
HALDIMAND COUNTY

Memorandum CLE-M01-2024 Updates to Council and Council in Committee Agenda



For Consideration by Council in Committee on May 21, 2024

To: Mayor Bentley and Members of Council

From: Chad Curtis, Municipal Clerk

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT Memorandum CLE-M01-2024 Updates to Council and Council in Committee Agenda be received.

This memorandum is intended to advise Council and the public of recent updates to the Council and Council in Committee agendas. The changes made include the addition of staff recommendations to Council on the agenda cover page, the provision of additional information on the rationale to enter into a closed session, relevant meeting date and report numbers accompanying by-laws on Council agendas, and the inclusion of board and committee minutes as agenda items.

At the [April 9, 2024, Council in Committee meeting](#), in response to a Closed meeting investigation, Council approved the adoption of Closed Meeting Protocols. The Closed Meeting Protocol seeks to balance the public interest in open and transparent municipal decision-making, while also recognizing that in certain circumstances, meetings in the absence of the public are required to protect municipal interests. A number of municipal best practices from this initiative are now appearing on Council and Council in Committee agendas.

Confidential items are those that fall within the parameters of closing the meeting to the public as set out in Section 239(2) of the *Municipal Act, 2001*. A municipal best practice for closed session meetings is to schedule them at the end of the meeting as a courtesy to the public. Moving forward, there will be no open session report accompanying closed session items. Instead, for agenda items that meet the criteria to go into closed, there will be a single closed session report at the end of the meeting.

Pursuant to subsection 239(4) of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, prior to holding a Closed Meeting, Council must pass a resolution stating the fact of holding a Closed Meeting, and the general nature of the matter(s) to be considered at the Closed Meeting. The resolution to convene in a Closed Meeting should maximize the information available to the public, while at the same time not undermining the reason for excluding the public in the first place. The recommendation on the agenda to go into Closed Session will be based on the above principles, and in addition will include the specific section of the Act which permits the item to be exempted from being an open meeting.

In an effort to make the agenda and proposed recommendations more accessible to Council and members of the public, they are now included on the agenda covering pages. This will result in more lengthy agenda covering pages, and is considered best practice across municipalities in Ontario.

By-laws are provisionally approved at Council in Committee meetings and are formally adopted at Council meetings. A new practice will be to include the date, report number, and type of meeting the by-law was provisionally approved by Council on Council agendas, under each by-law listed. This will allow Council and the public to easily locate information for by-laws to be voted upon at Council.

Although Council has typically voted within the meetings to receive memorandums as information, that recommendation has not consistently been included as a section on the actual memo to Council. Memorandums will now include a recommendation for Council to receive the memo as information. This practice acknowledges that Council has considered the memorandum, and will increase the consistency among all agenda items prepared by staff.

A final change to the agendas involves the inclusion of Committees of Council minutes on Council Meeting agendas. Committees of Council provide recommendations and advice to members of Council and staff on various issues and provide an opportunity for members of the public to formally engage with their community and local government. This addition to Council agendas make the Committee minutes more accessible and provides additional awareness of Committee activities to Council and the public. It should be noted that the minutes are not being formally approved by Council and are being received for informational purposes only.

REFERENCES:

1. None.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. None.