



Municipality of Port Hope Staff Report

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Report Title: Deputy Mayor Selection – Council Term 2022-2026

Report to: Council

Date of meeting: September 20, 2022

Report Author:

Brian Gilmer – Director, Corporate Services / Clerk

Department responsible:

Corporate Services

Report Number: CS-19-22

Recommendation:

Refer to By-laws.

Highlights:

- Amendment to identify the timing of the appointment of the Deputy Mayor to take place within the first 3 months of the new Council term rather than at the Inaugural Meeting.
- Provides for greater transparency through the appointment process.
- Directs staff to formalize a procedure to guide the appointment process.

Background:

When the Municipality of Port Hope was amalgamated in 2000 the Transition Board Order from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs identified the composition of Council and provided that a Deputy Mayor would be appointed by Council from amongst the members elected to act from time to time in the place of the Head of Council when absent or the office is vacant.

The Procedural By-law section 5.1 currently identifies the following with respect to the appointment of the Deputy Mayor

“5.1 Appointment of Deputy Mayor

Council shall from among Members of Council elect a Deputy Mayor, who shall be appointed by By-law at the inaugural meeting and who shall hold office as Deputy Mayor for the balance of the term of Council.”

With the municipal election pending, staff are preparing training and orientation programs for the next term of Council. Planning for the Inaugural Meeting to take place on November 15th is well underway. The next Council will not be sworn in or have any authority until this time.

The appointment process related to the selection of the Deputy Mayor has never been well defined and has been somewhat inconsistent since amalgamation. In past instances there have been times when draft by-laws are presented at the Inaugural Meeting identifying a particular member of Council to be appointed to the Deputy Mayor. More recently, at the 2018 Inaugural Meeting a draft by-law was presented without a candidate identified and Council determined that evening who would fill the position.

In addition to this inconsistency, another challenge with appointing a Deputy Mayor at the Inaugural Meeting is that it could in turn effectively force the incoming Council to informally consider who they wish to appoint prior to taking office which would likely conflict with transparency and accountability principles identified in the Municipal Act.

Further, appointing the position at the Inaugural Meeting before the new Council has affected any other business potentially means that Council has not had opportunity to get to know one another or hear from those publicly that wish to be considered for the position in a public setting prior to the same evening members are sworn in.

Finally, having a new Council work through what has the potential to become a procedurally challenging process prior to any orientation or training poses a particular challenge. Training and orientation of the new Council is set to begin in December 2022 as has traditionally been the practice. Inaugural meetings of Council are generally intended to swear in new members, offer congratulatory messages, and introduce opportunities for the public to hear from new members. Inaugural meetings are not generally intended to decide significant municipal business such as the appointment of the Deputy Mayor.

Discussion:

Staff propose that an amendment to the Procedural By-law identifying that Council will appoint a Deputy Mayor within the first three months of its term, rather than the Inaugural Meeting, will provide for an opportunity for new members of Council to get oriented and learn their new roles. It will also offer the opportunity for members to consider whether they wish to be appointed to the role of Deputy Mayor following orientation and having been through a number of regular meetings.

This inconsistent approach should also be clarified with additional procedure that would guide the appointment process and bring additional transparency. Staff are working to formalize a process to be considered that is currently in draft form as included in **Attachment 1**. It is important to note that this process will likely change following some review of best practice and consultation with the new Mayor following the upcoming election but it is staff's intent to provide for a similar process for the next appointment of the Deputy Mayor.

This report is being brought directly to Council for consideration as the September 20 meeting is the last regularly scheduled Council meeting in the term. There will be many new Procedural By-law improvements to be considered by the next Council that are expected to be presented within the first 6 months of the term. This particular amendment is generally minor in nature and addresses comments received in the past with respect to the appointment of the Deputy Mayor.

Financial Considerations:

There are no direct financial considerations related to this report.

Communication and Public Engagement:

The selection of the Deputy Mayor would take place at a regular meeting of Council. Agendas are published in advanced and advertised accordingly. For this particular meeting, additional communications would be placed on municipal social media channels to make the public aware that the selection of the Deputy Mayor was being considered. Allowing additional time between being sworn in and appointing a Deputy Mayor will allow for more public comment to be received about the selection. Staff will communicate the change publicly to ensure the public are informed about the timing of the appointment of the Deputy Mayor.

Conclusion:

Staff recommend that the Procedural By-law be amended to revise the timing of the appointment of the Deputy Mayor.

If Council does not wish to approve the proposed amendment to the Procedural By-law then staff will prepare to present a draft By-law to appoint a Deputy Mayor at the Inaugural Meeting much the same as was presented in 2018.

It is anticipated that Procedural By-law amendments further modernizing the approach to Council meetings will be presented early in the next term. It is normal for a new Council to undertake some review of its procedures to reflect any desired improvements to process. This particular proposed amendment is more time sensitive as the Inaugural Meeting is in November.

Attachments:

Attachment 1 – Draft / Sample Deputy Mayor Selection Process