



## Staff Report

**Report Title: Council and Committee Meetings – Return to in Person**

**Prepared By: Emily Dance, Clerk**

**Department: Clerk**

**Date: Mar. 21, 2022**

**Report Number: CLK-2022-04-28**

**File Number: C11-Council**

### **Attachments:**

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### **Recommendation:**

THAT the Township of Huron-Kinloss Committee of the Whole hereby authorizes returning to in-person Council and Committee Meetings commencing on

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### **Background:**

On February 1, 2021, Council decided that electronic upgrades required for a hybrid Council Meeting system would not be considered due to the high capital costs, additional staffing requirements and IT costs.

Council approved \$20,000 the 2022 budget, for new Council Chambers furniture and additional microphones to allow for the return to in-person meetings with a desk configuration that allowed for more appropriate social distancing between members.

On December 6, 2021, Council confirmed that Council and Committee Meetings would remain electronic until the province lifted the vaccine requirements for meeting spaces and that hybrid meetings would not be considered.

### **Discussion:**

#### In-Person Meetings

With all provincial COVID-19 measures, directives and orders expiring at the end of April 2022, Council could return to in-person meetings as early as the May 2, 2022 Committee of the Whole Meeting. This decision would include all Council and Committee Meetings.

This will also permit the public to attend Council Chambers with the gallery set up to obtain appropriate distancing.

Furniture and microphones are included in the 2022 Township of Huron-Kinloss budget; however, if the furniture is not delivered in the decided timeframe, the existing furniture and microphones could be adjusted on a temporary basis.

#### Electronic Meetings

The Township approved amending the Procedural By-law (Section 2.5) to allow for electronic meetings when it is determined by the Mayor, CAO and Clerk that electronic participation will be required.

This provision allows for electronic meetings to switch back to virtual in the event of changes with the pandemic, inclement weather, or other emergency matters.

If Council wishes to maintain the ability to switch from in-person to virtual for reasons stated above, it is recommended that the decision of the Mayor and staff be made as soon as possible and no later than noon the day of the meeting (night meetings) to allow for appropriate notice to members of Council, the public, the press, and staff.

#### In-person / Electronic Participation

The Procedural By-law allows for members of Council to participate in-person or by electronic means. When moving back to in-person meetings it is the expectation that all members would attend in-person.

Unfortunately, without upgrades to our electronics, Council Chambers does not allow for electronic participation by members or delegations; therefore, the only options are for either completely virtual or in-person at this time.

#### Direction

Staff is requesting direction for the date Council would like to move back to in-person meetings AND confirmation of maintaining the ability to host meetings entirely electronic in the event of changes with the pandemic, inclement weather or other emergency matters.

Depending on Council direction, amendments may be required for the Procedural By-Law and Notice By-Law.

#### **Financial Impacts:**

Council Chambers furniture and additional microphones are included in the 2022 Township of Huron-Kinloss Budget (\$20,000)

#### **Strategic Alignment / Link:**

We are an accessible community by being open and transparent

#### **Respectfully Submitted By:**

Emily Dance

#### **Approved By:**

Mary Rose Walden, Chief Administrative Officer