



## Staff Report

**Report Title: Hybrid Meeting Policy and Required Procedure By-law Update**

**Prepared By: Jennifer White, Manager of Legislative Services/Clerk**

**Department: CLK**

**Date: Mar. 6, 2023**

**Report Number: CLK-2023-03-20**

**File Number: C11 CLK23**

**Attachments:** Appendix D Operational Protocols for Hybrid Meeting Participation by Council and Committee Members Draft.

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### **Recommendation:**

THAT the Township of Huron-Kinloss Committee of the Whole receive Report CLK-2023-03-20 prepared by Jennifer White, Manager of Legislative Services/Clerk;

AND FURTHER directs Staff to bring forward the appropriate by-law.

### **Background:**

Council at the meeting Feb 6, 2023 directed Staff to bring forward a report on the required amendments to the procedural by-law to permit a mix of in-person and electronic (hybrid) participation at Council and Committee meetings. This report provides information on the necessary changes and provides a proposed operational protocol to govern members of Council participation electronically.

### **Discussion:**

Council desires to allow for the participation of some members of Council in meetings electronically while the majority of members participate in person in the Council Chambers. Council directed Staff to bring a report forward on the required changes to the Procedural By-law to facilitate this.

### Changes to Procedural By-law

A few changes are required to the Consolidated Procedural By-law No. 2019-155. These updates include:

- Update definitions; and
- Update section 2.5 Electronic Meetings.

Staff are recommending the following updates:

Update to definitions to include hybrid participation

the definition of "Hybrid" shall mean a meeting called and held with participation both in person and via electronic participation.

Current: Electronic Meeting

2.5 When it is determined by the Mayor, CAO and Clerk that electronic participation will be required, the meeting shall be held entirely electronically.

To be replaced with:

2.5 Electronic and Hybrid Meetings

(a) Members of Council or Committees may attend an open or closed meeting electronically via telephone or video conference. Any such member participating electronically shall be counted in determining whether or not a quorum of members is present and shall be permitted to participate fully in the meeting including casting a vote per Appendix D, Operational Protocols for Hybrid Meeting Participation by Council and Committee Members.

(b) Notwithstanding 2.5, Township Staff, invited deputations and consultants are permitted to participate electronically in a meeting.

(c) Notwithstanding When it is determined by the Mayor, CAO and Clerk that electronic participation will be required by a large number or all members of Council, the meeting shall be held entirely electronically.

A proposed Appendix D is attached to this report for Council consideration. The Appendix provides the structure through which a member of Council could participate electronically yet would maintain the integrity of the in-person meeting for other members of Council and any public in attendance.

The Operational Protocols address the frequency of participation, the timelines and other expectations, and the means by which a Member would participate.

During the February 17, 2023 Council meeting, Council provided an exemption to the current Procedural By-law to permit electronic participation by a member of Council. This provided an opportunity for Council to experience what a hybrid meeting would look and feel like to members of Council. As a result of that experience, Council has directed Staff to improve the sound quality of the virtual participant with minimal financial impact. There will be additional costs associated with purchasing an improved sound bar, and to purchase additional microphones to ensure that all in-person participants, including staff can be heard by the virtual participant.

**Financial Impacts:**

There will be minimal financial impacts to improve sound quality.

**Strategic Alignment / Link: N/A**

**Respectfully Submitted By:**

Jennifer White, Manager of Legislative Services/Clerk

**Report Approved By:**

Mary Rose Walden, Chief Administrative Officer