

Amendment to The Procedures and Committees Bylaw, 2014

ISSUE

How should requests to speak on new matters and communications requiring the direction of the Committee be dealt with at the Committees of Council?

RECOMMENDATION

That the Governance and Priorities Committee recommend to City Council that Schedule “C” of Bylaw No. 9170, *The Procedures and Committees Bylaw, 2014* be amended as outlined in this report.

BACKGROUND

Bylaw No. 9170, *The Procedures and Committees Bylaw, 2014* (the “Procedures Bylaw”) allows a person to request to speak or have a letter or other communication considered by a Council Committee on a new matter not on the agenda. Schedule “C” of the Procedures Bylaw outlines the agenda order for Public Council Committee meetings. Requests to Speak on new matters and Communications requiring the direction of the Committee are the first substantive items on the agenda after Unfinished Business. It is only after these matters are dealt with that the rest of the agenda is considered, excepting where requests to speak from the public on matters on the agenda are received, which are prioritized over Communication items without speakers.

The Administration reviews agendas and tries to balance the number of reports on an agenda to ensure every Committee has an opportunity to complete the business within the time allotted. However, the Administration has no way of knowing when a Request to Speak or a Communication from the public with respect to a new matter not on the agenda will be placed on an agenda. There have been instances when these matters have consumed a significant amount of time and made it difficult for the Committee to complete the business on the agenda.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Some municipalities in Canada have moved away from allowing Communications and Requests to Speak on matters not on an agenda. For example, there are no provisions in the *Procedure Bylaw* of the City of Calgary that allow for Requests to Speak on new matters. The public submission form allows comments relating to an upcoming Council or Committee matter, or to Request to Speak on an upcoming public hearing item. Similarly, the *Council Procedures* of the City of Toronto allow speakers on matters on the agenda of a Committee, or the Committee may invite specific persons to make a public presentation to it on any matter within its mandate. Neither jurisdiction allows speakers at Council except with respect to legislated matters such as public hearings.

Public participation has always been important at the City of Saskatoon. We have allowed Requests to Speak and Communications on new matters for many years. Requests to Speak on matters on the agenda are also allowed at City Council meetings. The Administration is not recommending that this process change. Allowing for public participation and allowing members of the public to bring forward issues that are important to them continues to be an important element of how we operate and manage the City.

The Administration is recommending that the order of the agenda for Public Council Committee Meetings as set out in Schedule "C" of the Procedures Bylaw be changed. It is suggested that Requests to Speak (new matters) and Communications (requiring the direction of the Committee) be considered after Giving Notice on the agenda and no prioritization of speakers on these items occur. This change would ensure that matters on the agenda are heard first before new matters and that the Committee can deal with the business on the agenda before new matters. Speakers on matters already on the agenda would continue to be prioritized. A draft version of Schedule "C" with these changes has been attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

To be clear no changes are proposed for Council meetings. This change is only to the four Standing Policy Committees and the Governance and Priorities Committee.

The City has updated its rules with respect to how speakers can participate. Speakers are no longer required to attend in person and can attend remotely. We note that the City of Calgary encourages remote attendance. A speaker could simply follow the agenda remotely and join when it is their turn to speak. Further, all Committee meetings are live streamed so a member of the public could follow an agenda remotely and then simply come to the meeting before their item rather than sit in the Chambers for the entire meeting if they wanted to speak in person.

The Administration believes that this change will allow for more efficient meetings while still balancing the desire for public participation on both matters on the agenda and new matters that the public wishes to bring forward. Any items, including speakers on new matters, if not completed at the initial meeting, will be placed as Unfinished Business on the next meeting agenda and prioritized as the first item on that agenda.

Section 111(6) of the Procedures Bylaw does provide flexibility in the event unique circumstances arise. This section allows the Committee to alter the order of the agenda with a majority vote of the members present.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial or other implications. This change will require an amendment to the Procedures Bylaw. Public notice will be required.

NEXT STEPS

If this change is approved, the City Solicitor's Office will bring forward the appropriate bylaw amendment.

APPENDICES

1. Draft version of new Schedule "C"

Report Approval

Written by: Cindy Yelland, City Solicitor and Adam Tittlemore, City Clerk
Reviewed by: Mike Jordan, Chief Public Policy and Government Relations Officer
Approved by: Jeff Jorgenson, City Manager

Admin Report - Amendment to The Procedures and Committees Bylaw, 2014.docx