



Committee Report

To:	Warden Hicks and Members of Grey County Council
Committee Date:	October 28, 2021
Subject / Report No:	CCR-CW-08-21
Title:	2022 Inaugural Considerations
Prepared by:	Heather Morrison
Reviewed by:	Kim Wingrove
Lower Tier(s) Affected:	None
Status:	

Recommendation

1. That Report CCR-CW-08-21 regarding 2022 inaugural considerations be received; and
2. That the 2022 Inaugural meeting to elect the 2022 Warden be held at 11:00 AM Tuesday December 7, 2021 and that the secret ballot be replaced with an online poll to allow for electronic participation should Council members chose to participate electronically; and
3. That nominations for the 2022 Warden be delivered in writing to the Clerk no later than 12:00 PM Thursday November 25, 2021; and
4. That the following sections of the County's Procedural By-law 5003-18, as amended, be waived for the purposes of the election of the 2022 Warden: Section 3.1 Date of Inaugural Session and Sections 5.3 Nominations, 5.7 Secret Ballot and 5.9 Scrutineers.

Executive Summary

In accordance with the County's Procedural By-law 5003-18, as amended, meetings can be held in person, electronically or a combination thereof. This allows for Council members, should they choose, to attend meetings in person or electronically including the 2022 Inaugural meeting. This report will outline COVID-19 information related to holding this event and proposed changes for Council's consideration.

Background and Discussion

Section 3.1 of the County's Procedural By-law states that "Council will, in accordance with the By-law, hold its first meeting on the first Tuesday in December at 7:30 PM." As Council is aware,

the warden is elected annually at this meeting. The 2022 Inaugural meeting is scheduled for December 7, 2021.

In person meetings for Council returned October 14, 2021 with members having the option of attending in person or electronically via Zoom. Technological and procedural changes have been made to permit these hybrid meetings to take place to allow all members to participate fully in Council meetings while still ensuring everyone's safety and well-being.

Inaugural Meeting Changes

With the limitations imposed around social gatherings included in the Reopening Ontario Act, there are changes that will have an impact on Grey County's traditional inaugural meeting procedures. Limits to the number of the people permitted within the Council Chambers as well as indoor social gatherings are requiring staff to recommend shifting the way the 2022 Inaugural meeting will be held.

Due to capacity limits in Council Chambers, staff are recommending that no social event take place following the Inaugural meeting. Instead, staff are proposing an 11:00 am meeting followed by a Council lunch for those members able to attend. The lunch would be held in the County Administration Building lunch room with appropriate distancing considerations in place to allow Council to come together to acknowledge and celebrate the 2022 Warden. The other option would be a 4:00 PM meeting only and no gathering afterwards, similar to the 2021 Inaugural meeting. Staff are recommending an 11:00 AM meeting.

Staff are also recommending that each candidate running for the Warden for 2022 be permitted to invite one guest to the meeting. At this time, no other invitations are recommended to be offered due to limited capacity within Council Chambers. Based on the square footage of Council Chambers and the Discovery Room the capacity limit is 37 to allow for the six foot social distancing requirements.

Nominations and Voting

The Procedural By-law permits members to attend a Council meeting either in person or through electronic means. A hybrid Inaugural will have an impact on how the vote, should one be required, occurs for the election of the Warden. It is staff's recommendation that, like the 2021 election, Sections 5.7 and 5.9 be waived to permit an online poll to be used for the election. Technology will be available to both members participating in person and electronically to cast their vote for Warden while still having the vote remain secret. As with the 2021 election of the Warden, the candidates may view the online poll results prior to the Clerk announcing the successful candidate.

To prepare the electronic voting poll, staff are once again recommending that Section 5.3 be waived, and a nomination deadline be established for those members wishing to stand for the 2022 Warden. Nominations will be requested to be received in writing, by the Clerk no later than 12:00 noon Thursday November 25, 2021. Confirmation will also be required from the candidate's mover and seconder. This will allow staff time to build the online poll for the inaugural meeting.

Legal and Legislated Requirements

The Inaugural session of Council follows the County's Procedural By-law 5003-18 as amended. Section 2.1 permits the suspension of any of the provisions of this by-law with a two-thirds vote of Council. The resolution contained within this report will require such a vote as it waives various sections of the By-law. Section 233 (5) of the Municipal Act, 2001, as amended, allows that the head of council may be appointed by secret ballot. Section 233 (1) of the Municipal Act requires that the Head of Council be selected at the first meeting of its 2021/2022 term, which starts December 1, 2021 pursuant to Section 235 (1.1).

Financial and Resource Implications

There are no financial costs associated with the recommended changes to the 2022 Inaugural. Any expenses related to holding a Council lunch following the meeting would be covered through the existing Council operating budget.

Relevant Consultation

- Internal CAO
- External

Appendices and Attachments

None