

Date: December 18, 2015
From: Councillor Debra McCarthy
To: Members of Council and Cobourg citizens
Subject: Response to the December 21, 2015 Regular Council Agenda item report dated December 3, 2015, "Update based on comments received from the Public Governance and Committee of the Whole Meetings held on November 30, 2015" Governance Model Review Ad Hoc Working Group Recommendations — Revised Report

Preamble

As a member of the Governance Model Review Ad Hoc Working Group Committee, I support the recommendations of the December 3, 2015 report to Council. The recommendations are included in the report without accompanying rationale because records of shared discussion within a Council-member working group are classified as working notes and therefore confidential. It was my hope that the report would have included the rationale for each of the recommendations but it is not procedurally permitted.

It goes to the heart of why I ran for election to Cobourg Council that a rationale for these recommendations be provided. In the spirit of openness, transparency and accountability, I am sharing my reasons for supporting the recommendations. At the outset I preferred the Committee of the Whole system but I support these changes to the current system as I believe information will be equally shared among Councillors. There will be an opportunity at the next review January or February 2017 to evaluate if the desired outcomes have been achieved.

Background

On May 25, 2015, at the Special Committee of the Whole about Governance, the Council of the Town of Cobourg met to discuss the pros and cons of the current Coordinator system and the Committee of the Whole system as practiced by the Town of Blue Mountain. Feedback was provided by members of Council and delegations who made presentations. Council struck an Ad Hoc Governance Model Review Committee to function as a working group of Council to review these two models in more depth and to report to Council by November 2015. Members of the Committee included:

Mayor Gil Brocannier
Deputy Mayor John Henderson
Councillor Debra McCarthy
CAO Stephen Peacock
Town Clerk Lorraine Brace

The Committee met September 9, October 20, and November 9, 2015. A draft version of the recommendations were posted to Civic Web November 18, 2015, for consideration at a public meeting held Nov. 30, 2015, where feedback from members of Council and the public was received.

Below are the recommendations with my accompanying rationale which I have placed in the following Categories:

- 1) Governance model recommendations
- 2) Committee of the Whole and Council meeting recommendations
- 3) Coordinator meeting recommendations
- 4) Municipal Advisory Committee review recommendations

1) Governance Model Recommendations

It is recommended that the Coordinator system be retained with adjustments to improve communication and transparency. This recommendation is based on a detailed review of the Town of Blue Mountains model. A hybrid model retaining the existing system allows for greater input and understanding of issues facing Council. My rationale is based on:

- The role of the Coordinator is to be a conduit of information to Council, not a topic specialist
- Coordinators have the opportunity to develop greater awareness of work being carried out by Town staff in the assigned portfolio becoming a resource to Council and members of the public
- The workload of Council is spread among Councillors who are also members of related advisory committees that have community appointments
- The Committee of the Whole system has a significant reduction in advisory committees reducing the opportunity for community involvement
- The Committee of the Whole system seems to work well in municipalities where residents are seasonal
- The Committee of the Whole system transfers more decision-making power to the CAO as more decisions are made earlier on by staff and approved by the CAO before being reviewed by Council

To optimize the effectiveness of the existing system and ensure that all of Council receives information in a timely manner adjustments were considered and are detailed in the sections outlined below.

2) Committee of the Whole and Regular Council Meeting Recommendations

| Recommendation | Comments |
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| The pilot initiative of a 3 week Council cycle has been deemed to be successful and it is recommended that this schedule be continued. | No change - Posting Committee of the Whole agendas 10 days in advance has provided greater time for members of Council to prepare and for members of the public to be informed of reports coming to Council. Flexibility will remain for time sensitive reports being added less than 10 days when necessary. |

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| <p>Broadcasting of all Council and Committee of the Whole meetings.</p> | <p>New – 2015 - 2018 Strategic Action 1.2 will allow the public to observe the debates that occur in both meetings of Council.</p> |
| <p>All persons requesting delegation status at Council meetings will be requested to provide written submissions to the Municipal Clerk outlining their topic and issues including a recommendation if requesting an action from Council for inclusion in Council agenda in advance of the printing of the agenda.</p> | <p>Change - Members of Council will be better prepared to ask questions of clarification of delegations when written submissions are provided in advance with the agenda.</p> |
| <p>At the Committee of the Whole meetings, each Council Coordinator will remain in their Council seat while assuming the role of Chair for the portion of the meeting for items under their area of responsibility including placing motions on the floor, leading the debate and calling for the vote in accordance with Council’s Procedural By-Law.</p> | <p>New - This is an adaptation of the Standing Committee model providing increased leadership experience as Chair for members of Council. Municipal Staff/Directors or Managers as required will present their respective staff reports to Council.</p> |
| <p>Each Coordinator has an assigned Councillor as back up that will assume his/her duties in the event of an absence from a CofWhole or Regular Council meeting.</p> | <p>New - This will provide coverage for a Coordinator in their absence. Council representation on advisory committees will remain the same. The recommended changes to the advisory committees (as identified in Appendix A) will even the workload of Council members. Consideration to have two Council members on the Parks Advisory Committee was not recommended at this time but can be revisited at the next governance review.</p> |
| <p>The Committee of the Whole and Regular Council meetings will continue to be held at 7:00 p.m. on Mondays unless it falls on a Statutory Holiday. Summer meetings will continue to be held at 4:00 p.m. in July and August as scheduled; as is the present practice. Public meetings will begin at 6:00 p.m. prior to Council meetings.</p> | <p>No change - Continuing with a 7:00 pm start for Regular Council will permit members of Council and the public who are working full-time to be in attendance.</p> |

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| <p>If a Member of Council wishes to have an item or motion placed on the agenda (within the scope of Council) for discussion at a Committee of the Whole meeting, the member shall notify the Municipal Clerk in writing and shall provide an outline of the issue with a recommended motion at least 10 full working days prior to the meeting to incorporate within the meeting Agenda package. This recommendation will dispense with the requirement for a 'Notice of Motion' and would be removed from the Council Procedural By-law.</p> | <p>New - Removing a Notice of Motion permits a member of Council to bring a motion forward without the delay of waiting for the next Committee of the Whole meeting as is the case with a Notice of Motion. This would be for a separate agenda item than a report from staff.</p> |
| <p>'Community Announcements' header to be added to Regular Council meeting agendas</p> | <p>New – replaces Coordinator Reports at the Committee of the Whole meeting providing Councillors the opportunity to relay information on delegated initiatives outside the purview of staff reports.</p> |
| <p>Council Report format will be standardized.</p> | <p>New – Council will adopt a report writing/template policy so that reports to Council, committees and staff are presented in a consistent and methodical manner using the standardized template as part of iCompass/Civic Web software program.</p> |

3) Coordinator Meeting Recommendations

| Recommendation | Comment |
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| <p>In general, Coordinator and staff meetings will be held on a monthly basis</p> | <p>No change</p> |
| <p>All Coordinator and staff meeting agendas are to be produced and circulated to members of Council in confidence a minimum of three (3) days in advance of each meeting.</p> | <p>New - This will allow all of Council to be aware of the topics under consideration at Coordinator meetings allowing for equal access to information.</p> |
| <p>Councillors interested in attending other Councillor/Coordinator meetings are invited to do so with a maximum of two (2) additional Councillor-attendees at any one meeting. Attendance will be on a first come basis. Council members must advise the respective Council/Coordinator or staff representative of their intention to attend in advance of the scheduled meeting.</p> | <p>New - Council Members will be encouraged to submit questions to Coordinators or Municipal Staff to include on the monthly Coordinator meeting agenda for discussion. The number of Councillors attending a Coordinator meeting cannot be more than three (3) so that a quorum of Council does not occur.</p> |

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| <p>Coordinator and municipal staff meeting working notes are to be prepared and distributed as a 'Confidential' document to the Mayor, Council Members and Division Directors a maximum of 10 days following the meeting.</p> | <p>Change - Timely delivery of the Coordinator Meeting working notes permits members of Council to be fully informed. Working notes are confidential because they are investigative in nature and may not reflect the final report being presented to members of Council at Committee of the Whole and Council for discussion and decision.</p> |
| <p>Annual schedules of all Coordinator meetings are to be prepared and circulated by the Municipal Clerk.</p> | <p>No change</p> |

4. Municipal Advisory Committee Review Recommendations

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| <p>Dissolve the Waterfront Advisory Committee transferring the community and stakeholder members to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee.</p> | <p>New - Council passed a motion freezing expansion plans at the marina during this term of Council. It is recognized that the terms of reference for the Waterfront Advisory Committee are no longer applicable and that the waterfront is included in the Parks Master Plan.</p> |
| <p>Terms of Reference will be developed by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee in January 2016.</p> | <p>New - The size of the Parks and Recreation Committee will be expanded to accommodate the transfers of members from the Waterfront Advisory Committee with the provision that as members leave the committee no replacement shall occur until membership reaches the original mandated numbers of 6 + 1 council appointment.</p> |
| <p>Committee for Art in Public Spaces (CAPS) be dissolved and that its mandate be included in the anticipated future Arts and Cultural Advisory Committee. In the interim, it is recommended that Cobourg Heritage Advisory Committee assume this role.</p> | <p>New - It is anticipated that an Arts and Culture Advisory Committee will be established once the Cultural Master Plan is completed. In the interim, the Public Art Policy will be reviewed and updated by the Cobourg Heritage Advisory Committee. Art, culture and/or heritage projects will be approved by the Cobourg Heritage Advisory Committee until such time as an Arts and Culture Advisory Committee is approved by Council.</p> |

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| <p>The Seniors Advisory Committee be dissolved, and the Community Services Coordinator be the Council Liaison to the Seniors Activity Center.</p> | <p>New - The Seniors Activity Centre has evolved to be a fully functioning hub for seniors' recreational activities. Seniors can bring any other concerns to the Council Liaison who can refer them to the appropriate Town advisory committee.</p> |
| <p>The Environmental Advisory Committee be dissolved and be consolidated with the Active Transportation Advisory Committee under a Public Works Advisory Committee with a new name and terms of reference. This committee is to be made up of the present members of the Active Transportation Advisory Committee. Up to three (3) existing appointed members of the Environmental Advisory Committee are to be asked to join the newly established committee.</p> | <p>New - The new committee will develop terms of reference for active transportation, sustainability and environmental issues associated with public works activities. The size of the Public Works Advisory Committee will be expanded to accommodate these transfers with the provision that as members leave the committee no replacement shall occur until membership reaches the original mandated numbers of 6 + 1 council appointment.</p> |
| <p>The Planning Advisory Committee be re-named "Planning and Sustainability Advisory Committee". This committee is to be made up of present members of the Planning Advisory Committee. Up to three (3) existing appointed members of the Environmental Committee are to be asked to join the newly established committee.</p> | <p>New - Additions to this committee's mandate will include environmental and planning issues and assistance with completion of the Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP). The size of the Planning and Sustainability Advisory Committee will be expanded to accommodate these transfers with the provision that as members leave the committee no replacement shall occur until membership reaches the original mandated numbers of 6 + 1 council appointment.</p> |
| <p>The Sustainability and Climate Action Plan for the Town of Cobourg be given a higher priority and be used to inform the Town of Cobourg's sustainability efforts moving forward.</p> | <p>New - This is based on the feedback from citizens at the Governance Model Review Public Meeting and will be reflected in 2016 budget deliberations.</p> |
| <p>There will no longer be Council or Municipal staff appointed to the Cobourg/Port Hope Waterfront Trail and Parks Committee</p> | <p>New - This is a special interest/stakeholder organization</p> |

Respectfully submitted,
Debra McCarthy
 Councillor for the Town of Cobourg