

## Formalizing the Flow of Agenda Items at City Council and Committee Meetings

### ISSUE

Saskatoon City Council is interested in formalizing meeting procedures to ensure consistency and to remove ambiguity with respect to the how members may speak on agenda items. The Administration has explored approaches in other cities. This report seeks Committee's approval to formalize the flow of agenda items at meetings of City Council and its committees.

### RECOMMENDATION

That a report be forwarded to City Council recommending the City Solicitor be directed to amend *Bylaw 9170, The Committee and Procedures Bylaw, 2014* to formalize the flow of Council and Committee meeting agenda items as described in this report.

### BACKGROUND

At the October 21, 2019, GPC meeting, a procedural question was raised with respect to when motions can be made by Committee (or City Council) members. A Committee member attempted to make a motion while asking clarity questions from a stakeholder. The Chair instructed the member to hold off on the motion until after all questions to the Administration and stakeholders have been asked.

At its November 18, 2019, meeting, City Council considered a report from the Governance and Priorities Committee titled, "Time Limits for Debate on Motions in Committee". City Council resolved, in part, "that the Administration report back on the process for the flow of agenda items in comparable cities".

### DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

The City's governance structure allows City Council members to ask the Administration questions of clarity on reports that it submits. It is also permitted to ask stakeholders similar types of question on presentations or correspondence that they submit for the meeting to which the item is being addressed. This practice is in place so that City Council members can obtain necessary clarity before making a potential motion or debating the issue(s) on the meeting agenda. However, this practice is not formalized in Bylaw 9170.

The Administration conducted research into the procedures and practices in other cities. For example, the procedure bylaws for both Calgary and Edmonton formalize the process for the flow of agenda items at Council and Committee meetings. They both, with minor variations, prescribe the flow as follows:

- introduction of the item;
- Administration and/or public presentation;
- questions of clarification from Members to Administration or stakeholders;
- motion for debate;
- debate of motion; and
- conclude by voting on the item.

Discussion with representatives from these cities indicate that the process used to implement the flow of agenda items can occur in a few different ways, depending on the circumstance. The period for questions is typically reserved for questions only. Sometimes a Chair will allow members to indicate an intention to make a motion. During the motions period they are typically put forward on a first-come, first-served basis.

In Committee, members are given priority to ask questions, followed by non-members – only members can make motions. The members that wish to speak by asking questions, making motions, or speaking to a motion signal to the Chair, who keeps track of the order.

In Council, the Councillors click in to add their names to the queue in the meeting management software, which is managed by the Chair. These cities do not have a procedural rule preventing Council or Committee members from signalling intent to make a motion. However, it is often encouraged so that the body is aware of the intent.

Administration recommends that Bylaw 9170 be updated to reflect the process described above, where motions cannot be made during question period. Signalling of intention to make a motion will be allowed during question period, and motions will only be allowed during the debate portion of the item.

### **IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial, environmental, or social implications resulting from the recommendation in this report. Approval of the recommendation will generate legal implications in that Bylaw 9170 will require an amendment.

### **NEXT STEPS**

The City Solicitor is preparing amendments to Bylaw 9170, based on previous City Council direction. If approved, this amendment will be incorporated, and all amendments will be presented at the January 20, 2020, meeting of the Governance and Priorities Committee for approval.

### **Report Approval**

Written by: Mike Jordan, Chief Public Policy and Government Relations Officer  
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Approved by: Jeff Jorgenson, City Manager