

## **Staff Report To Council**

**From:** Vicki McDonald, Manager of Legislative Services/Clerk  
**Date:** June 2, 2025  
**Report:** CL-05-25  
**Subject** **Procedure By-Law Review and Update**

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### **Recommendation**

That Report CL-05-25 Procedure By-law Review and Update be received; and

That the Procedure By-law as presented, be brought forth at the June 16, 2025, council meeting for adoption.

### **Background**

The *Municipal Act, 2001* requires that every municipality pass a by-law for governing the calling, place and proceedings of meetings. The last comprehensive review of the Town's Procedure By-law was completed in 2016, with amendments in 2018, 2019, and 2020. Effective governance, administration and conduct of meetings has become increasingly challenging to navigate with continuous legislative and societal changes impacting the process.

A key priority in the Town's Strategic Plan is Open and Responsible Government, which defines council's objective of delivering services in a friendly, efficient and effective manner while providing an exceptional working environment for employees.

Staff have conducted a comprehensive housekeeping review of the Procedure By-law to update, clarify, and incorporate provisions with consideration for the aforementioned and is proposing the adoption of a new by-law due to the extent of the modifications.

### **Discussion**

Municipal procedure by-laws are essential for governing the conduct of council and committee meetings. They ensure that meetings are conducted in an orderly, transparent, and efficient manner and reflect statutory requirements and provisions such as conflict of interest declarations, public notice of meetings and the roles and responsibilities of members of council.

It is important that municipalities review their governance and procedure by-laws to identify outdated, confusing or problematic rules and procedures. Updating procedures can streamline operations and make municipal governance more efficient. As municipalities continue to face evolving challenges and needs, an effective procedure by-law is valuable in allowing the town to adapt to these complexities and remain effective. Additionally, staying informed about and incorporating best practices in governance can improve overall municipal performance.

Summarized below are the notable amendments to the proposed procedure by-law. Minor amendments or administrative changes have not been included in the following synopsis. A copy of the draft by-law and sample agenda are attached to this report.

1. New and updated definitions for enhanced clarity.
2. Application and Suspension of Rules (section 3). This information was not previously included, and questions have been raised during this term of council regarding the process. Including in the by-law ensures all members of council and committees are aware of this provision and the appropriate process.
3. Administrative Authority of Clerk (section 4). Provides improved measure of efficiency for conduct of meetings and minor administrative corrections.
4. Orientation, Emergency and Workshop has been added to the types of meetings (section 5.2, 5.5, 5.6). This provides clarity and greater flexibility in scheduling meetings for their appropriate function/purpose.
5. Addition of process for Cancellation of Meeting (section 5.8)
6. Public Notice of Meeting (section 5.9). The requirements for public notice were noted individually under each meeting type. For ease of reference public notice requirements have been consolidated.
7. Participation of Mayor in Debate (section 7). This process was not previously included and is a best practice for accountability and transparency.
8. Voting on Questions (section 11). Updated to provide clearer direction on voting and identifying the number of votes required for a majority, 2/3 and 1/3 vote of members.
9. Introduction of Consent Agenda. A consent agenda is an effective tool to manage routine information reports and correspondence by receiving the items collectively rather than speaking to each item individually. If there is an item on the consent agenda that a council member wishes to bring forth, notice can be given to the clerk to pull this item for discussion at council (in advance of the meeting). This approach ensures that more critical issues receive the time and attention required to make a fully informed decision and contributes to effective use of council and staff time that they dedicate to meetings.
10. Removing committee of the whole meetings and holding only council meetings. Some of the challenges being faced include reduced time frames for grant submissions, approvals for entering into funding agreements and contracts, awarding project tenders, for example. Implementing council meetings twice per month improves the town's ability to successfully conduct business in a timelier manner thus improving service to residents and stakeholders.
11. Unfinished Business (section 13.4). Distinguishes the method of handling agenda items that were not addressed at the meeting.

12. Reconsideration of a Council Decision (section 20). This category was added as questions were raised regarding the process. Including in the by-law provides clear awareness of the appropriate process.

It is expected that the updated Procedure By-law will also have the following effects;

1. Enhanced Transparency: With clear rules and procedures, the new by-law will make council operations more transparent to the public.
2. Improved Public Trust: By promoting open meeting and ethical conduct, the by-law is expected to enhance public trust in the municipal government.
3. Efficient Meetings: The structured procedures will help in conducting meetings more efficiently, ensuring that all agenda items are addressed in a timely manner

The adoption of a refreshed procedure by-law affirms council's commitment to accountability and transparency in local governance. The by-law promotes the principles of good governance and ensures council meetings are conducted in a fair, efficient and orderly manner, which is crucial for effective decision-making.

### **Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications related to this report.

### **Link to Strategic Plan**

This report supports the indicated Strategic Goals and Action Plans of the Town of Hanover.

#### ☐ **Goal 1: Safe and Reliable Infrastructure**

Build, maintain and continuously improve our municipally owned properties, buildings, and equipment.

#### ☐ **Goal 2: Healthy and Welcoming Community**

Care for our natural environment and provide an enviable quality of life for everyone who calls Hanover "home".

#### ☐ **Goal 3: Strong and Vibrant Economy**

Refresh downtown Hanover and retain and attract local economic investment and jobs.

#### ☐ **Goal 4: Balanced Growth**

Work together to create a community we can all be proud of.

#### ☒ **Goal 5: Open and Responsible Government**

Deliver services in a friendly, efficient and effective manner while providing an exceptional working environment for our employees.

Respectfully submitted,

Concurrence,

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Sherri Walden  
CAO