



Working together with our community

Council-In-Committee Meeting – October 15, 2025

Subject: Procedural By-law Updates
Report Number: CS-25-117
Division: Corporate Services
Department: Legislative Services
Ward: All Wards
Purpose: For Decision

Recommendation(s):

That Staff Report CS-25-117 be received for information; and

That Council provide direction to Staff as to what changes are to be made to the Procedural By-law.

Executive Summary:

Purpose of the Report:

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with a consolidation of all suggested updates to the procedural by-law that have been received by members of Council to date. It is also to give Council an opportunity to discuss and decide what changes they'd like to see implemented, and ultimately to amend the Procedural By-law to better reflect the current standing and practices of the County.

Background and Context:

At the April 8th, 2025, Council-in-Committee meeting, resolution CIC-117 was passed which directed Staff to bring updates to the Procedural By-law to Council for review. In response, Legislative Services staff communicated with members of Council and the Chief Administrative Officer in order to consolidate all of their suggested changes to the by-law and present Council with a list of potential changes that could be made to best reflect what Council wishes their procedures to be.

Key Findings and Analysis:

The Procedural By-law is Council's document, and thus, it is vital that it reflects the will of Council. It's also vital that it keeps up with current legislation and best practices. Public transparency is also a crucial element, as ensuring that the procedural by-law reflects current practices, it gives members of the public the ability to learn and understand Council's procedures.

Options:

Through this report, Council has the ability to pass any number of the proposed changes found within the attached draft by-law. There is no obligation to pass all or none of the proposed changes, and Council can pick and choose which specific changes they would like to be made.

Conclusions:

This report concludes that reviewing and potentially changing the Procedural By-law is an important task for Council to undertake. Even if no changes are made to the by-law, the discussions had regarding it help to solidify Council procedures and ensures that all members of Council have their voices heard in regard to how they want meetings to run, and how they wish to operate.

Recommendations:

This report recommends that Council receives this report as information and subsequently directs staff to proceed with updating the procedural by-law with Council's selected changes.

Financial Implications:

No direct financial implications are anticipated as a result of Procedural By-law updates. Finance staff will work with the Mayor to ensure budget processes are in alignment with legislative requirements and any mayoral direction.

Discussions:

A compilation of all the suggested changes to the Procedural By-law that could feasibly be implemented has led to a variety of minor changes to the wording of certain sections, as well as a limited number of substantive changes. These substantive changes include a new section that summarizes the powers bestowed upon the Mayor under the *Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act, 2022*. This section specifies that only the individual elected to the office of Mayor is bestowed these powers.

One change that was suggested but is not included in this draft version is the addition of allowing electronic petitions to be filed with Council. There are two reasons for not including this, namely:

1. **Verification.** Verifying the signatures on an electronic petition requires a more in-depth process than the process of verifying a physical petition. Concerns around the use of Artificial Intelligence or bot signatures could mean that even the creator of an electronic petition could be unknowingly submitting a petition that includes fraudulent signatures.
2. **Privacy Requirements.** The Information and Privacy Commissioner (IPC) issued a recommendation to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario (LA) advising that were the LA to accept e-petitions, it should be done through their website, meaning

petitions would be submitted and then added to their website where individuals could browse current petitions and decide whether to sign them or not. Further, the IPC recommended that the only thing that be available to the public is the petition itself and the number of signatures it had. It should not include any information about the signers.

To keep up with best practices, were the County to want to incorporate e-petitions, it would be best to do so in accordance with the IPC's recommendations.

For these reasons, if Council wishes to incorporate e-petitions, a further staff report detailing the methods and procedures to be used should be brought forward.

Finance Comments:

There are no direct financial implications as a result of recommended changes to the Procedural By-law as outlined in Attachment A.

The most significant changes noted from a financial perspective are related to the recent introduction of *Strong Mayor Powers*, and the impact on the annual budget process. These changes shift the introduction of the municipal budget to the Mayor and establish a veto/override process for budget matters. These are governance and procedural changes only, and no direct financial implications are anticipated.

Interdepartmental Implications:

The Procedural By-law impacts all County departments and staff who require reports to be presented to Council and Committees and will be subject to the provisions within the by-law.

Consultation(s):

This report was made in consultation with members of Council, Legislative Services Staff, and the Chief Administrative Officer.

Strategic Plan Linkage:

Serving Norfolk - ensuring a fiscally responsible organization with engaged employees who value excellent service

Explanation: By ensuring that the Procedural By-law is up to date and reflects Council's current and best practices, meetings will flow more effectively, public transparency will be ensured, and organizational efficiency will be maximized.

Attachment(s):

- Attachment A: Procedural By-law – Draft copy with highlighted changes

Approval:

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