

## Staff Report

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**Report To:** City Council  
**Report From:** Briana Bloomfield, City Clerk  
**Meeting Date:** April 13, 2026  
**Report Code:** CR-26-031  
**Subject:** 2027 Committee Structure and Calendar

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### Recommendations:

THAT in consideration of Staff Report CR-26-031 respecting the 2027 Committee Structure and Calendar, City Council:

1. Approves the Terms of Reference for the Resilient Community Advisory Committee;
2. Approves the Terms of Reference for the Sustainable Community Advisory Committee;
3. Approves the Terms of Reference for the Vibrant Community Advisory Committee;
4. Approves the Terms of Reference for the Tom Thomson Art Gallery Advisory Committee;
5. Directs staff to bring forward a by-law to amend the Board, Committee and Seat Selection Policy No. GOV001 to amend committee start dates and Council seating start dates;
6. Directs staff to bring forward the 2027 Board and Committee By-law for approval, including new terms of reference, working group clauses, and any changes to the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority Board;
7. Directs staff to bring forward a by-law to amend the Procedural By-law to publish committee agendas earlier, remove standing committee references, and make housekeeping changes to the absence of the chair section as outlined in the report;

8. Directs staff to provide notice of the proposed amendment to the Procedural By-law in accordance with the Notice By-law; and
9. Approves the 2027 Council and Committee meeting calendar, substantially in the form attached to the report.

### **Highlights:**

- New committee names highlight that Owen Sound is a Resilient, Sustainable, and Vibrant Community.
- Committee changes will take effect for 2027.
- In response to Council and committee feedback, staff will make updates to the website, printed materials, and orientation program for the updated 2027 committee structure.
- Advance approval of the 2027 committee structure and meeting calendar provides prospective municipal election candidates with information necessary to make informed decisions about whether to seek office.

### **Vision 2050 - Strategic Plan Alignment:**

[Strategic Plan](#) Priority: The recommendation contributes to core service delivery or a corporate initiative that enables service delivery for one or more strategic priorities.

### **Previous Report/Authority:**

*Municipal Act, 2001*

[Vision 2050 Strategic Plan](#)

[Inclusion Strategy](#)

[2026 Board and Committee By-law](#)

[Board, Committee and Seat Selection Policy No. GOV001](#)

[Report CM-26-011](#) – Committee Structure Review - Feedback

[Report CM-25-038](#) – Committee Structure Review

[Resolution No. R-241216-006](#)

“THAT in consideration of Staff Report CR-24-141 respecting 2025 Council Board and Committee selections, City Council directs the City

Manager working with the City Clerk to bring forward a report to Council respecting options for committee structures.”

[Resolution No. R-260223-009](#)

“THAT in consideration of Staff Report CM-25-038 respecting a committee structure review, City Council directs staff to bring forward a report with draft terms of reference for the:

1. Tom Thomson Art Gallery Advisory Committee as status quo;
2. Community Services Committee as status quo;
3. Operations Committee as status quo; and
4. Governance and Finance Committee, as an amalgamation of the Corporate Services Committee and the Service Review Implementation Ad Hoc Committee.”

[Resolution No. R-260223-011](#)

“THAT in consideration of Staff Report CM-25-038 respecting a committee structure review, City Council directs staff to include in the 2027 Board and Committee By-law a mechanism to permit the establishment of working groups, being a less formal group of Council and public members who can be appointed quickly to study and report on a particular issue and make recommendations based on its findings.”

[Resolution No. R-260223-012](#)

“THAT in consideration of Staff Report CM-25-038 respecting a committee structure review, City Council directs staff to:

1. Consult with the Community Foundation Grey Bruce and Owen Sound Fund Committee respecting the Council member appointment on the Owen Sound Fund Committee; and
2. Report back to Council on the option of no longer appointing a Council representative to the Owen Sound Fund Committee.”

[Resolution No. R-260223-013](#)

“THAT in consideration of Staff Report CM-25-038 respecting a committee structure review, City Council directs staff to bring forward a report respecting Board and Committee appointment terms beginning in November 2026 rather than February 2027.”

#### [Resolution No. R-260223-014](#)

“THAT in consideration of Staff Report CM-25-038 respecting a committee structure review, City Council directs staff to include the following in the 2027 Board and Committee By-law:

1. Council member committee appointment terms of two (2) years rather than (1) year;
2. Public member committee appointment terms of two (2) years rather than three (3) years;
3. A Council member appointment term on the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority Board of two (2) years rather than four (4) years;
4. A Council member appointment term on the Owen Sound Housing Company Board of two (2) years rather than one (1) year; and
5. Mayor/alternate member and public member appointment terms on the Owen Sound Police Service Board of two (2) years rather than four (4) years.”

#### [Resolution No. R-260223-015](#)

“THAT in consideration of Staff Report CM-25-038 respecting a committee structure review, City Council directs staff to include in the 2027 Board and Committee By-law that Council member appointment terms on community organizations be two (2) years rather than one (1) year.”

#### [Resolution No. R-260223-016](#)

“THAT in consideration of Staff Report CM-25-038 respecting a committee structure review, City Council directs staff to include the following in the 2027 Board and Committee By-law:

1. Amend the length of service cap for public members on committees to a maximum of eight (8) consecutive years; and
2. Remove the option for Council to waive the length of service cap by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of Council.”

### **Background:**

This is the third report respecting committee structure. It builds on previous reports and incorporates feedback received to date, with the aim of finalizing a comprehensive and effective framework for 2027.

The draft 2027 Board and Committee By-law is attached to the report and includes:

- previously approved items e.g. working group, term length, and service cap; and
- committee terms of reference, as attached to the report.

Any changes made by Council during the review of this report will be included in the 2027 Board and Committee By-law that will be brought forward for approval.

In preparing this report, staff developed the 2027 Council and Committee meeting calendar, and it is attached to the report. While this item is typically brought forward in the fall, it has been incorporated into this report to avoid the need for a separate report. Early approval of the meeting schedule provides municipal election candidates, Council, board and committee members, staff, the public, and the media with timely and comprehensive notice of all meeting dates.

## **Analysis and Options:**

The information requested by Council respecting committee structure is provided below and organized by topic for ease of reference.

### **Terms of Reference**

Attached to the report is the draft terms of reference for each of the proposed City committees. The Terms of Reference have been reviewed by and supported by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

Staff recommend that that the Terms of Reference be approved and incorporated into the 2027 Board and Committee By-law. The main differences between the current structure and the new structure are:

- All committees are called Advisory as they function the same way and it reduces confusion for Council, staff, and the public.
- The former standing committees are renamed to recognize that City work is increasingly cross- departmental and supports the direction set by Council through Vision 2050. The updated names move away from department- based labels and better reflect the range of reports, corporate matters, and decisions considered by each committee.

The former standing committees now have the word 'community' as part of their title to emphasize that the group exists to represent, reflect, and serve the broader community, not just internal stakeholders. It signals that the committee's work is grounded in community perspectives, needs, and impact.

The Corporate Services Committee has been combined with the Service Review Ad Hoc Committee to create the **Resilient Community Advisory Committee**. For this committee:

- The name is more aspirational, outcome based, and still speaks to the concept of good governance.
- The composition includes all of Council and no public.
- It provides all of Council with the opportunity to have an in-depth analysis of the operating and capital budget.
- The meetings are scheduled during the day as there are no public members and the committee reviews matters relating to internal operations. The change also supports work-life balance for staff that attend committee meetings.
- Communications will now report through this committee, as it previously did not have a home committee, and it relates to City operations.
- Animal Control, By-law Enforcement, and Fire Services will be addressed by the former Operations Committee as explained below.

The Operations Committee will now be called the **Sustainable Community Advisory Committee** and will include deputations, correspondence, and reports relating to animal control, by-law enforcement, and fire services in addition to its existing scope. For this committee:

- The name reflects the core objective of meeting present and future infrastructure and service needs.
- The change in scope will even out the number of reports reviewed by committees.
- Adding animal control, by-law enforcement and fire services ensures that these matters are addressed by a committee that has public members.

The Community Services Committee has no changes other than the name which will now be the **Vibrant Community Advisory Committee**. The name reflects the vitality created by connected, inclusive groups and well-planned, culturally rich, accessible spaces and programs.

The only change to the Tom Thomson Art Gallery Advisory Committee is that the chair and vice chair will be Council members. Council members are most familiar with the City's Procedural By-law as well as the City's Code of Conduct.

## **Working Groups**

At the March 9, 2026 Council meeting, Council requested that staff include in the Board and Committee By-law a mechanism to permit the establishment of working groups, being a less formal group of Council and public members who can be appointed quickly to study and report on a particular issue and make recommendations based on its findings.

In September of 2023, the Board and Committee By-law was updated to include the option of a "Task Force" which is defined as:

"a group of experts, the majority of which are not on Council, who collaborate to achieve specific goals, tasks, or projects within a set timeframe. A task force results in an end-product such as a report to Council or the completion of a project. A task force is subject to less stringent procedures to allow for more flexibility with deliberations."

A Task Force and Working Group are very similar and in the draft 2027 Board and Committee By-law, Task Force has been removed in favour of Working Group, which is defined as:

"a subcommittee appointed to achieve specific goals, tasks, or projects within a set timeframe that concludes before or with the current term of Council. A working group produces an outcome, such as a report, a set of recommendations, or the completion of a project, and presents it to Council through one of the City's advisory committees. Working groups do not require Council members but may have a maximum of four (4) Council members as long as Council members make up less than fifty per cent (50%) of the group's membership. Public members for a working group are selected from the Working Group Roster by members of Council. A working group is meant to be self-sufficient and use limited staff resources. Working groups are not subject to the City's Procedural By-law to allow for more flexibility in achieving their outcomes".

The definition above emphasizes that:

- A quorum of Council members (5) cannot be on the committee because it would be considered a Council meeting under the *Municipal Act*.
- In order to avoid meeting the *Municipal Act* definition of committee, the number of Council members on the working group must be less than 50% of the group membership. This allows the working group to not be required to have a formal agenda, take minutes, and comply with open meeting rules.
- A working group does not need to have a clerk/recording secretary and is not subject to the City's Procedural By-law e.g. quorum, agendas, minutes, livestreaming, etc.

While Working Groups will be informal, members will still be subject to the City's volunteer training modules and the City's Code of Conduct.

During recruitment of public members for 2027 Board and Committee vacancies, staff will also introduce and promote individuals sharing information about their areas of interest and ask them to identify whether they would be interested in serving on a working group should one arise.

**This "Working Group Roster" will then be used to quickly identify public members to serve on working groups.** While the Working Group Roster will be actively promoted during the annual board and committee recruitment process, individuals will be able to add their name at any time through the City's website or by paper format.

A similar approach used in research is an Opinion Panel. Opinion Panels are formed by identifying and recruiting participants in advance who are willing to provide input on an ongoing or issue-specific basis. By drawing from an existing pool of engaged contributors, this approach avoids repeated recruitment cycles and allows for timely, focused qualitative research. Opinion Panels are particularly useful for testing policy ideas, exploring perspectives, and identifying common themes to support evidence-informed decision-making.

**In practice, a Working Group can be initiated quickly and in three ways: by Council, by Committee, or by staff** as long as the mandate and timeline have been identified. A Working Group could be established in as little as two (2) weeks or may take up to six (6) weeks depending on coordination requirements. The process would be as follows:

Step 1	Council approval (based on a motion from Council, Committee, or a staff report)
Step 2	<p>If the Working Group includes Council members – they will have a Working Group meeting to select the public members using the Working Group Roster. Staff will contact the selected members.</p> <p>If the Working Group includes public members only, Council will select the members during a closed session using the Working Group Roster. Staff will contact the selected members.</p>
Step 3	Now that composition is established, the Working Group can start to meet.
Step 4	Staff will present a consent agenda report noting the Working Group members and update the Board and Committee By-law.

The timeline for the establishment of a Working Group is an improvement over the establishment of a Task Force or Committee that would take anywhere from eight (8) to twelve (12) weeks due to staff reports, recruitment, selection, and by-law amendments.

It is important that Working Groups be created in an open and transparent way so that the public knows who is working on behalf of the City. While, Working Groups can begin before the Board and Committee By-law is updated, all Working Group members will be included in the Board and Committee By-law for transparency and tracking purposes.

Additionally, the *Municipal Act, 2001* provides that for committees consisting solely of council members, the Mayor, under strong mayor powers has the ability to establish or dissolve committees, appoint chairs and vice-chairs, and assign functions to committees.

### **Owen Sound Fund Committee**

Following consultation with the Community Foundation Grey Bruce, staff recommend maintaining Council’s appointment to the Owen Sound Fund Committee. During a recent discussion, the Executive Director noted that the Community Foundation was originally established as a result of work undertaken by the City of Owen Sound at the time, underscoring the historical foundation of the City’s relationship with the organization.

Council representation remains important as staff anticipate the committee will meet on a quarterly basis, and City participation supports ongoing oversight, communication, and alignment. This representation is also consistent with the previously approved Donor Fund Agreement and reflects the existing financial relationship between the City and the Foundation. Staff will continue to explore opportunities to further strengthen the partnership between the City and the Community Foundation.

## **Conservation Authorities**

On March 10, 2026, the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks announced the Province's intention to consolidate Ontario's 36 conservation authorities into 9 regional conservation authorities. Governance would remain municipal but shift from lower-tier municipal representation to upper-tier and single-tier municipalities. For the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority, this would mean representation through Grey County and Bruce County. While Local Watershed Councils are proposed to help maintain local perspectives and knowledge, details regarding their role and influence have not yet been provided.

In the coming weeks, the province plans to introduce amendments to the *Conservation Authorities Act* that would implement the consolidation and set out a path to consolidation. The province is targeting early 2027 for the consolidation to take effect.

Being as Council does not have decision making authority over the conservation authority framework, staff are requesting approval from Council to incorporate any updated changes to the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority Board in the 2027 Board and Committee By-law once confirmed by the province.

## **Board and Committee Appointment Terms**

### **Council Appointments to Boards and Committees**

The Board and Committee By-law currently provides that in an election year, the board and committee terms for Council members end with the term of Council. Beginning in the new term of Council, Council membership on boards and committees is determined by the following:

- a. Where a Council member is re-elected, they continue to sit on the same boards and committees until successors are appointed; and

- b. Where a Council member is not re-elected, an elected Council member is assigned, alphabetically, to assume membership on boards and committees until successors are appointed.

In practice, this means that a new, incoming Council member is assigned alphabetically to a board or committee for November, December, and January with selections being made in December/January and new terms beginning February 1.

In consultation with the representatives from the Boards that Council members are appointed to, they expressed interest in having permanent appointments made as quickly as possible after the election.

Staff reviewed the Council calendar and the earliest Council appointments could be made to boards and committees is December. **This would move the start of board and committee terms from February 1, 2027, to December 15, 2026**, and would leave approximately 1 month where a Council representative would not be present should a board meeting be held (outgoing members continue their appointments until November 16, 2026). Should Council support transitioning to this model, staff will notify the applicable boards in case they want to adjust their meeting schedule. The updated process is outlined in the chart below.

Date	Description
November 30	First Regular Council Meeting and members make their selections
December 4	Last day for trades
December 14	Second Regular Council Meeting and the appointment by-law will be presented for approval
December 15	Board and committee terms for Council members begin December 15

Staff recommend that the above process be followed so that temporary training is not required for board appointments and there is minimal disruption to representation at meetings. Prior to selections, staff will provide an overview of boards and committees and the selection process as part of Council orientation, the week before selections are made. Council previously approved 2-year terms, where possible, so terms would generally end December 31, 2028.

## Public Member Appointments to Boards and Committees

Staff reviewed the timelines for public appointments to boards and committees and propose utilizing the timeline below for 2027:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Description</b>
October 19 to November 20	Applications accepted. Should municipal election candidates or River District Board candidates not be elected, this gives them time to apply to serve on a City Board or Committee
November 30	Closed report to review application material
December 14	Open report and by-law to appoint public member applicants
January 1	New committee terms for public members begin

Should Council support the above process, these terms would generally end December 31, 2028.

The revised timelines have been reviewed and approved by SLT and Clerks. Should Council support this change, the start dates of the term will need to be updated in the Board, Committee, and Seat Selection Policy. Additionally, the seating arrangements would change from February 1 to January 1.

Staff propose that public member appointments on the Community Services Committee, the Operations Committee, and the Tom Thomson Art Gallery Advisory Committee that extend beyond 2027, be provided the opportunity to continue their term on the corresponding committee (Vibrant, Sustainable or Tom Thomson Art Gallery), with vacancies being filled through recruitment.

## Procedural By-law Updates

In response to feedback received during the review of the committee structure and to ensure alignment between the Procedural By-law and the Board and Committee By-law, staff recommend making the following updates to the Procedural By-law:

- Remove references to Standing Committees to align with the Board and Committee By-law.

- Publish committee agendas one week in advance of the meeting so that members and the public have more time to review the material. A re-publish would be permitted in extenuating circumstances 72 hours in advance of the meeting.
- Make housekeeping changes to the absence of the chair section to clarify who calls the meeting to order and how an acting chair is selected.
- Make housekeeping changes to the Budget Amendment section to clarify the process for making amendments after the budget is approved.

Through the feedback received, it was also suggested that there be a consent agenda on committee agendas when warranted. While no change to the Procedural By-law is required for this update, staff will start implementing this in 2027.

The Notice By-law requires that changes to the Procedural By-law be published in a newspaper and on the City's website at least 10-days before the Council meeting where the by-law will be considered.

## **2027 Council and Committee Meeting Calendar**

Attached to the report is a draft 2027 Council and Committee meeting calendar. The calendar has been reviewed by and is supported by SLT.

While reviewing the calendar, staff wish to highlight the following:

- Where possible, Regular Council Meetings are scheduled on the second and fourth Mondays of the month.
- A number of Special Council Meetings are scheduled for continued education and capital budget.
- Semi-annual meetings with the Owen Sound Police Service Board are scheduled in June and December, in keeping with the Protocol Agreement.
- A summer hiatus is included in the month of August.
- Meetings of Boards that Council members are appointed to are noted in the legend.
- Community organization committees that Council members are appointed to are not included in the legend because they do not meet on set schedules.
- 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 meeting dates/times have been avoided.
- Major municipal conferences have been noted in the legend.

A similar number of Regular Council meetings is being proposed for 2027 compared to previous years as noted in the chart below. In addition to the 19 Regular Meetings, there are also 4 Special Meetings that are scheduled. Leading into 2027, the new Council will be busy with inauguration, two (2) Council meetings, and nine (9) orientation sessions scheduled in November and December 2026.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of Regular Meeting</b>
2022	18
2023	20
2024	21
2024	20
2026	18
2027	19

Advisory Committee meetings are included in the calendar and scheduled generally as outlined in the chart below.

<b>Advisory Committee</b>	<b>Day of Month</b>	<b>Time</b>
Resilient Community	1 <sup>st</sup> Tuesday	9:00 a.m.
Sustainable Community	3 <sup>rd</sup> Thursday	5:30 p.m.
Vibrant Community	Last Wednesday	5:30 p.m.
Tom Thomson Art Gallery	1 <sup>st</sup> Wednesday, quarterly	2:00 p.m.

There are currently 67 Council, Board, and Committee meetings scheduled for 2027.

## **Resource Alignment:**

### **Financial Resources**

There are no financial impacts for updates to the committee structure or approval of the meeting calendar.

## **Human Resources**

Staff from the Clerk's Team and the Communications Team will spend time updating the website, printed materials, and application form.

## **Time and Scheduling**

The new committee structure will begin January 1, 2027, with selections being made in December and training occurring in December/January.

## **Technology and Infrastructure**

There are no changes to technology or infrastructure requirements.

## **Climate and Environmental Impacts:**

There are no anticipated climate or environmental impacts.

## **Communication and Engagement:**

In response to feedback from Council and committees, staff will update the website, printed materials, and orientation resources to reflect the revised 2027 committee structure.

The 2027 Council and Committee meeting calendar will be added to the website, candidate information package, and emailed to Rogers Television.

## **Report Developed in Consultation With:**

Senior Leadership Team, Manager of Legislative Services, Deputy Clerk, Committee and Executive Support Coordinator

## **Attachments:**

1. Terms of Reference – Resilient Community Advisory Committee
2. Terms of Reference – Sustainable Community Advisory Committee
3. Terms of Reference – Vibrant Community Advisory Committee
4. Terms of Reference – Tom Thomson Art Gallery Advisory Committee
5. 2027 Board and Committee By-law
6. 2027 Council and Committee Meeting Calendar

**Reviewed by:**

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](mailto:bbloomfield@owensound.ca) or 519-376-4440 ext. 1247.