

**Subject:** Proposed 2022 Council Meeting Schedule**Recommendation:**

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council receive Report #2021-0122 – Clerks - Proposed 2022 Council Meeting Schedule;**

**AND THAT the appended Tuesday 2022 Council Meeting Schedule be submitted for Council approval at Council's next regular meeting;**

**AND THAT Council approve and direct the decommissioning of Policies and Priorities Committee;**

**AND THAT Council approve and direct the agenda structure to include Committee of the Whole within all Regular Council Meetings;**

**AND THAT the Clerk be directed to present the necessary By-law to amend the Town's Procedural By-Law to:**

- 1. Call for Tuesday Regular Council and Public Meetings under the *Planning Act*;**
- 2. Include the addition of a third meeting within the summer schedule, to be determined by staff and approved by Council in advance;**
- 3. Decommission the Policies and Priorities Committee; and**
- 4. Establish a Committee of the Whole standing agenda item within the Regular Council Agenda;**

**AND THAT the By-Law be presented at the next Regular Meeting of Council being October 4, 2021.**

**Background:**

The Town of Pelham's Procedural By-law No. 4107(2019), as amended, provides the framework for the Town of Pelham's Council meeting schedule by stating Council shall meet as Regular Council on the first and second Monday of the month with a Committee meeting to follow. Currently, the first Monday of the month is reserved for the Policy and Priorities Committee and the third Monday of the month

is reserved for Committee of the Whole.

The Procedural By-Law further calls for Council to meet on the second Monday of the month for Public Meetings under the *Planning Act*.

The Procedural By-law provides special provisions for a summer schedule and therefore reduces Regular Council meetings to one Regular Council meeting and one Public Meeting in both July and August, with no scheduled Committee meetings.

Although the Procedural By-law provides the framework for when Council shall meet, there are additional provisions within the By-law to allow for the calling of special meetings and topic-specific public meetings.

On March 23, 2020 Council for the Town of Pelham amended the Procedural By-law to provide for electronic meetings during a declared emergency, by Amending By-law No. 4217(2020). Council is currently meeting in a council-in-committee format, as Policy and Priorities Committee and Committee of the Whole have been temporarily suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic. Committee meetings have been included on the proposed 2022 meeting schedule(s), should the COVID-19 pandemic be declared over and Council reinstates Committee meetings.

This report seeks three amendments to the Procedural By-law:

#1. Staff seek Council approval to amend the Procedural By-law to schedule Regular Meetings of Council on the first and third Tuesday of each month, as well as Public Meetings under the *Planning Act* on the second Tuesday of the month.

#2. Staff are seeking the addition of a third Regular Council meeting within the summer schedule.

#3. Staff seek the complete elimination of Policies and Priorities Committee. Staff recommend Council meet as Committee of the Whole within the Regular Council Meeting to facilitate less formal discussion and questioning.

In order to ensure that Council meeting dates are published in advance of the calendar year, Council is traditionally presented a draft meeting schedule in the fall of each year. A meeting schedule is established annually to accommodate Statutory Holidays, Religious Holidays and other known events, such as the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Annual Conference and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario Annual General Meeting.

Approval of this report will provide public notice that the Town of Pelham intends to amend the Procedural By-law.

### **Analysis:**

Municipal Council sets the strategic goals, priorities and direction of the municipality and therefore, meeting regularly and consistently is critical to municipal operation and business continuity. In order to ensure optimal attendance, when creating the upcoming Council Meeting Schedule, consideration is given to Statutory Holidays, Religious Holidays and various conferences and events where attendance by Members of Council and senior leadership is anticipated.

### **Tuesday Meeting Schedule**

Staff recommend the Procedural By-law be amended to call for Regular Council meetings to be scheduled on the first and third Tuesday of each month and for Public Meetings under the *Planning Act* to be scheduled on the second Tuesday of each month.

As the majority of statutory and civic holidays fall on Mondays, Council meetings are mandated by the Procedural By-Law to be shifted to the Tuesday following a holiday. During the calendar year of 2021, five of 20 Regular Council meetings were scheduled on a Tuesday in recognition of a holiday. Staff believe a Tuesday meeting schedule would apply consistency to the 2022 meeting schedule, with no alternative meeting dates required.

Monday night meetings have further proven difficult for staff attempting to schedule and accommodate frequent municipal delegates such as the Niagara Region. The Niagara Region regularly appears as a delegate before Niagara local area municipalities each month. As illustrated below, eight of the 12 Niagara local area municipalities meet on Monday. A recent scheduling conflict resulted in the Niagara Region being unable to attend the July 26, 2021 Town of Pelham Council meeting, as originally planned, due to the Region's commitment to appear as a delegate at neighboring municipalities. To accommodate the delegation, the Niagara Region appeared as a delegate on the August 23, 2021 Council meeting. This presented a challenging time crunch for Council and staff as municipal feedback related to the Transit Governance Model was due to the Niagara Region by August 25, 2021.

Additionally, The Town Solicitor is a shared position between the Town of Pelham (40%), Town of Fort Erie (40%) and Township of Wainfleet (20%). Accordingly, there are times when the Town Solicitor is required to attend two municipal Council meetings in the same night. This ability will cease or be dramatically reduced upon

the return of in-person meetings (which has already happened in Fort Erie). The recommendation of Tuesday Council meetings should alleviate any potential conflicts the Town Solicitor has with the Town of Fort Erie. The Town Solicitor is not regularly required to attend Township of Wainfleet Council meetings.

Monday night Council meetings might also be inconvenient to Members of Council as the current schedule generally relies on Councillors preparing for their meetings on the weekend. Weekends are designed for rest, relaxation and family time, opposed to meeting preparation time. Staff commend Members of Council for always being prepared for Monday night meetings; however, recognize this may encroach on Council Members personal time. Should a Tuesday meeting night schedule be adopted, this should allow Council more weekend free time.

Staff recognize, should Council adopt a Tuesday meeting schedule, this will conflict with some Council Advisory Committee current meeting schedules, such as the Committee of Adjustment; however, any Advisory Committee meeting schedule can be shifted to accommodate the adopted Council Schedule.

### **Municipal Council Meeting Time/ Date Comparison Chart**

*As of July 13, 2021*

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Day of the Week</b>	<b>Meeting Start Time</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Niagara Region	Thursday	6:30 p.m.	4 <sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month (Except 3 <sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month in November & December)
Fort Erie	Monday	6:00 p.m.	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Monday of each month
Grimsby	Monday	8:00 p.m.	1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday of each month
Lincoln	Monday	6:00 p.m.	Every 3 weeks
Niagara Falls	Tuesday	4:00 p.m. July and August meetings begin at 1:00 p.m.	Every 3 weeks
Niagara-on-the-Lake	Monday	6:00 p.m.	Every 4 weeks

Pelham	Monday	5:30 p.m.	1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday of each month
Port Colborne	Monday	6:30 p.m.	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Monday of each month
St. Catharines	Monday	6:00 p.m.	Varying frequency
Thorold	Tuesday	6:30 p.m.	1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month
Wainfleet	Tuesday	7:00 p.m.	Every 3 weeks
Welland	Tuesday	7:00 p.m.	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month
West Lincoln	Monday	7:00 p.m.	4 <sup>th</sup> Monday of each month

### **Summer Schedule**

As stated above, municipal councils are critical to the operation of a municipality. The current summer schedule leaves a four-week gap between both the July and August Regular Meetings of Council. Staff recommend the inclusion of a third Regular Meeting of Council within the summer schedule. Staff recommend the Procedural By-Law not designate a specific Tuesday for the said third meeting, but rather allow staff flexibility in setting the date. Having said this, the proposed date selected by staff will always be presented to Council in the fall of the preceding year for Council's consideration and approval. The proposed third meeting for 2022 is illustrated on the appended schedule(s).

The inclusion of a third Regular Council meeting is suggested to ensure corporate business is addressed in a timely manner. Furthermore, a third meeting would reduce the items of business presented on each agenda, thereby reducing the length of each meeting. Provisions for the calling of special meetings and topic-specific public meetings would remain in effect.

### **Committee of the Whole**

Upon termination of the declared pandemic, Council may reinstate Committee meetings. Staff recommend the Procedural By-law be amended to decommission Policies and Priorities Committee. Staff propose that Council meet as Committee of the Whole within the regular session of each Regular Council Meeting. Should Council adopt this process, a regular standing agenda item will be used for Council to consider items, such as policies and staff reports not requiring immediate action, as Committee and ratify Committee decisions at the subsequent Council meeting. This structure will not detract from items forwarded to Council for direct approval.

Staff have deemed it expedient to meet as Committee within the same session as Regular Council to eliminate the requirement of two separate meetings. A singular meeting will circumvent the requirement of two agendas, minutes and a break in livestreaming and recording, thereby saving time.

### **Financial Considerations:**

There are no costs associated with this proposal.

### **Alternatives Reviewed:**

Council can consider any of the alternative options identified below:

#### **Meeting Schedule**

##### Alternative Option One

Council can decide to proceed with the current regular meeting schedule being the first and third Monday of each month with the Public Meetings under the *Planning Act* on the second Monday of each month. Should Council wish to proceed in this manner, it is recommended that Council include a third regular meeting within the summer meeting schedule.

##### Alternative Option Two

Council can decide to amend the Procedural By-law, changing the regular meeting schedule to the first and third Tuesday of each month. With this alternative, the summer schedule would remain at one meeting held the third Tuesday of July and August. Public Meetings under the *Planning Act* would be scheduled on the second Tuesday of each month, including the summer schedule.

##### Alternative Option Three

Council can decide to proceed with a regular meeting schedule being the first and third Monday of each month, while maintaining the current summer schedule being one meeting on the third Monday of July and August. Public Meetings under the *Planning Act* are to be scheduled on the second Monday of each month.

#### **Committee of the Whole**

##### Alternative Option One

Council can decide to alternate between sitting as Committee of the Whole and Council. For example, Council could meet as Committee of the Whole on the first Tuesday of the month and Council on the second Tuesday of the month. Staff do

not advise of this alternative as it may result in the delay of approval of time-sensitive items of business.

#### Alternative Option Two

Council can decide to meet as Committee of the Whole in a separate session following Regular Council. This is more similar to the traditional meeting style at the Town of Pelham.

#### Alternative Option Three

Council can decide to meet as Committee of the Whole each month either during the Regular Council session of one meeting or in a separate session following Regular Council. If Council wishes to meet only once a month as Committee, staff recommend this occur at the first meeting of the month.

### **Strategic Plan Relationship: Communication and Engagement**

Developing a meeting schedule in advance of the calendar year allows for the publication of scheduled meeting dates on the Town's website, increasing initiatives in transparency, communication and community engagement.

### **Consultation:**

None.

### **Other Pertinent Reports/Attachments:**

Proposed 2022 Council Meeting Schedule - Tuesday  
Proposed 2022 Council Meeting Schedule – Monday  
Proposed Procedural By-law Amendment, in draft.

### **Prepared and Recommended by:**

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### **Prepared and Submitted by:**

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