


HALIFAX

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Item No. 6
Halifax Regional Council
May 9, 2017

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: 
Original Signed by _____
John Traves, Q.C., Municipal Solicitor

DATE: March 15, 2017

SUBJECT: Roll Call at Meetings of Regional Council and all Committees of Council

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

Halifax Regional Council passed the following motion on August 2, 2016:

That Halifax Regional Council request a staff report regarding the inclusion of Roll Call on all Halifax Regional Municipality Advisory and Standing Committee Agendas.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, clause 20(1)(b) ``The Council may make policies ...(b) regulating its own proceedings and preserving order at meetings of the Council``.

Administrative Order One, the Procedures of Council Administrative Order

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION

On August 2, 2016, Regional Council passed a motion for a staff report regarding the inclusion of Roll Call for all HRM Committees. The motion originated from the Accessibility Advisory Committee, which has a current practice of the Chair opening the meeting with greetings and a roll call. The roll call is aimed to remove a participation barrier, to help identify members present for those in the room who may have a visual impairment. The current practice of the Accessibility Advisory Committee is to do a roll call and to announce when members enter and leave the meeting room throughout the course of the meeting.

In late 2016 Staff conducted a jurisdictional scan of municipalities from across Canada regarding roll call. The scan included the municipalities of Edmonton, Hamilton, London, Mississauga, Ottawa, and Surrey BC. These municipalities were selected as they were used in previous corporate scans. The benchmarking demonstrated that most municipalities do not have a roll call. The City of Ottawa was the exception, and has a roll call at the beginning of Council. The City of Ottawa Procedure By-law provided an explanation on how roll call is completed noting that "the Secretary shall call the roll and record in the minutes the Members present". However, it is silent on the process for when Members arrive late, what occurs after a recess, or if Members are announced when they enter or leave the Chamber during the course of the meeting. Upon review the roll call facilitated at the City of Ottawa is ceremonial and does

not lend to enhancing the overall accessibility of the meeting.

Current practice for Halifax Regional Municipal Council includes the Mayor as the Presiding Officer calling the meeting to order, and after silent reflection will provide greetings and note regrets. In identifying regrets, the Presiding Officer provides a clear picture of those in attendance. In addition, all votes are recorded and serve as a record of those Members who are present for the vote. The practice of announcing members entering and leaving at the Accessibility Advisory Committee may work at that committee meeting but is not feasible at a Regional Council meeting due to the length and breadth of the meeting and that it may become disruptive to the flow of business. At this time, there are no recommendations from staff.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no budget implications to this report.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

This recommendation originated from a citizen advisory committee and was discussed both at a standing committee, with no public participation and at Regional Council, no correspondence was received.

ATTACHMENTS

None.

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.php> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210, or Fax 902.490.4208.

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