



Municipality of Port Hope

Staff Report

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Report Title: Options for Appointment of Deputy Mayor

Report to: Corporate Services Committee

Date of meeting: December 20, 2022

Report Author:

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Department responsible:

Corporate Services

Report Number: CS-23-22

Recommendation:

That a preferred option be identified regarding the appointment of a Deputy Mayor and put forward as a motion to be approved by Council at their next regular meeting:

1. 4 Year Appointment (Status Quo)

That the Deputy Mayor continue to be appointed for the full term of Council and consideration of that appointment take place at a regular meeting to be determined.

or

2. Annual Appointment

That staff be directed to bring forward the necessary by-law and policy amendments required to appoint the Deputy Mayor on an annual (1 year) basis.

or

3. Rotating Appointment

That staff be directed to bring forward the necessary by-law and policy amendments required to appoint the Deputy Mayor on a rotating basis amongst the 6 Councillors throughout the 4 year term of Council.

Highlights:

- Procedural By-law currently calls for the Deputy Mayor to be appointed within 3 months of the inaugural meeting of Council.
- At their last meeting Council directed staff to present options related to appointing the Deputy Mayor for a term other than the current 4 year appointment consideration at their meeting of December 20, 2022

Background:

When the Municipality of Port Hope was amalgamated in 2000 the composition of Council was prescribed and provided that a Deputy Mayor would be appointed 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. Since that time the Municipality's Procedural By-law has effectively included the same language with respect to the role of the Deputy Mayor being an appointed position for the full 4 year term of Council.

Outside of what is currently identified, the position of Deputy Mayor is not defined, but it is understood to provide for a backup leadership presence in the Mayor's absence and it is important that the authority afforded to the Mayor is able to be acted upon as necessary throughout any absence.

With respect to exactly when the appointment would take place, the Procedural By-law was recently amended to identify that "Council shall from among Members of Council elect a Deputy Mayor who shall be appointed by By-law at a meeting within the first 3 months of the new term and who shall hold office as Deputy Mayor for the balance of the term of Council."

In order to move the appointment process forward staff prepared a [report](#) for Council that was considered at their regular meeting on December 6, 2022 regarding the appointment of the Deputy Mayor. The report sought direction regarding the appointment and requested direction with respect to when Council wished to consider appointing a Deputy Mayor.

Following some discussion, Council referred the matter back to staff with a request that a report be prepared with respect to options related to appointing on an annual basis. This direction was further amended to specifically identify that the report was to be presented to Council for consideration at their December 20, 2022 meeting.

This report is intended to provide general options that could be considered moving forward that could include the continuation of the status quo, an annual appointment, or the potential appointment on a rotating basis.

Municipalities across the Province have varying approaches to appointing a Deputy Mayor. The options provided in this report are representative of a variety of options. While the relative short amount of time provided to produce this report has meant that a full scale analysis of best practices has not been possible, it is worth noting that appointing on a rotating or annual basis appears to be becoming an increasingly more common approach.

One question that is raised on occasion during election years is why the Municipality does not directly elect a Deputy Mayor. While it is common practice in Northumberland County, direct election of a Deputy Mayor is not more common than appointment.

A quick review of the results of the most recent election cycle shows that of the 417 municipalities that have reported recent municipal election results, only 126 directly elect a Deputy position. Nearly all mid to large municipalities in the Province appoint the position from amongst members of Council.

Discussion:

Option 1

In the recent Procedural By-law amendment staff were directed to provide for a process to be utilized when considering the appointment of the Deputy Mayor. Staff have formalized the approach to be utilized to appoint the Deputy Mayor to aide in providing for transparent and equitable selection process as identified in past reports.

If maintaining the status quo of appointing a Deputy Mayor is preferred staff are prepared to undertake the process to be conducted at a regular meeting of Council. Direction would simply need to be provided as to the date Council would like to consider appointment. The Deputy Mayor would subsequently be appointed by By-law for the full term of Council. In this scenario the Deputy Mayor would also be appointed as the alternate member of Northumberland County Council in the Mayor's absence and in accordance with County policy.

Option 2

Appointing the Deputy Mayor on an annual basis would be a relatively simple adjustment in terms of amending the Procedural By-law. That amendment would be required prior to appointment and would identify the new annual appointment.

Ideally, the amendment would identify exactly at what point in the year the selection of the Deputy Mayor would take place. Naturally, appointing at a meeting close to the beginning/end of the calendar year would likely be the recommendation of staff. With this option Council would need to consider whether the appointment on an annual term would preclude that appointed member from serving consecutive annual terms.

With this option Council would need to consider appointing one member of Council to be appointed as an alternate County Councillor in order to meet the current requirements of Northumberland Council policy. Alternatively, Council could request that Northumberland County consider amending their processes to have the alternate run with the annual term of the Deputy Mayor. Further investigation of this element may be required.

Option 3

The appointment of a Deputy Mayor from amongst all members of a Council on a pre-determined schedule is an approach that is has been used by many municipalities for some time but also appears to be becoming an increasingly more common approach. This is especially true amongst municipalities that have a Ward system like the Municipality of Port Hope where the only member of Council elected at-large is the head of Council.

Leading up to and following the recent election municipalities such as Aurora, Quinte-West and Kincardine have shifted to this approach and others are considering similar changes to the appointment process. Rotating throughout every member of Council provides for an equitable distribution of workload and provides for experience to be shared amongst all elected officials.

Appointing on a rotating basis would require an amendment to the Procedural By-law that outlines the terms and schedule of the rotating appointment. For a Council of 7, the 6 Councillors over a 4 year term would serve an 8 month term that could be broken down as desired by Council. Some municipalities appoint according to alphabetical order while others have different means of determining the order and terms.

With this option Council would need to consider appointing one member of Council to be appointed as an alternate County Councillor in order to meet the current requirements of Northumberland Council policy. Alternatively, Council could request that Northumberland County consider amending their processes to have the alternate run with the rotating appointment of the Deputy Mayor. Further investigation of this element may be required.

Financial Considerations:

As identified in the Compensation Administration Policy, the annual salary for the Deputy Mayor position as of December 1, 2022 is \$36,000. The annual salary for the position of Councillor is \$30,000.

If it is determined by Council that a rotating appointment or an appointment for a shorter than full term is preferred, staff will be required to bring forward the necessary amendments to change the policy with respect to the salary of the Deputy Mayor recognizing the difference during the term of appointment as determined.

Communication and Public Engagement:

The selection of the Deputy Mayor is a Council consideration and staff are prepared to communicate the decision of Council upon direction being received. Consideration of the selection of the Deputy Mayor by Council was included in the media release and other communications efforts following the December 6 Council meeting when the matter was referred back to staff.

Conclusion:

Staff have provided this report as directed by Council in a limited period of time. The information contained in this report is provided as requested in order to aide in the decision making process and explore options. This report has been prepared for presentation to the Corporate Services Committee considering the potential by-law and policy amendments that would be required to be prepared for presentation to Council at their next regular meeting.

There are no requirements outlined in the Municipal Act to appoint a Deputy Mayor and the legislation is silent on how to appoint a Deputy Mayor. As long as Council amends the Procedural By-law accordingly, the options for a new arrangement for appointing the Deputy Mayor are fairly wide open.

Attachments:

None.