

# 2018



## Understanding Council and Committee Meetings



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## **Purpose of Booklet**

The purpose of this Booklet is to provide the public with insight on the procedures of Committee of the Whole and Council meetings. This Booklet also references the amended Procedural By-law 47-2017 which Council approved on June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2017. The Procedural By-law helps to:

- create expectations for decorum and speaker participation during Council meetings,
- provide important information regarding debate and motions, and
- govern the proceedings of Committee of the Whole and Council meetings.

## **Important**

All correspondence, delegations and speakers at Committee of the Whole and Council meetings form part of the public record in the Agenda and/or the minutes. Council meetings are recorded for the purpose of taking minutes.

Anyone who wishes to keep personal information out of the public record should mark it confidential, refrain from disclosing it in public and keep it separate from other comments submitted to Council. For example, you may wish to write a letter with comments for Council and provide your contact information so staff can contact you about the meeting. In this case, include a covering letter with your personal contact information and attach a separate letter with your comments to Council. This way your contact information like phone number, email address or mailing address is not included in the agenda.

Derogatory or inappropriate remarks are not tolerated at Committee of the Whole and Council meetings. Applause, booing or other audible demonstrations of support or opposition are also strongly discouraged in the Council Chambers. The Township of Woolwich asks delegations and all members of the public to display the same respect to others as they would expect to receive for themselves.

## Definitions

**Agenda:** means the order of proceedings for a meeting setting out the business to be considered at the meeting

**Committee of the Whole Meeting:** is a less formal, discussion-oriented meeting with the same members of Council. Generally, matters are discussed at the Committee of the Whole level first, then given final approval at the subsequent Council meeting.

**Council:** is the term used to refer collectively to the Mayor and Councillors elected to the Council of the Township of Woolwich.

**Decorum:** means behaviour that, in the opinion of the Presiding Officer, promotes an atmosphere of respect in Council Chambers.

**Delegation:** means a person or persons who requests permission to address Council in accordance with section 19 of the Procedural By-law. Delegations can be:

**Registered,** meaning they called ahead to be listed on the agenda, or

**Unregistered,** meaning they are not listed on the agenda and may not be permitted to speak.

**Improper Conduct:** means disruptive or unethical conduct and includes engaging in a course of vexatious comments or conduct against another person that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome. It includes behaviour that in any way obstructs the deliberations and actions of Council.

**Motion:** means a question to be considered by the Council or Committee of Council which is read, moved and seconded and, subject to debate, voted on. When a motion is carried, it becomes a resolution.

**Presentation:** means a presentation of information to Council or a Committee of Council that has been requested by a member of Council or a Committee of Council, or a member of staff of the Township of Woolwich.

**Resolution:** means a formal determination made by Council or a Committee on the basis of a motion passed before a properly constituted meeting of Council or a Committee for debate and decision, and duly passed.

**Special Meeting:** means a meeting of Council not scheduled in accordance with the approved calendar of meetings.

## **Attending a Meeting**

Council and Committee of the Whole meetings are generally open to the public and any member of the community is welcome to attend and observe Council discussions. You do not need to call ahead or register to observe Woolwich Council in action. There is ample public seating and additional standing room if needed.

## **Coming and Going**

Meetings generally start at 7:00 p.m. and last as long as necessary for Council to finish the business on the agenda. Members of the public may come and go as they please, but are asked to do so quietly so as not to disturb the discussion.

## **Decorum of Council Chambers**

1. To preserve and protect the decorum of Council Chambers or other meeting places of Council or Committees of Council, no person participating in a meeting, including members of the audience, may undertake any of the following actions:
  - 1.1. Make deprecating comments about, or speak disrespectfully of, or malign the integrity of any member of Council, Committee of Council, staff or the public;
  - 1.2. Use offensive words or an aggressive tone of attack;
  - 1.3. Disobey any rule or request of the Presiding Officer or any decision of Council or Committee of Council on questions of order or practice;
  - 1.4. Enter into cross debate with the Presiding Officer, members of Council or Committee of Council, other delegations or staff;
  - 1.5. Appear before Council or Committee of Council for the sole purpose of generating publicity or personal attacks;
  - 1.6. Address Council or Committee of Council without permission
  - 1.7. Interrupt any speech or action of the members of Council or Committee of Council or any other person addressing Council or Committee of Council;
  - 1.8. Display or have in their possession picket signs or placards in the Council Chambers or meeting rooms or within any municipally owned building used for such purposes; or
  - 1.9. Applaud participants in debate or engage in conversation or other behaviour which may disrupt the proceedings of Council or Committee of Council.

## **Public Meetings**

Public meetings are required for certain purposes under the Planning Act and often held for other purposes when Council wishes to hear from the community. Members of the public who attend a public meeting are asked to sign a sign-in sheet and may be asked to state their name and address before speaking. This information may be required for notice or appeal purposes.

All members must follow the rules of decorum during public meetings.

## **Closed Meetings**

Meetings may be closed to the public to keep information confidential in limited circumstances authorized by the *Municipal Act, 2001*. For example, if Council wishes to sell municipal land they may discuss the value of the land in closed session and keep this information confidential. In other cases, Council may discuss applications submitted by persons interested in participating on a committee but will announce the new committee member during the open (public) part of the meeting once they have made their choice.

If Council needs to move to a closed session they first must pass a motion stating the general nature of the matter being discussed and will move to another room for a closed meeting.

## **Public Restrooms**

There are public restrooms available just outside the Council chambers for those attending a meeting.

## **Cell Phones and Electronics**

Cell phones and electronic devices are permitted in Council chambers but must be switched to silent mode. Members of the public are asked to step out of chambers when making or receiving calls so as not to disturb the meeting.

## **Food and Drink**

Outside food and drinks are not permitted in Council Chambers, except water.

## **Pets and Service Animals**

Only service animals are allowed in Council Chambers. Pets are not permitted. Do not leave pets in vehicles in extreme hot and cold environments.

## **Parking**

There are ample parking spaces behind the municipal office or in the Church Street Municipal Parking Lot. Parking is free all day.

## **Committee of the Whole and Council**

The Council of the Township of Woolwich generally meets on a 3-week rotational schedule in the Council Chambers of the Township Administration Building located at 24 Church Street West in Elmira.

## **Committee of the Whole Meeting**

Committee of the Whole meetings provides the opportunity for all members of Council to participate in discussion. These meetings are considered less formal than Council meetings and are chaired on a rotational basis by members of Council.

## **Council Meeting**

Council meetings are generally held the week following a Committee of the Whole meeting and are chaired by the Township Mayor. Any decisions and recommendations presented at Committee of the Whole meetings are formally approved at Council meetings.

## **Where can I access Committee of the Whole and Council Agenda Packages?**

All Committee of the Whole and Council packages are posted by 2:00 p.m. on the Friday prior to the meeting on the Township website under the Council and Committee Calendar.

## **Where can I access Committee of the Whole and Council Minutes?**

All Committee of the Whole and Council minutes are posted once approved on the Township website under the Council and Committee Calendar. If you are having trouble finding minutes, contact the Clerk's Department at 519-669-6004 for assistance.

## **Public Notice**

Notice of meetings is provided in two ways:

1. The dates of Committee of the Whole and Council meetings are provided in a yearly calendar posted online.
2. The time, location and matters to be discussed at meetings is provided when the agenda package is posted on the Township website.

## **Proclamations and Delegations**

### **Proclamations**

The Township of Woolwich does not pass proclamations.

### **Who can Register as a Delegation?**

Anyone who wishes to speak at a public Committee of the Whole or Council meeting must register as a delegation to save their place on the agenda. Interested delegations must clearly state the topic of discussion. To register as a delegation, please contact the Council and Information Services Department prior to 5 p.m. on the Thursday before the meeting by calling 519-669-6004 or toll free at 1-877-969-0094 ext. 6004. Delegations can also complete an online delegation request form to be registered for an upcoming meeting. Online forms can be found at [www.woolwich.ca](http://www.woolwich.ca).

### **Are Delegations required to provide presentation materials?**

Delegations are encouraged to submit their presentation materials to Township staff by 5:00 p.m. on the Thursday prior to the meeting. This ensures that the materials are included on the agenda package. If you do not wish to include your presentation materials on the public agenda, please be sure to bring 16 copies to the meeting and provide them to Council, Township staff, the Media and the Council/Committee Coordinator. Delegations are permitted to make visual presentations to Council. The Council Chambers offers a laptop and projection screens.

### **When do I need to arrive to a meeting?**

Delegations, as well as members of the public are encouraged to arrive at least 15 minutes prior to the start of a meeting.

### **How long can I speak before Council?**

Each delegation is limited to a maximum of 10 minutes to present their information to Council. Once the delegation has completed their presentation, members of Council may ask questions for clarification purposes. When all questions have been addressed, the Chair will thank the delegation for their presentation and ask them to be seated.

### **Can a group attend as a delegation?**

If you are appearing on behalf of a larger group, notify staff that you will be the spokesperson for the group. If more than one person is addressing Council regarding the same subject, each following person is strongly encouraged to provide only new information on the matter.

### **Am I able to speak before Council if I am not registered as a delegation?**

Council may pass a motion to allow unregistered delegations to speak on an item listed on the agenda. Unregistered delegations may speak for a maximum of 5 minutes although Council may also implement a shorter speaking time if needed.

If a delegation does not register by 5:00 p.m. on the Thursday before the meeting, they may not be permitted to speak if Council has a large agenda, other delegations or Council believes the comments would best be addressed at another meeting. To ensure you are able to speak it is best to register before the meeting.

### **If I have concerns, how will Council answer them?**

Prior to registering as a Delegation, community members are encouraged to speak with the appropriate Township staff members and their Ward Councillor(s). Council may not be able to answer all questions at a meeting but may ask that a Council or staff member look into the concern and respond after the meeting.

### **If I have a concern and do not wish to speak before Council, what should I do?**

Community members are always welcome to call, submit a letter or email Township staff, their Ward Councillor(s) or all of Council with questions or concerns. For more information, contact the Clerk's Department at 519-669-6004.

### **How should I address members of Council during the meeting?**

To ensure that order is maintained throughout the meeting, delegations are encouraged to address comments to the Chair of the meeting. If you are speaking at a Committee of the Whole meeting, it is appropriate to address the Chair of as Mr. Chair or Madam Chair. If you are speaking at a formal Council meeting, the Mayor is the meeting Chair and shall be addressed as Mayor Shantz or Your Worship.

## **Accessibility**

In 2005 the Province of Ontario passed the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). The purpose of the Act is to ensure that all organizations, including municipalities move forward with ensuring that the Province of Ontario becomes fully accessible by the year 2025.

The Township of Woolwich strives to deliver exceptional customer service to ensure that all customers benefit from the same service in the same way. The Township's Administration Office is a two-story building with an elevator, automated door paddles and an accessible family washroom on the main floor available to use by the public.

### **Assistive FM Listening Devices**

For residents who require assistive FM listening devices during a meeting, be sure to contact Township staff prior to the meeting at 519-669-6004.

### **Large Print Meeting Agenda's**

The Council/ Committee Coordinator prints off up to ten (10) copies of the Agenda Package in Large Print, or size 14 Arial font and makes them available on the Agenda table outside the Council Chambers.

### **Accessible Documents**

If you require information or documents in an alternate format or accessible format, contact the Council and Information Services Department at 519-669-6004. Township staff will receive the request and provide the requested information within a reasonable timeframe.