

MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: July 22, 2025
To: Finance and Labour Relations Sub-committee
From: Adam Betteridge, Interim Chief Administrative Officer
Report Number: FIN25-021
Attachments: 1. Current Policy A.1.7 – Lowering Flags at City Hall
2. Amended Policy A.1.7 - Flags at City Hall Policy

Title: Policy Update - Flags at City Hall Policy

Objective: To present proposed amendments to the current policy including updated language for clarity and consistency; and formatting for accessibility.

Background: The current policy outlines when the National Flag at City Hall and at the corner of Ontario Street and Downie Street will be lowered upon the death of a number of individuals including the Prime Minister, Premier, Sovereign, Governor General; federal, provincial and municipal representatives, members of the Royal Family, City staff and persons whom the Mayor chooses to honour.

Analysis: This policy was updated based on national protocols, research of local municipal policies, and staff input. Considerations were made in conjunction with standard practices, health and safety factors, and consultation with City staff, to ensure that the City's commitment to respectful and meaningful flag-raising practices are adhered to. A clause is being recommended relating to the respectful disposal of the national flag, consistent with federal guidelines.

The flagpole at Ontario Street and Downie Street currently has the United Way campaign thermometer mounted, which poses safety concerns for staff to raise and lower the flag. City staff must use a bucket truck or lift to change the flag when the thermometer is installed which presents logistical difficulties. City staff are following up with the United Way to amend the thermometer to allow for easier access to the flagpole. Festival Hydro is responsible for the installation and removal of the thermometer. This flagpole will be addressed in the forthcoming policy under the category of 'City facilities,' and therefore falls outside the scope of the current policy and the mandatory lowering provisions applicable to City Hall.

The flagpole on the roof (peak) of the City Hall building also poses safety concerns for lowering and raising the National Flag. Therefore, when a half-masting is to occur, the recommendation is that a National Flag will be placed on the Community Flagpole at the corner of Wellington Street and Downie Street, and half-masted accordingly. The National Flag on the roof (peak) of City Hall, will remain raised.

The new flag policy elaborates and expands on the purpose of the policy, City facilities that have flagpoles, exemptions to the policy, responsibilities of the policy, and the addition of Federal annual Special Days for half-masting of the National Flag of Canada.

Additionally, the policy has been amended to include a procedure for external groups and organizations to request the flag-raising or half-masting of flags on the Community Flagpole. City Council approves these requests, which are later coordinated by the Mayor's Office.

Financial impact to current and/or future year operating budget:

None anticipated as the proposed changes are administrative and nominal in nature.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Work Together For Greater Impact

This policy aligns with this priority as it ensures consistency and alignment with national standards for half-masting, commemorative observances and special recognitions; reinforcing a shared sense of respect and unity.

Intentionally Change to Support the Future

This report aligns with this priority as the proposed additions to the policy, including the dedicated community flagpole, will create greater opportunities for community engagement and cultural recognition by allowing groups and organizations to display their flags at City Hall and demonstrate our commitment to inclusivity, diversity and local representation.

Alignment with One Planet Principles:

Equity and Local Economy

Flying community flags supports equity by ensuring that diverse voices, cultures and causes are visibly recognized and valued by the City and our community. By adopting an open and fair policy, the City demonstrates its commitment to equitable recognition for all to celebrate.

Staff Recommendation: THAT the Lowering Flags at City Hall Policy A.1.7 be rescinded and replaced with the Flags at City Hall Policy A.1.7 attached to Report FIN25-021.

Prepared by: Lindsay Van Gestel, Administrative Assistant to the Mayor

Recommended by: Adam Betteridge, Interim Chief Administrative Officer