their answers to each vacancy and showcase their diverse skills and perspectives.

In this format, each applicant will complete the first 3 pages of the application form, which include basic personal information (e.g., name, address), ranked committee preference (if applying to more than 1 committee) and an optional self-declaration. Each committee then has a separate form with an additional 5 to 6 questions, allowing applicants to tailor their responses to the specific committee(s) to which they are applying.

Should Council wish to proceed with the option to enhance the application and scoring process the following motion should be made:

“THAT in consideration of staff report CR-24-101 respecting Board and Committee By-law Housekeeping, City Council directs staff to:

- 1. Utilize the priority skills, scoring guide and tool, and application form as part of the 2025 application process; and**
- 2. Include the use of the priority skills, scoring guide and tool, and application form in the 2025 Board and Committee By-law.”**

2. Eliminate the scoring tool

As an alternative to the enhancements proposed above, Council may consider eliminating the scoring tool. Eliminating the scoring tool would mean a return to the application assessment process used prior to 2023. Under this process, Council would receive the raw application materials provided by each applicant and would discuss the applications during a Closed session of Council. Successful applicants would be appointed at a subsequent Open session of Council.

If the scoring tool is eliminated, the priority skills, scoring guide and scoring tool noted above would not be required and would not be provided to Council or prospective applicants. The application form would be unchanged from 2023-2024 and would continue to include an optional self-declaration to provide Council an opportunity to

consider the aims of the Inclusion Strategy as part of its recruitment decisions.

While eliminating the scoring tool would mean potentially less time spent by each individual Council member in evaluating applications prior to meeting to discuss them together, it would also remove a tool intended to assist in decision-making.

Section 19 of the Board and Committee By-law states that “All public member applicants for boards and committees will be assessed using the scoring tool in effect at the time of the application as determined by the City Clerk and Human Resources Manager.” Should Council wish to eliminate the scoring tool, the By-law would need to be amended to that effect.

Should Council wish to eliminate the scoring tool, the following motion should be made:

“THAT in consideration of staff report CR-24-101 respecting Board and Committee By-law Housekeeping, City Council directs staff to:

- 1. Return to the former application assessment process as outlined in the report, for 2025 board and committee public member recruitment; and**
- 2. Remove section 19 from the 2025 Board and Committee By-law respecting the scoring tool for the assessment for public appointments to boards and committees.”**

Financial Implications:

The cost to advertise committee vacancies in The Sun Times newspaper is approximately \$500 per advertisement. One advertisement will be used to advertise all committee vacancies.

Communication Strategy:

The 2025 board and committee recruitment process will begin in October 2024, with applications being accepted until mid-November 2024. All vacancies will be advertised in The Sun Times and on the City’s website and social media platforms, as well as through a media advisory.

Staff will send letters to local Indigenous organizations to notify them of the committee vacancies and application process. This practice began as part of

the 2022 board and committee recruitment campaign and will continue as part of the City's ongoing effort to recruit diverse candidates whose knowledge and experience is representative of the community.

Consultation:

Senior Leadership Team, City Clerk, Manager of Legislative Services, Manager of Human Resources, Human Resources Specialist – Safety, Equity & Wellness, Human Resources Specialist – Recruitment, Retention & Compensation

Attachments:

1. Letter from Bruce Grey Poverty Task Force Re: Renewal of Formal Representation to the Bruce Grey Poverty Task Force
2. Priority Skills and Scoring Guide 2025
3. Public Applications Scoring Tool 2025
4. Public Application Form 2025

Recommended by:

Allison Penner, Deputy Clerk
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 Allison Penner, Deputy Clerk at apenner@owensound.ca or 519-376-4440 ext. 1235.