

## COUNCIL MEETINGS AND PROCEEDINGS POLICY

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1. This policy is entitled the “**Council Meetings and Proceedings Policy**”.
2. This policy applies to all meetings of Council as described below. The intent of this policy is to provide a standard set of guidelines concerning meetings of Council and the processes involved. This policy will provide Council, staff and community members with a reference for Council meeting procedures, schedules and roles and responsibilities of Council members and members of the public wishing to participate in meetings of Council.

It is also the intent of this policy to stand independently of any other pre-established rules of order or meeting procedures, even in instances of referencing or replication to maintain best practices for the Municipality of the County of Inverness council specifically.

3. This policy applies to all members of Council, staff and members of the public in attendance or participating in a Council meeting.
4. Municipal Council

Council consists of six (6) elected members; four (4) Councillors, a Deputy Warden and a Warden.

5. Organization of Council

Within four weeks after an election, the Council shall meet and administer the required oaths and appoint of Warden and Deputy Warden per the Municipality’s *Appointment of Warden Policy* and *Appointment of Deputy Warden Policy*.

6. Regular Council Meetings

Regular council meetings will be held on the first Thursday of the month, beginning at 1:30 p.m., except when designated otherwise by motion of Council. Council shall not sit later than 5:00 p.m. unless a motion is made to sit beyond, to a maximum meeting time of 5:30 p.m. Council meetings will be held in Council Chambers except when designated by motion of Council to be held in an alternate location or at an alternate time. Should a regular Council meeting fall on a statutory holiday the meeting will be moved to the following working day. Times and dates of regular Council meetings will be made available to the public through public posting of schedules and on the Municipality’s website three days prior to the meeting date.

7. Special Meetings

Council may hold additional meetings to deal with urgent business that cannot be postponed until the next scheduled meeting. However, for these meetings, Council must receive a minimum of three (3) days of notice along with two (2) days' notice to the public prior to the meeting. A special meeting may be called by the CAO at the request of the Warden or by two-thirds of the Councillors submitting their own request.

8. Emergency Meetings

Council is permitted to hold emergency meetings with as much notice as possible under the circumstances per the Municipal Government Act. These meetings are called by the Warden and do not have the same notice requirements as a special meeting. Emergency meetings are a rare event and are intended to deal with an immediate crisis event and not simply regular Council business.

9. Committee of the Whole Meetings

Committee of the Whole meetings will be held on the third Thursday of each month. The Committee of the Whole meetings will include municipal business related to Policy, Audit and Planning.

10. Council Meeting Packages

The CAO shall distribute a Council package containing all relevant documents for each regular or special meeting; including: an agenda, minutes, documents corresponding to delegations or Council items or other materials as per the agenda necessary to the meeting. The Council package will be distributed three business days prior to the meeting.

11. Notice of Meetings to Council

Notice of meetings shall be provided verbally, by telephone or telephone answering machine, or in writing (including electronic mail or facsimile messages) to each Council Member.

12. Notice of Meetings to the Public

Notice of meetings shall be provided to the public by posting on the Municipality's website and social media sites a "Notice of Council Meeting" containing the time, date and place of the meeting.

### 13. Chairperson

Once quorum is met, the Warden, if in attendance, shall chair the meeting. If the Warden is not present within fifteen minutes of the time appointed for the meeting, the Deputy Warden shall take the chair and preside during the meeting or until the arrival of the Warden. If neither the Warden nor Deputy Warden is in attendance within fifteen minutes of the time appointed for the meeting, the Chief Administrative Officer shall call the meeting to order and the Councillors present shall appoint one of the members Chairperson, and he/she shall preside during the meeting or until the arrival of the Warden or Deputy Warden.

It shall be the duty of the chair to:

- i) Open the meeting of Council by taking the chair and calling the Council Members to order;
- ii) Ask the Council whether there is a consensus on an item of procedure or business, and if no Council Member indicates dissent, may treat the item as resolved to the same extent as if a motion had been duly moved, seconded and passed by vote;
- iii) Receive and submit to Council motions properly presented by a Council Member;
- iv) Put to a vote a question which is regularly moved and seconded or necessarily arising in the course of the proceedings and to announce the result of the vote;
- v) Decline to put to a vote, a motion which infringes upon the rules of procedure;
- vi) Restrain the Council Members, when engaged in debate, within the rules of conduct of debate;
- vii) Enforce on all occasions, the observance of order and decorum;
- viii) Call by name any Council Member persisting in a breach of the rules of order of Council thereby ordering him or her to vacate the Council Chambers;
- ix) Inform the Council when necessary, or when referred to, on a point of order;
- x) Permit the CAO to speak on any point upon request;

- xi) Permit proper questions to be asked through the Chair of any guest speaker, official or employee of the Municipality of the County of Inverness, to provide information to assist any debate;
- xii) Declare a meeting dissolved if no quorum has been achieved within 15 minutes of the scheduled meeting time; and
- xiii) Adjourn the meeting when the business is concluded or, when an adjournment time has been set and approved by majority vote or consensus, when the adjournment time has been reached, except when it is extended by unanimous consent.

#### 14. Quorum

Quorum will be achieved by the smallest number of people who must be present in order for motions to be made; quorum is met when four (4) Council members are present. In the case of quorum not being met within fifteen minutes of the appointed meeting time, or if quorum is lost during a meeting, the meeting will adjourn to the following Monday.

#### 15. Order of Business

The order of business at a regular or special Council meeting shall generally adhere to the following organizational structure:

- i) Call the meeting to order;
- ii) Approval of the meeting agenda;
- iii) Approval of the minutes of the last regular meeting and of any special meeting(s) held since such meeting;
- iv) Delegations appearing before Council;
- v) New business;
- vi) Motions or items brought forward by Council;
- vii) Consideration of correspondence;
- viii) Adjournment.

## 16. Delegations

Organizations or individuals presenting to, or making a request of, Council in person at a Council meeting. Delegations must submit a request in writing, which includes their presentation, to the CAO's office not less than ten (10) working days prior to the council meeting. Please refer to the Municipality's *Delegation Appearing before Municipal Council Policy* for additional information.

## 17. Staff

The Chief Administrative Officer, Administrative Assistant, Director of Finance, Director of Tourism and Culture, Director of Public Works, Manager of Recreation and municipal solicitor will be in attendance at meetings of Council. The CAO will assist and inform Council, the Administrative Assistant will keep a record of the meeting.

## 18. Minutes

A record of Municipal Council meetings will be kept by the Chief Administrative Officer. The minutes will be held in a book/binder specifically for that purpose and that book/binder shall be properly indexed and available to the public. The minutes shall contain a record of the date, location, time, Council members and staff present and the outcomes and actions taken on all agenda items.

Audio recordings will be utilized to assist in the creation of accurate minutes. Once the minutes of the meeting are approved, audio recordings related to that meeting will be destroyed.

## 19. Motions and Voting

Any member of Council can make a motion. The Warden can make a motion only after he/she has relinquished the chair to another Council member; the Warden will re-take the chair upon completion of the motion. A roll call vote can be requested by any Council member; the Administrative Assistant will record the names and vote of each Council member in the minutes.

- i) Every Council Member, prior to speaking on any question or motion, shall raise a hand and wait to be recognized by the Chair. When two or more Council Members raise their hands to speak, the Chair shall designate as the Council Member who has the floor the Council Member who, in the opinion of the Chair, first raised a hand.
- ii) No Council Member may speak more than twice, without the leave of Council, on any motion except to explain a misconception of his remarks, but the mover of a motion shall have the right to reply and sum up in closing the debate. When

a Council Member wishes to explain, the Council Member shall raise a hand and ask leave of the Chair, without further comment, and if permitted by the Chair, shall explain only an actual misunderstanding of language.

- iii) No Council Member shall speak more than five minutes upon any matter at one time, without the leave of Council.
- iv) The Chair shall state every question properly presented to Council and before putting it to a vote, shall ask "Is Council ready for the question" and if no Council Member offers to speak, the Chair shall put the question, after which no Council Member shall be permitted to speak upon it.
- v) The usual form of voting on any question shall be by the chair calling for "yeas" and "nays", but any Council Member, before or after a voice vote can call for, and obtain through the Chair, a show of hands, and any two Council Members can call for, and obtain through the Chair, a recorded vote with each Council Member's vote entered into the minutes.

A motion must be seconded and then repeated by the Chair or read aloud by the Clerk before it is debated. The Chair may direct that the motion be put in writing. After reading of a motion by the Chair or Clerk, it shall be open for discussion.

- 20. A motion may at any time before the Council has voted on it be withdrawn by the mover with the consent of the seconder.
- 21. When any question is before the Council, the only motions in order shall be:
  - i) a motion in amendment of the original motion;
  - ii) a motion to refer the question, including the motion and amendment if one is moved, to any committee;
  - iii) a motion to defer the consideration of the question either indefinitely or to a specified time;
  - iv) a motion to close the debate at a specified time;
  - v) a motion that the question be put to a vote;
  - vi) a motion to adjourn;

any of which may be moved either to the original motion or to the amendment of the original motion.

22. A motion:

- i) that the debate be closed at a specified time; or
- ii) that the question be put to a vote,

shall be put to a vote without further amendment or debate, but a motion that the question be put to a vote shall not itself be put to a vote until every Council Member who has not spoken on the question and claims a right to speak has been heard. A motion that the question be put to a vote shall preclude all amendment to the main question until the motion is decided, and shall be put to a vote, without debate, in the following words: "That this question be put to a vote". If this motion is resolved in the affirmative, the original question shall be put to a vote immediately, without any amendment or debate, but if such motion is resolved in the negative, then the Council shall proceed to other business.

23. A motion to adjourn shall always be in order except in the following cases:

- i) when a Council Member is in possession of the floor;
- ii) when the "yeas" and "nays" are being called;
- iii) while the Council Members are voting; or
- iv) when the adjournment was the last preceding motion.

24. The following questions shall be decided without debate:

- i) a motion to reconsider;
- ii) all motions as to priority of business or as to the suspension of the order of the day;
- iii) application to speak more than the prescribed number of times;
- iv) a motion to allow any person other than the Council Members to address the Council;
- v) a motion to postpone to a specified time or day;
- vi) a motion to lay on the table when claiming a privilege over another person; and
- vii) a motion to adjourn.

25. Amendments shall be put in the reverse order to that in which they are moved. Every amendment submitted shall be decided or withdrawn before the main question is put to vote. Only one amendment shall be allowed to an amendment and any further amendment must be to the main question.
26. Except for matters arising from correspondence, committee or other reports, agenda items, or notices of motion or other material circulated to Council Members on or before the day before the meeting, and except for matters arising from an *in camera* meeting, no motion committing the Municipality of the County of Inverness to the expenditure of funds shall be accepted by the Chair for the consideration of Council except with the unanimous consent of Council Members present.
27. Any notice of motion given by a Council Member for a subsequent meeting may, in the absence of the Council Member giving such notice, be taken up by any other Council Member.
28. After any question has been decided, either in the affirmative or negative, any 4 Council Members may, after the decision has been announced from the chair, but before adjournment of the meeting, give notice of an intention to move a reconsideration at the next meeting of the Council. The giving of such a notice operates as a stay or suspension of Council's decision.
29. Unless reconsideration is moved at the next meeting the right of reconsideration shall be lost.
30. No discussion of the main question shall be allowed on the motion for reconsideration.
31. The following matters are not eligible for reconsideration:
  - i) a motion approving the first or second reading of a By-Law enactment, amendment or repeal;
  - ii) a motion to decide upon a matter which was the subject of a statutory hearing by Council;
  - iii) a motion which is or was considered by **Committee of the Whole** in substantially the same form in which it is being or will be considered by Council, irrespective of whether Council has adopted or rejected, or may adopt or reject, the recommendation of **Committee of the Whole**;
  - iv) a matter which has been reconsidered once; and
  - v) a vote to reconsider.



32. Notice(s) of Motion

Council members can provide Notice(s) of Motion for upcoming meetings of Council. The Council member making the motion will provide the motion to the CAO for submission to Council in the next Council meeting package.

33. Conflict of Interest

Any Council member with a conflict of interest related to motions or actions of Council must declare and record this conflict. The Council member will enter their name, the date and the topic of conflict in a book provided by the Clerk for such records. The Council member in conflict will be excused from participation in the meeting during the time which the topic is under consideration.

34. In-Camera Sessions

In-camera sessions will occur as per Section 22 (1) and (2) of the Municipal Government Act:

- i) Except as otherwise provided in this Section, council meetings and meetings of committees appointed by council are open to the public;
- ii) The council or any committee appointed by the council may meet in closed session to discuss matters relating to:
  - a) acquisition, sale, lease and security of municipal property;
  - b) setting a minimum price to be accepted by the municipality at a tax sale;
  - c) personnel matters;
  - d) labour relations;
  - e) contract negotiations;
  - f) litigation or potential litigation;
  - g) legal advice eligible for solicitor-client privilege;

(h) public security.

iii) No decision shall be made at an in-camera council meeting except a decision concerning procedural matters or to give direction to staff of, or solicitors for, the Municipality.

35. Breaks

Council may request a break for fifteen (15) minutes if the meeting has been in progress for more than ninety (90) minutes. If the meeting is being recorded for any purpose the recording will be terminated during that time. If, by motion of Council, the meeting extends past 5:00 p.m., Council will again break for fifteen (15) minutes with the same recording stipulation.

36. Professional Conduct

All Council members, staff and members of the public are encouraged to maintain professional standards of conduct during all meetings of Council. Abusive language or actions can result in expulsion from the meeting, Council Chambers and/or the building. Threatening language, disruptive behavior, violence or destruction of property can result in intervention by the RCMP.

37. Cell Phones

Staff and Councillors will mute cellular devices during all council meetings.