City Council – A Commitment of Time

Newly Elected Officials (Orientations)

All members of the newly elected Council are required to attend a Newly Elected Officials Workshop in November following the election. The 2014 workshop will be hosted by the Township of Esquimalt and includes two evening sessions - and dinner. The first session will be held Monday, November 24th and the second session will be held Wednesday, November 26th. City Staff will provide you with the specific details if you are elected. Please mark these dates as "tentative appointments" in your calendar to hold the nights!

Additional workshops, sponsored by the Union of British Columbia Municipalities, will follow within a few months of the election. Information will be provided once the session dates have been established. These workshops usually take place in the Parksville area over a period of two days.

Regular Council Meetings and Standing Committee Meetings

Colwood City Council meets the 2nd and 4th Monday of each month, except July, August and December where the schedule is modified for summer recess and Election Years/Christmas Closure. These meetings start at 7:00 p.m. and are sometimes preceded by in-camera (closed) Council meetings and/or public hearings. That equates to 22 regular council meetings per year lasting from one hour to three or more hours each. All members of Council are required to attend Council meetings.

Special Meetings of Council are called as required, usually when an issue cannot wait until the next scheduled meeting.

Standing Committee meetings take place, generally, during the first three weeks of each month. A sixth Standing Committee is being established and will have to fit into this schedule in 2015. Most of these meetings are held once a month; however, the Planning and Land Use Committee meets twice a month. The Standing Committee meetings will often last anywhere from one to three hours.

Each Councillor is appointed to three different Standing Committees: one as Chair; one as Vice-Chair; and one as Alternate Chair. The Alternate does not have to attend every session but can – as a non-voting member – if they so choose. If attending in place of the Chair of Vice-Chair, the Alternate Chair would then be a voting member. Alternates must stay well versed in the Committee's issues so they are prepared to participate as and when they need to or want to.

In addition to the new standing committee be established, the five other standing committees include: Finance and Administration (3rd Monday each month at 7:00 pm); Parks, Recreation and Culture (3rd Monday each month at 5:30 pm); Planning and Land Use (1st and 3rd Tuesday each month at 7:00 pm); Protective Services (2nd Wednesday each month at 5:30 pm); and Transportation and Public Infrastructure (1st Monday each month at 6:30 pm). The meeting schedule is always subject to change to meet the needs of the current council and the citizens appointed to serve on these committees.

Council sitting as Committee-of-the-Whole (CoTW)

All members of Council serve on the Committee-of-the-Whole. When Council is sitting at CoTW meetings, they are serving as Committee Members, not Council members, and can only put forward motions that are 'recommendations to Council' for formal consideration and enactment. That means any recommendation passed at a CoTW meeting must then be forwarded to a Council Meeting for consideration by the Council – the authority for passing resolutions and giving direction.

CoTW meetings are often held during the last three or four months and first four months of each year. These meetings are held to allow Council, sitting as a committee, to go through the City's budget needs in order to develop the City annual Five-Year Financial Plan. These meetings can last anywhere from one hour to three hours or more with the frequency and dates of meetings determined by the needs and the availability of members.

CoTW can also be called when there is an issue or there are issues that must be addressed and the process would be better served by having the Council sit as a Committee to allow them to hear all the relevant information prior to sitting as a Council to make a decision on the matter. These meetings are scheduled as required.

Select, Ad Hoc and Other Committees, Commissions, Boards – City and Outside Agencies

Council members are also appointed to various select and ad hoc committees whose meetings they are required to attend on behalf of Council. These committees may be established by the City, or they may belong to other organizations to which the City has been requested to appoint a Council member or members.

The commitment to these meetings varies depending on the nature of the committee, but normally would require attendance at a meeting on at least a monthly basis requiring anywhere from one to three hours. These include, but are not limited to: CRD Board of Director (and its subcommittees); CRD Regional Water Commission; Juan de Fuca Water Distribution Commission; Intermunicipal Advisory Committee on Disability Issues; Cycling Advisory; CREST Emergency Services Communications; Greater Victoria Public Library Board; Colwood Heritage Commission; Greater Victoria Labour Relations Association; Economic Development and Innovation Committee; Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee; West Shore Parks and Recreation Society; Esquimalt Lagoon Stewardship initiative; Emergency Planning Committee; BC Transit Commission (including Victoria Regional Transit); and Electromagnetic Radiation Transmitters Task Force.

Conferences and Conventions

The **Union of British Columbia Municipalities** (UBCM) is the advocate for local government in British Columbia and was formed to provide local governments with a common voice. Activities have expanded from annual presentations to Cabinet to direct involvement in intergovernmental committees, regular meetings with various Provincial Ministers, and daily contact with senior government representatives. The annual conventions are the main forum for UBCM policy-making bringing local governments from all over British Columbia together to share their experiences and take a unified position. The conventions are five-days in duration and are held in the third or fourth week of September and all members of Council attend. The Council meeting may be cancelled or rescheduled to accommodate the convention.

The **Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities** (AVICC) is an association under the umbrella of UBCM. Established in 1951 its membership is made up of 51 municipalities and regional districts between Central Coast Regional District down to the tip of Vancouver Island, including the Sunshine Coast and Powell River. AVICC deals with issues affecting the largest urban areas right down to the smallest rural communities.

The AVICC holds its annual general meeting and convention in April each year, with the 2015 convention scheduled for April 10th, 11th, and 12th in the City of Courtenay. Members bring forward concerns from their individual communities through resolutions and debates and the Executive constantly works toward making the event very informative and allows members to share and discuss their issues. This convention is usually attended by one to three members of Council.

The City is a member of the **Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM)** which has been the national voice of local government since 1951 and has more than 2,000 members. They represent municipalities on policy and matters that fall within federal jurisdiction. Their annual convention and trade show is usually held over a three day period in June. Council does not usually attend this convention; however, it is considered when issues of mutual interest are scheduled for discussion.

Public Consultation and Public Events

Every year the City schedules and hosts a number of public meetings on a wide variety of topics as required. It is not mandatory that members of council attend these public meetings, but they provide an opportunity for council to connect with and hear directly from the public and some councillors have found attendance to be very beneficial when pondering the issues and making up their minds about what is best for their Community. There is no set schedule for these public meetings as they are held as needed according to the requirements of the process.

Council hosts, and is expected to participate in, annual City functions such as the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner and Sister City exchanges as they occur. Council members also receive numerous invitations to receptions, open houses, conferences, celebrations, concerts, annual general meetings and official events.

Materials Review

Council members can expect to spend a considerable amount of time reviewing reports, emails, and correspondence that comes to and through the City. There are many lengthy and complex reports and other communications created and considered by the City on a regular basis, many of which form the basis of the discussions to be held at the Committee and Council Meetings.

A great deal of information also comes through other agencies, boards, committee, or organization to which you may serve or looking to you for support.

Members must be able to commit the time necessary to read and understand the information presented, and to ask questions or get clarification on issues presented so they can comfortably and confidently speak to the issues.

Office Space and Computers

The Mayor is provided with his/her own office and computer.

Councillors are provided with an office to work in and computers are available for them to use at City Hall.

The City is working toward a paperless system and provides City Council members with the necessary equipment to allow them to receive and view most documents digitally (currently we use iPads).

Electronic Access to Agenda, Minutes and Council Meeting Webcasts

Access to meeting agendas, minutes and Council meeting webcasts are available on the City's website: www.colwood.ca/cityhall/meeting-calendar.

Scroll through the various meetings held each month, click on the meeting title to be directed to options that allow you to read the full agenda package and minutes. You can also watch the video webcast of Council meetings.

The Time Commitment

The current City Council agrees they spend an average of 20 to 30 hours a week on "Council" related issues that are relevant to their role as an Elected Official of the City of Council.

Council members are also approached quite often by individuals who want to address a problem or concern and this can happen while grocery shopping or out and about in and outside the community.

Council also receive numerous emails and phone calls, which can happen during the day, evening, and weekend. Some of these they can manage themselves while others must be referred to City Staff for response.

Council Remuneration and Expenses Bylaw No. 762, 2004

The current annual salary (2014 rate) paid to the Mayor of Colwood is $23,753.34.

The current annual salary (2014 rate) paid to the Councillors of Colwood is $11,876.54.

There is a per diem (if appropriate) of $80 per day for expenses incurred by a member of council when performing activities specifically referred to in Bylaw No. 762. The current per diem rate or $80 includes $5 for incidental expenses and meals are paid as follows: Breakfast $15.00; Lunch $25.00; and Dinner $35.00.

Please note these are the "maximum" amounts paid per meal and you can only claim the actual amount spent. If a member of Council or staff only spends $12.49 for lunch, they can only claim $12.49 for lunch, not $25.00 (keep your receipts!).

Mileage rates are set at the rate established by the Canada Revenue Agency. The current rate is $0.54 per kilometre.

(Detailed information is provided in City bylaws for other expenses incurred for meals, travel, conferences, etc.)