

Effective Meetings, Public Engagement & Communication: Key Take-Aways and Considerations for CAOs

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- The *MGA* and Regulations contain many legal requirements for municipal meetings related to meeting types, quorum, scheduling and notification, procedures, voting, decision making, records and attendance
- Efficient and effective meetings have a well-designed agenda, strong leadership and involve significant preparation. Effective meetings also result in clear and transparent decisions.
- Municipalities are required to have a Procedural Bylaw which governs council meetings and meeting procedures. The Bylaw may also contain provisions related to meeting conduct, motion/debate and committees.
- Unless otherwise provided in the *MGA*, an action or proceeding of a council is not valid unless it is authorized or adopted by a bylaw or resolution at a duly constituted public meeting of council.
- Regular council meetings must be held six times annually (at minimum), must be conducted in public, and the public shall be invited to attend. Notice of the regular council must be given electronically and by other means.
- Closed council meetings require a resolution, and the resolution must describe the matter to be considered in the closed meeting. Matters that can be discussed during a closed meeting are restricted to matters listed in Section 119 (1) of the *MGA*.
- A council adopts a formal resolution or bylaw by proposing a motion as part of the approval process. A motion may also be used to acknowledge an instruction or directive of council (i.e. approval of meeting minutes).

- Roberts Rules of Order may, but need not, be used as the governing meeting procedures. Council must decide on its meeting procedures and codify these procedures in the Procedural Bylaw.
- The mayor, in presiding at meetings of council, shall maintain order and decorum and decide all questions of order (Section 111 *MGA*).
- The CAOs role is to provide administrative support to council to prepare for and conduct meetings. The CAO will provide council with the agenda and supporting documentation for the agenda items before each council meeting.
- To prepare council for effective decision-making, the CAO should help identify decision-making criteria, including policies, bylaws and resolutions, or other laws (Acts and regulations).
- When preparing meeting packages, the CAO will draft a meeting agenda and set a deadline to receive all meeting materials from various parties. The CAO will collect and organize all background material and prepare summary reports or requests for decision, if necessary.
- The CAO must ensure that all minutes of council and council committee meetings are recorded and include the date of the meeting, persons present, subject matter of issues discussed and any record of decisions made.
- Council committees oversee a delegated area of responsibility and make recommendations to council. Common standing committees include Finance and Administration, Recreation, Water and Sewer, Fire and Police, Properties and Planning, Streets and Lights.
- The CAO is responsible for maintaining a robust records management system to reduce the proliferation of paperwork, ensure timely access to information, maintain municipal records, and correctly dispose of records.