

Hi I am writing as I heard Mr. O'Brien on the CBC news this morning. Hearing what is being proposed and the rationale as noted on the news story, has compelled me to write.

I agree with the need to be considerate of Ramadan, and move the meetings so they don't conflict with this observance similar to how meetings aren't held on statutory holidays or Christian holidays. I think this is the right thing to do, BUT Ramadan is only celebrated for one month each year. Wouldn't it make sense to move just the meeting times for the month when Ramadan falls each year vs. moving all meeting times over the entire year?

I worry that by trying to be considerate of one group you are affecting the ability of other groups to appear before council. Really you should be trying to ensure the largest possible number of community members has the ability to bring their concerns to council throughout the year.

I am part owner in a manufacturing business. We would have very few people who would be able to delegate, either in person or by phone, if the meetings were held at 10am. Our workflow is interdependent. That is, if one person is missing, the whole process slows down or stops. So for an employee to delegate to council they would have to take an unpaid day off work, or a vacation day. Even if the meetings started mid afternoon it would be better vs. 10am which potentially impacts a person's entire day.

Even as a member of management, it would be difficult for me to wait and monitor the meeting's progress to be available to delegate. I'd not be productive during the meeting which isn't fair to my company. Again, I'd likely need to take time off of work.

I think for this reason moving the meeting times to during 9am to 5pm is bad for community engagement.

In the interview Mr. O'Brien also referred to the right to disconnect as a reason to move the meeting times. From my understanding of Bill 27 this is false. Bill 27 protects a worker by giving them the right to disconnect from work in their off hours. I would suggest that any City staff that is required to be at a council meeting, to support council, is doing so as part of their job - as part of their expected working hours. The bill talks about the employees right to disconnect, not their right to not work overtime. I have to imagine that the City offers flex time if it doesn't provide overtime for supporting meeting. These meetings are scheduled months in advance. Staff should be aware of the commitments on their time well in advance so they can plan accordingly. In most cases I'd suggest they accepted their positions with full knowledge of the historical timing of council meetings and their position's requirement to attend the evening meetings.

This is really no different from the many charities in town who have board and committee meetings after 5pm. The charity staff are expected to attend the meetings and are provided comp time. I know this to be the case at F&CS Guelph Wellington where I am on the board and can attend up to 3 meetings a month after 5pm during a given month. Our ED and senior staff are provided comp time as attending these meetings is part of their role.

Finally, I was wondering when the community was consulted on this proposed change? I get the "Have Your Say" emails. Often they are on very detailed or complex issues which I wouldn't have the expertise to constructively respond, but this issue is the easy one to respond to. I don't recall this being in any emails the last 6 months. This would be the perfect way to get the community's input.

I appreciate you sharing this email with Mayor and Council.

Regards,

Mike Hallett