

**CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF HAWKESBURY**

**TO:** Municipal Council (December 9, 2024)  
**FROM:** Sonia Girard, Clerk  
**DATE :** November 18, 2024  
**SUBJECT :** Committee of the Whole, ref.: Topics on the agendas

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Mayor, Councillors;

**BACKGROUND**

At the Regular meeting of November 12, 2024, a resident addressed the Council concerning the procedure for a delegation request and the withdrawal of the Question Period at Regular Council meetings, which took place when Procedural By-law N° 57-2022 was adopted to replace By-law N° 20-2005. On August 28, 2023, By-law N° 57-2022 required certain modifications and was repealed and replaced by By-law N° 42-2023 with the status quo for the Question Period.

In integrating the Committee of the Whole into the Regular meeting agenda, it was decided to include the Presentations and Delegations section, to facilitate citizens to address the Council.

It was also mentioned that the time frame was too short when a resident wanted to make a comment or ask a question on a subject on the agenda, since the delegation request had to be submitted 7 days before the meeting, and the fact that the agenda was published only 72 hours before the meeting.

The Presentation and Delegations section is not, by definition, a question period, but rather the action of “sending a person on behalf of a group or someone else, for a specific purpose, with a defined mission”. This designated person addresses the Council either for a project idea, a specific request or some other subject that is not necessarily on the agenda of a meeting.

**ANALYSIS**

The Administration and the Clerk's Office have taken the comments into account and recognize the importance of quickly finding a solution without the need to amend the rules of procedure at this time. This solution would ensure that, when individuals have comments or questions about a subject presented at a regular meeting, they are given adequate time to submit a delegation request following the required procedures. It

would also allow them the opportunity to address the Council at a subsequent meeting, where the subject will have been deferred, to ensure public input is heard before the Council makes a decision.

During the review for the update, it was decided to remove the Question Period, as it was felt that often the questions asked related to a specific administrative subject and not to the Council at the time. These questions could therefore easily be answered by the Administration through the department directors or the CAO, without having to be presented to the Council.

While the *Municipal Act, 2001* stipulate “an agenda must be publicly posted prior to the meeting, listing the issues to be discussed. Adequate notice must include the date, time and place of the meeting, to enable the public to attend and observe the proceedings. “ and the Ontario Ombudsman's Public Meetings Guide for Municipalities stipulate that “ there is no automatic right to speak or participate in a meeting. There is a distinction between a citizen's right to participate and their right to observe municipal government progress. The open meeting requirements set out in s. 239 of the *Municipal Act, 2001* permit the public to observe the political process.

Each municipality is required to have a procedure by-law, which may set out a process for members of the public to address council. Questions about the process should be referred to the municipal clerk.” We believe it is important to give citizens the chance to address their comments, suggestions and/or questions to Council.

## **CONCLUSION**

This temporary solution is designed to provide greater transparency and give the public an opportunity to address their comments and questions to the Council on the subjects presented.

In concrete terms, this approach consists of including non-recurring topics primarily on the agenda of the committees of the Whole, in the Department heads' items. These topics will be discussed and, if the Council or the Administration deems that one or more of them could give rise to comments or questions, they will be deferred to a subsequent regular meeting. This will give citizens the time they need to submit a delegation request, or to communicate with the Administration and Council members, before a decision is made.

As for recurring topics, they will continue to be integrated, as in the past, into the Matters requiring action.

Finally, an in-depth review of the Rules of Procedure is scheduled for 2025, with a recommendation to be presented to the Council at a later date.

Sonia Girard  
Clerk

## Report Approval Details

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This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

**No Signature - Task assigned to Samuel Cardarelli was completed by workflow administrator Sonia Girard**

**Samuel Cardarelli - Dec 4, 2024 - 12:57 PM**