

Subject: Ward Boundary and Council Composition Update and Selection Process for Deputy Mayor

Recommendation:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council receive Report #2022-0224 Ward Boundary and Council Composition Update and Selection Process for Deputy Mayor, for information;

AND THAT Council authorize and direct staff to investigate the cost of a Ward Boundary and Council Composition Report from Watson & Associates for Council's consideration within the 2023 Budget process;

AND THAT Council direct staff to include a report for the new Council's consideration at their inaugural meeting for determination of the process to appointing a Deputy Mayor at the December 5, 2022 Council meeting.

Background:

The Town of Pelham was established in 1970 with a three (3) ward system. Minor ward adjustments were completed in 1978.

In 2013 the Town of Pelham underwent a boundary review which was completed by Watson and Associates. The report from Watson and Associates in 2013 cost approximately \$20,453.00.

In 2011 the Town of Pelham's population was 16,598. In 2013 the Town of Pelham's population was 17,110. In 2021 the Town of Pelham's population was 18,192. Growth has been both significant and uneven: the vast majority of residential building permits are issued in the urban boundary of Fonthill, and more recently the majority of the growth has been in the Eastern portion of Fonthill. This has likely exacerbated representation challenges.

Historically, Council for the Town of Pelham adopts a Deputy Mayor By-Law at the start of the term. This by-law appoints each member of Council, in alphabetical order, as Deputy Mayor for an eight (8) month term.

Analysis:

Ward Boundary Review

The 2013 Watson and Associates report indicated it is best practice to regularly review ward boundaries to ensure:

1. Wards should constitute an effective and equitable system of representation;
2. Wards should preserve communities of interest;
3. Wards should recognize natural physical features (rivers, lakes, swamps) or natural barriers/dividers (highways, railways);
4. Wards should recognize areas of growth/decline, population trends, density; and
5. Wards should recognize accessibility and/or communication issues.

As it is approximately 10 years since the last ward boundary review and Pelham has continued to grow since 2013, staff recommend a ward boundary and Council composition review be completed prior to the next regular municipal and school board election (2026). Staff note, conducting such reviews periodically is a municipal best practice.

Council Composition and Deputy Mayor Selection

Further to reviewing ward boundaries it is important to review Council composition. Often the two processes are reviewed in conjunction with one-another. Currently, the Town of Pelham Council consists of six (6) Councillors elected in three (3) wards and a Mayor elected at large. The 2013 report from Watson and Associates denotes this as a 'two-member' ward system. The report further states this system is increasingly uncommon with a 'one-member' ward system being the norm. Staff recommend the report commissioned include seeking recommendations on both Council composition and examine representation options (including, but not limited to election at large, two member ward systems, and a one member ward system with new wards).

It is important to note, Section 217(1) of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, states a local municipality may change the composition of its Council subject to the following rules:

1. There shall be a minimum of five members, one of whom shall be the head of council.
2. The members of council shall be elected in accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*.
3. The head of council shall be elected by general vote.
4. The members, other than the head of council, shall be elected by general vote or wards or by any combination of general vote and wards.

5. The representation of a local municipality on the council of an upper-tier municipality shall not be affected by the by-law of the local municipality under this section

Staff would not want to prejudice the potential report, however could envision numerous potential recommendations for Council composition, such as:

At Large Election

1. One (1) Mayor elected at large and six (6) Councillors elected at large; or
2. One (1) Mayor elected at large and four (4) Councillors elected at large; or
3. One (1) Mayor elected at large and One (1) Deputy Mayor elected at large and five (5) Councillors elected at large; or
4. One (1) Mayor and One (1) Deputy Mayor elected at large and three (3) Councillors elected at large.

Ward System Election

1. One (1) Mayor and One (1) Deputy Mayor elected at large and three (3) Councillors elected within three (3) wards; or
2. One (1) Mayor elected at large and four (4) Councillors elected within four (4) wards; or
3. One (1) Mayor and One (1) Deputy Mayor elected at large and five (5) Councillors elected within five (5) wards; or
4. Continue with status quo.

Potential Changes to Deputy Mayor Selection Process

With respect to selecting a Deputy Mayor, staff reached out to all municipalities within Ontario and received 82 responses. It has been determined there are three (3) methods being commonly practiced to select a Deputy Mayor, being:

Method Type	No. of Municipalities Adopting The Method
1. Elected at Large by the Electorate (By position or elected member with the most votes within the election)	42
2. Elected / Appointed by Mayor or Council	21
3. Rotation	19

The Town of Pelham currently appoints each member of Council, in alphabetical order, as Deputy Mayor for an eight (8) month term. This method is consistently being used within the Niagara Region and appears to be the third most common practice among Ontario municipalities. Having said that, the overwhelming

approach within Ontario is having the electorate select the Deputy Mayor, either by position or by appointing whichever elected official receives the most votes. It is important to note, the method of selecting the Deputy Mayor by most votes is used within the 'at large' election system.

The most popular method, and perhaps best practice, for electing a Deputy Mayor appears to be an election at large by the electorate, however it is impossible for the upcoming term. Staff note this may be a recommendation from Watson and Associates and may be considered by the next Council.

Council may select any below referenced option for selecting the Deputy Mayor.

Option 1

Continue with status quo. Council for the Town of Pelham adopts a Deputy Mayor By-Law at the start of the term. This by-law appoints each member of Council, in alphabetical order, as Deputy Mayor for an eight (8) month term.

Option 2

Council elects the Deputy Mayor at the first meeting of the start of the year (January) as Deputy Mayor for the year. This allows for the possibility that a member of Council may be selected and elected multiple times. This option allows for the possibility of up to four (4) ward Councillors to hold the appointment of Deputy Mayor.

Option 3

Council elect the Deputy Mayor at the first meeting of the start of the year, bi-annually (January), a Deputy Mayor for a two (2) year term. A member of Council may be selected and elected multiple times. This option allows for the possibility of up to two (2) ward Councillors to hold the position of Deputy Mayor.

Option 4

Council elects the Deputy Mayor for the full, four (4) year term at the inaugural meeting or the first regular meeting of Council thereafter.

Staff Recommendation

While examples of all four options can be found in Ontario, staff believe that Options 2 or 3 would best serve the Town's present and future governance needs. From a corporate perspective, the Town administration has benefited greatly from increased emphasis upon succession planning. The position of Deputy Mayor can be more than merely ceremonial; it can also be a training ground for future heads of council. Any option which allows for multiple persons to gain experience in the

role strengthens the potential training and talent pool of community leaders, which in the long-term should support continued excellence in leadership.

Staff intend to present these options to the newly elected Council at their inaugural meeting, so that they may adopt any methodology deemed appropriate. Staff encourage feedback and commentary from all members of Council, each of whom has a unique insight into the relative merits and associated potential of the various options.

Financial Considerations:

Council will consider the cost of the Ward Boundary and Council Composition Report from Watson & Associates during the 2023 budget process.

There are no financial impacts associated with options 1-4 listed above with respect to selecting a Deputy Mayor.

Alternatives Reviewed:

See options 2-4 listed above.

Strategic Plan Relationship: Strong Organization

Regularly reviewing the Town's ward boundaries and Council composition leads to building a strong organization by ensuring democratic representation is fair amongst the residents of Pelham. Conducting such reviews demonstrates the Town's commitment to the democratic and electorate process.

Consultation:

Ontario Municipalities

Other Pertinent Reports/Attachments:

2013 Watson & Associates Ward Boundary Review Report

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