

# Staff Report



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|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| To           | <b>Committee of the Whole</b>                           |
| Service Area | Corporate Services                                      |
| Date         | Monday, July 4, 2022                                    |
| Subject      | <b>2023 City Council and Committee Meeting Schedule</b> |

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## Recommendation

1. That the 2023 City Council and Committee Meeting Schedule, included as Attachment-1 to report 2023 City Council and Committee Meeting Schedule dated July 4, 2022, be approved.
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## Executive Summary

### Purpose of Report

To approve the 2023 City Council and Committee meeting schedule.

### Key Findings

The meeting schedule is based on best practices, guiding principles, meeting statistics, available evidence and qualitative information collected through the agenda forecast review process.

To reflect the diversity of the City of Guelph, and to build equity into the City Council governance structure, City staff are recommending:

- that the calendar be updated to reflect significant cultural and religious dates beyond those recognized as statutory holidays
- that all meeting start times be set at 10:00 am
- that regularly scheduled Council and Committee meetings be held on Tuesdays

### Financial Implications

None.

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## Report

Pursuant to the City of Guelph's [Procedural By-law](#), City Council is required to approve an annual City Council and Committee meeting schedule. Specific to the 2023 schedule, several meetings are also proposed for November and December 2022 (City Council orientation meetings, the inaugural City Council meeting, etc.).

### Guiding Principles

The following principles guide the development of the annual meeting schedule:

1. Agendas are published a minimum of ten days prior to a meeting.

2. Committee of the Whole meetings are generally scheduled the first Tuesday of the month and are scheduled for 10:00 am.
3. City Council Planning meetings are generally scheduled the second Tuesday of the month and are scheduled for 10:00 am.
4. Special City Council and meeting placeholders are generally scheduled the second Wednesday, third Tuesday and third Wednesday of the month and are scheduled for 10:00 am.
5. Regular City Council meetings are generally scheduled the fourth Tuesday of the month and are scheduled for 10:00 am.
6. Committee of the Whole meetings consist of two or three service areas reporting on alternating months with exceptions to be made for matters of a timely nature.
7. Committee of the Whole meetings and regular City Council meetings are generally scheduled three weeks apart.
8. Closed City Council and Closed Committee of the Whole meetings are scheduled immediately prior to the corresponding open meeting (start times of closed meetings are based on agenda content).
9. Changes to the meeting calendar are posted publicly as soon as possible.
10. No meetings are scheduled during the week of March break and the month of August.
11. No meetings are scheduled on the next business day following conference opportunities from external organization such as the Association of Municipalities of Ontario or the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.
12. Committee of Management for the Elliot meetings are schedule at the end of each quarter and precede the monthly Committee of the Whole meeting.
13. Guelph Municipal Holdings Incorporated and Guelph Junction Railway Annual General Meetings are required to be held prior to June 30 of each year.
14. Meetings dates and times are adjusted as to not conflict with significant cultural and religious dates. Adjustments can include updates to the meeting start times and/or meeting dates, in meeting adjustments such as scheduled breaks or acknowledgement of the event within the meeting.

### **Significant Cultural and Religious Dates**

In collaboration with the City's Senior Advisor, Equity, Anti-Racism and Indigenous Initiatives, a review of cultural and religious dates that are important to the community of Guelph was completed. The review was done to incorporate significant cultural and religious dates into the annual meeting schedule to ensure that all Guelphites can participate in their local democracy.

By adding these events into the Council calendar, the City is acknowledging these dates and how they impact an individual's ability to participate in meetings of City Council; be it residents, City Council or City staff.

The following is the list of cultural and religious days to be recognized as part of the 2023 meeting schedule:

- National Aboriginal Veterans Day – November 8, 2022

- Hanukkah – December 18 to 26, 2022
- Kwanzaa – December 26, 2022 to January 1, 2023
- Armenian Orthodox Christmas – January 6, 2023
- Orthodox Christmas – January 7, 2023
- Lunar New Year – January 22, 2023
- Louis Riel Day – February 20, 2023
- Spring Solstices – March 20, 2023
- Ramadan – March 22 to April 20, 2023
- Passover – April 5 to April 13, 2023
- Holi – April 8, 2023
- Vaisakhi – April 14, 2023
- Eid al-Fitr – April 21, 2023
- National Aboriginal Day – June 21, 2023
- Eid al-Adha – June 29, 2023
- Emancipation Day – August 1, 2023
- Rosh Hashanah – September 15 to 17, 2023
- National Day for Truth and Reconciliation – September 30, 2023
- National Aboriginal Veterans Day – November 8, 2023
- Diwali – November 12, 2023
- Hanukkah – December 8 to 15, 2023
- Kwanzaa – December 26, 2023 to January 1, 2024

This is a living list of significant dates. It will be reviewed and updated annually as part of the City Council meeting schedule approval. The current list is not perfect or finished. It is a starting point. Staff welcome feedback from the community on how it can be made better as we continue to work together to make Guelph's governance structure more equitable.

Not all of the events require that City Council meetings be moved entirely. Some require a change in start time, and others require the acknowledgement of the Mayor or chair at the beginning of a meeting.

## **Meeting Start Times and Days**

### **Meetings routinely extend beyond 9 pm**

There were 82 meetings of Council and Committee in held in 2020 and 86 in 2021. In 2020, 29 (or 35%) of those meetings ended after 9:00 pm. In 2021, 41 (or 48%) of those meetings ended after 9:00 pm. Chart 1 shows all meetings of Council and Committee that adjourned later than 9:00 pm, 10:00 pm and 11:00 pm in 2020 and 2021.

Meeting length and adjournment time affects the ability of all participants (the public, City Council and staff) to make good decisions. Meetings which extend past 9:00 pm strain the ability of participants to think effectively and focus on important decisions.

Late evening adjournment times also have negative effects on delegates who are, at times, forced to wait until the late evening hours to appear before City Council.

**Chart 1 – Adjournment Times of Council and Committee in 2020 and 2021**

|                           | 2020 | 2021 |
|---------------------------|------|------|
| Adjournment past 9:00 pm  | 15   | 25   |
| Adjournment past 10:00 pm | 11   | 14   |
| Adjournment past 11:00 pm | 3    | 2    |
| Total Meetings            | 82   | 86   |

**Daytime meetings can provide opportunities to hear from more/different voices**

Traditionally, evening meetings have favoured people working 9 to 5 type jobs and have disadvantaged those working evenings, afternoons or night shifts. Research indicates that racialized communities are disproportionately exposed to contract, temporary, part-time, and shift work with poor job security, low wages and benefits, and also less flexibility. As we emerge from the pandemic with video conferencing tools more accessible and available, there is anecdotal evidence that these tools in combination with increasing flexibility in workplaces would allow people working in office type environments to continue participate in meetings at a 10 am start time, while further extending the opportunity to participate to more and different voices, including those who work alternative shift schedules.

When considering the connection to cultural and religious days of significance, daytime meetings also provide flexibility for those participating in religious practices with an emphasis on sunset times (for example Ramadan).

**Hybrid meetings increase accessibility and access for everyone**

As referenced above, hybrid meetings allow the public, City Council and staff to join and participate in Council meetings in-person or remotely over the phone, a mobile device or traditional computer. This makes it much easier to participate or delegate in meetings while juggling work, childcare, family and other responsibilities of modern life.

**Previous shifts to earlier meetings have not resulted in complaints from the public**

The introduction of Committee of the Whole meetings and the occasional Special City Council meeting held at 2:00 pm or earlier has not resulted in any complaints from the public relating to accessibility or access to meetings.

**The statutory right to disconnect policy supports daytime meetings on Tuesdays and Wednesdays**

In accordance with [Section 21.1.2 \(1\) of the Working for Workers Act](#), the City of Guelph has established a Right to Disconnect Policy that supports and encourages City employees, especially those employees who can easily remain connected outside of work hours, to disconnect outside of work hours. The core working hours of most employees who are regularly required to join City Council meetings is 8:30 am to 4:30 pm Monday – Friday. Evening meetings require that employees stay connected outside of those core working hours.

The City of Guelph prioritizes the health and well-being of its employees and recognizes that disconnecting from work is an important part of a healthy work-life balance. Increased connection and work activity can lead to overwork and other unintended adverse health consequences such as increased anxiety, stress or burnout. Daytime meetings will help to promote a healthy work-life balance for City of Guelph employees.

Additionally, to ensure that employees can provide City Council with timely responses to requests for information before meetings, a shift to Tuesday and Wednesday as the primary meeting days is required. Currently, revised agendas are distributed Friday afternoons and Council meetings are held on Mondays. To respond to questions from members of City Council prior to a Council meeting, staff are often required to work outside of core working hours. Shifting meetings to Tuesdays and Wednesdays will allow staff to respond to requests and provide information within core working hours.

### **Additional Information**

Specific to the 2023 City Council and Committee schedule, and with respect to the 2022-2026 term of City Council, Council orientation, mock City Council, and Inaugural City Council meetings have been scheduled in November and December 2022.

Additionally, specific budget orientation and budget confirmation meetings are planned to support both the 2022-2023 and 2024-2027 City budgets.

### **Financial Implications**

None.

### **Strategic Plan Alignment**

Approving an annual City Council and Committee meeting schedule aligns with the strategic plan priority of Working Together for Our Future by ensuring that City Council decision making remains accountable and transparent to the public.

### **Attachments**

Attachment-1 2023 City Council and Committee Meeting Schedule

### **Departmental Approval**

Dylan McMahon, Manager, Legislative Services/Deputy City Clerk

Sara Sayyed, Senior Advisor, Equity, Anti-Racism and Indigenous Initiatives

Mark Ellis, General Manager, Human Resources

### **Report Author**

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**This report was approved by:**

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**This report was recommended by:**

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