

Council Memo



To	City Council
Service Area	Corporate Services
Date	Monday, July 18, 2022
Subject	Additional Information - 2023 Council and Committee Meeting Schedule

2023 Council and Committee Meeting Schedule

The proposed [2023 Council and committee calendar](#) presented at the July 4, 2022 Committee of the Whole meeting represents the first time that an equity and diversity lens has been applied to City Council's annual meeting schedule. Guelph is among the first municipalities in Ontario to recognize significant religious and cultural dates not tied to statutory holidays in its meeting scheduling. This progress is worth celebrating and is further evidence of the City's on-going commitment to equity, diversity and anti-racism.

To summarize the discussion at the July 4 Committee of the Whole meeting in relation to the 2023 Council and Committee Meeting Schedule, Committee stated general concerns regarding a blanket shift to 10 am start times for all meetings of Council and committee. There was, however, interest expressed in relation to moving Council and committee meeting dates to Tuesdays as opposed to Mondays. In response to the discussion at Committee of the Whole, staff have prepared this memo with proposed motions for Council to consider and in such a way that the equity and diversity lens is retained while also maintaining many of the aspects of the Council and committee calendar that is familiar to the public, Council and staff and as experienced throughout the 2018-2022 term of Council.

In alignment with the above noted discussion, a revised 2023 Council and committee meeting schedule (included as attachment-1 to this memo) has been prepared. This schedule includes the originally referenced religious and culturally significant dates, a shift from Monday to Tuesday meetings (or from Tuesday to Wednesday where the Monday is a holiday) and 10 am meeting start times during Ramadan only.

Meeting Start Times

While the Committee of the Whole discussion focused on the removal of 10 am start times from the 2023 meeting schedule entirely, City staff are recommending that they be left in place during Ramadan. This change is recommended because staff have heard firsthand from the Muslim community, who must leave City Council meetings to break fast during Ramadan, that late night meetings are problematic. This has also directly affected City staff members who support City Council meetings.

Start times for budget meetings in 2023 are proposed to remain at 9 am, consistent with the process in used in 2021.

If City Council wishes to leave current meeting times the same, with the exception of Ramadan, along with the implementation of Tuesday meeting dates, the following motion could be passed:

That the 2023 City Council and Committee Meeting Schedule, included as Attachment-1 to the staff memo titled Additional Information - 2023 City Council and Committee Meeting Schedule, dated July 18, 2022, be approved.

July City Council Meeting Timing

At the July 4, 2022 Committee of the Whole meeting, there was discussion regarding the proposed July 25, 2023 City Council meeting. In the past, City Council has directed staff to place the July Council meeting in the third week of July instead of the fourth, which is the norm for other months. The layout of the calendar in July 2023, however, does not allow for this.

Moving the July 25 City Council meeting to July 18 does not provide adequate time for City Clerk's Office staff to publish the agenda following the Committee of the Whole meeting on July 5. The Committee of the Whole meeting is scheduled on July 5 to ensure there is an empty day following the Canada Day long weekend (similar to the shift from Monday to Tuesday meetings). City staff do not recommend shifting the July Council date earlier than July 25 for this reason. Operationally, there are irreconcilable challenges associated with publishing an agenda for a Council meeting less than 24 hours after the related Committee of the Whole meeting concludes.

Future Community Engagement and Comparator Analysis

At the July 4, 2022 Committee of the Whole meeting the following resolution was passed:

That the scheduled times of future Council meetings beginning November 1, 2022 be referred back to staff for public consultation and comparator/best practice review, and that the results be brought back to the Governance committee during Q1 of the 2023 term of the new Council.

City Clerk's Office staff believe that the annual approval of the Council and committee meeting schedule is the appropriate time to consider changes to meeting start times. In addition, the community engagement now required for this review will make it difficult for the work to be completed in alignment with the upcoming 2023 Governance Review. As a result, City Clerk's Office staff are recommending the following modified version of the July 4, 2022 resolution be passed:

That the scheduled start times of City Council and committee meetings held in 2024 and beyond be referred to staff for public consultation, in accordance with the Community Engagement Framework, a comparator/best practice review and meeting management data, and that the results be brought back to the Governance Committee as part of the approval of the 2024 Council and committee meeting schedule.

In closing, staff are proud of the calendar as recommended in the original July 4 staff report and as revised through the recommendations outlined in this memo given the strong focus on equity, diversity and inclusion. Having heard the discussion at Committee of the Whole, the proposed recommendations noted above represent the best advice of staff. These recommendations could be tabled at Council as alternatives to the Committee adopted motions to maintain existing and familiar meeting start times and accommodate a shift to Tuesday meeting dates while simultaneously applying the equity and diversity lens to the 2023 Council and committee meeting schedule.

Attachments

Attachment-1 Revised 2023 City Council and Committee Meeting Schedule

This memo was approved by:

Stephen O'Brien
General Manager, City Clerk's Office/City Clerk
Corporate Services
519-822-1260 extension 5644
stephen.obrien@guelph.ca

This memo was recommended by:

Tara Baker
Acting Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
Corporate Services
519-822-1260 extension 2084
tara.baker@guelph.ca