

2022



Understanding Council and Committee Meetings



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Definitions

Agenda: means the order of proceedings for a meeting setting out the business to be considered at the meeting

Committee of the Whole Meeting: is a less formal, discussion-oriented meeting with the same members of Council. Generally, matters are discussed at the Committee of the Whole level first, then given final approval at the subsequent Council meeting.

Council: is the term used to refer collectively to the Mayor and Councillors elected to the Council of the Township of Woolwich.

Decorum: means behaviour that, in the opinion of the Presiding Officer, promotes an atmosphere of respect in Council Chambers.

Delegation: means a person or persons who requests permission to address Council in accordance with Section 19 of the [Procedural By-law](#). Delegations can be:

Registered, meaning they called ahead to be listed on the agenda, or

Unregistered, meaning they are not listed on the agenda and may not be permitted to speak.

Improper Conduct: means disruptive or unethical conduct and includes engaging in a course of vexatious comments or conduct against another person that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome. It includes behaviour that in any way obstructs the deliberations and actions of Council.

Motion: means a question to be considered by the Council or Committee of Council which is read, moved and seconded and, subject to debate, voted on. When a motion is carried, it becomes a resolution.

Presentation: means a presentation of information to Council or a Committee of Council that has been requested by a member of Council or a Committee of Council, or a member of staff of the Township of Woolwich.

Resolution: means a formal determination made by Council or a Committee on the basis of a motion passed before a properly constituted meeting of Council or a Committee for debate and decision, and duly passed.

Special Meeting: means a meeting of Council not scheduled in accordance with the approved calendar of meetings.

Committee of the Whole and Council

Committee of the Whole and Council meetings are generally open to the public. Any member of the community is welcome to attend and observe Council discussions. You do not need to call ahead or register to observe Woolwich Council in action.

Where can I access Committee of the Whole and Council Agendas and Minutes?

All agendas and approved minutes for Council and Committees can be found in the [Council and Committee Calendar](#) on the Township website. Applicable deadlines can be found on the Township's [Council Meetings webpage](#).

If you are having trouble finding agendas or minutes, please contact the Clerk's Division at 519-669-6004 for assistance.

Public Notice

Notice of meetings is given through the annual Council Meeting schedule, available on the Township's [Council Meetings webpage](#). The time, location, and matters to be discussed at each meeting is provided when the agenda package is posted on the Township website.

Electronic Meetings

Participants in public meetings, presenters, and Delegates may attend a meeting electronically, following all rules outlined in the Township's [Procedural By-law](#).

Members of the public can view a Committee of the Whole or Council meeting's livestream and recordings of past meetings on the Township's [YouTube Channel](#).

In-Person Meetings

Meetings typically begin at 7:00 p.m. and will last as long as is necessary for Council to finish the business on the agenda. Members of the public may come and go as they please, but are asked to do so quietly so as not to disturb the discussion. There is ample public seating and additional standing room in Council Chambers, if needed.

Communications and Petitions

All communications and petitions for Council must be filed with the [Township Clerk](#). Documents must be addressed to Council, signed by at least one individual, be legibly written or printed, and not contain any impertinent or improper matter or language. For more information, please see the Township's [Procedural By-law](#). Please note that petitions submitted to Council are part of the public record and are included in the public agenda, which is posted online.

Decorum of Council Chambers

To preserve and protect the decorum of a meeting, the meeting Chair may take action regarding any member of the public who is not following the Township's [Respectful Behaviour Policy](#) or the expectations for decorum outlined in the Township's [Procedural By-law](#).

Other Types of Meetings

Public Meetings

Public meetings are required for certain purposes under the [Planning Act](#) and are often held for other purposes when Council wishes to hear from the community. Members of the public who attend an in-person public meeting are asked to sign a sign-in sheet and may be asked to state

their name and address before speaking. This information may be required for notice or appeal purposes.

For electronic meetings, if you only wish to observe the meeting and do not wish to speak to Council, please view the livestream on the Township's [YouTube Channel](#). If you want to speak to an application, or might wish to speak to an application, please fill out the [Delegation Request Form](#) on the Township website or contact the [Council and Committee Facilitator](#) for more information.

All members of the public must follow the rules of decorum during public meetings, as outlined in the [Procedural By-law](#) and [Respectful Behaviour Policy](#).

Closed Meetings

Meetings may be closed to the public to keep information confidential in limited circumstances authorized by the [Municipal Act](#). For example, if Council wishes to sell municipal land, they may discuss the value of the land in Closed Session and keep this information confidential. In other cases, Council may discuss applications submitted by persons interested in participating on a Committee of Council, but will announce the new committee member during the open (public) part of the meeting.

If Council needs to move into Closed Session, they must first pass a motion stating the general nature of the matter being discussed and will move to another room for a Closed Session meeting.

Miscellaneous

Cell Phones and Electronics

For in-person meetings, cell phones and electronic devices are permitted in Council Chambers but must be switched to silent mode. Members of the public are asked to step out of Council Chambers when making or receiving calls so as not to disturb the meeting.

Food and Drink

For in-person meetings, outside food and drink are not permitted in Council Chambers, except for water.

Parking

For in-person meetings, there is ample parking behind the Township Administration Office and in the Church Street Municipal Parking Lot. Parking is free all day.

Pets and Service Animals

For in-person meetings, only service animals are allowed in Council Chambers. Pets are not permitted. Do not leave pets in vehicles in extreme hot or cold environments.

Public Restrooms

For in-person meetings, there are public restrooms available just outside of Council Chambers.

Delegations

Who can register as a Delegation?

Anyone who wishes to speak at a public Committee of the Whole or Council meeting must [register as a Delegation](#) prior to 10:00 a.m. on the Tuesday before the meeting to save their place on the agenda. Interested Delegations must clearly state the topic of discussion. Prior to registering as a Delegation, community members are encouraged to speak with the appropriate Township staff member(s) and Ward Councillor(s).

If you are appearing on behalf of a larger group, please notify staff that you will be the spokesperson for the group. If more than one person is addressing Council regarding the same subject, each following Delegate is strongly encouraged to provide only new information on the matter.

How do I register as a Delegation?

To register as a Delegation, please contact the Council and Committee Facilitator prior to 10:00 a.m. on the Tuesday before the meeting by completing an online [Delegation Request Form](#) or by contacting the Council and Committee Facilitator directly at 519-669-6004 or via councilmeetings@woolwich.ca.

For more information on Delegations, including guidelines for the use and submission of presentation materials, please visit the [Speak Before Council](#) section of the Council Meetings webpage.

How long can I speak before Council?

Each Registered Delegation is limited to a maximum of seven (7) minutes to present their information to Council.

Am I able to speak before Council if I am not registered as a Delegation?

Unregistered Delegations may address Council on an item already listed on the meeting agenda, pending approval of the majority of members of Council. Unregistered Delegations may speak for a maximum of five (5) minutes, or at Council's discretion.

If a Delegation does not register by 10:00 a.m. on the Tuesday before the meeting, they may not be permitted to speak if Council has a large agenda, or if Council believes the comments would best be addressed at another meeting. To ensure you are able to speak, it is best to register before the meeting.

If I have concerns, how will Council address them?

Council may not be able to answer all questions at a meeting, but may ask that a Councillor or staff member look into your concern and respond after the meeting.

If I have a concern and do not wish to speak before Council, what should I do?

Community members are always welcome to call, submit a letter, or email Township staff, their Ward Councillor(s), or all of Council with questions or concerns. For more information, please contact the Clerk's Division at 519-669-6004.

Accessibility

In 2005 the Province of Ontario passed the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act](#) (AODA). The purpose of the Act is to ensure that all organizations, including municipalities, move forward with ensuring the Province of Ontario becomes fully accessible by the year 2025.

The Township of Woolwich strives to deliver exceptional customer service to ensure that all customers benefit from the same service in the same way. The Township Administration Office is a two-story building with an elevator, automated door paddles, and an accessible family washroom on the main floor available for use by the public.

Assistive FM Listening Devices

For residents who require assistive FM listening devices during a meeting, be sure to contact Township staff prior to the meeting at 519-669-6004.

Large Print Meeting Agendas

For in-person meetings, large print meeting agendas will be printed upon request.

Accessible Documents

If you require information or documents in an alternate or accessible format, please contact the Clerk's Division at 519-669-6004 or via email at councilmeetings@woolwich.ca. Township staff will receive the request and provide the requested information within a reasonable timeframe.