

MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: July 22, 2025
To: Finance and Labour Relations Sub-committee
From: Tatiana Dafoe, City Clerk
Report Number: FIN25-023
Attachments: None

Title: Appointment of Deputy Mayor

Objective: To consider the pre-election report on the deputy mayor position and to seek direction.

Background: The next Municipal Election will be held on Monday, October 26, 2026. Historically, electors have been asked to vote for:

- 1 Mayor, and
- 10 Councillors

Section 186 (2) of the Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, c. 25 (hereinafter the "Act") specifically allows Council to, among other matters, change the composition of Council. Council by way of a by-law may change the composition of Council but for the by-law to be effective for the 2026 election it will need to be passed prior to January 1, 2026. If it is not passed prior to that date, then the by-law will not be in effect for the 2026 election but will apply to the subsequent 2030 election.

The position of Deputy Mayor on Stratford City Council has historically been appointed from among the elected Councillors following a regular municipal election.

The Deputy Mayor position is included in the City's Procedural By-law 140-2007 as outlined below:

2.5 Absence – Mayor – Deputy Mayor – authority

In the absence of the Mayor or if the office is vacant, the Deputy Mayor shall act in the place and stead of the Mayor, including presiding at Council meetings, and shall have all the rights, powers and authority of the Mayor.

2.6 Absence – Deputy Mayor – Acting Deputy Mayor – appointed

In the event that the Deputy Mayor is unable to act in the place and stead of the Mayor, the Chair of the Finance and Labour Relations Committee is deemed to be Acting Deputy Mayor in the place and stead of the Head of Council and has and may exercise, while so acting, all the rights, powers and authority of the Head of Council, including presiding at Council meetings.

Previous Councils have appointed the Deputy Mayor position to act in the absence of the Mayor at meetings and to represent the city at functions and events. A resolution and by-law is adopted in open session to appoint the Deputy Mayor and to confer all the powers and duties of the Mayor, in their absence.

If Council wishes to change the way the deputy mayor position is selected, direction is required, including whether the deputy mayor position is an additional position on Council (meaning the composition of Council would increase to 12), or whether the size of Council is to be reduced from 10 councillors to 9 with the 10th member being the directly elected deputy mayor.

The City's Notice Policy requires the following notice to be given when considering a change to the composition of Council:

"Before passing a By-law to change the composition of Council,
Notice of Intent to be given:

Content of Notice:

- A general description of the subject matter;
- Purpose of the Public Meeting at which the subject matter will be considered, including date, time and location of the Public Meeting;
- General provisions guiding the submission of information before or at the Public Meeting of which notice is being given;
- Instructions on obtaining any additional information which may be made available by the City or submitting comments or making a presentation at the Public Meeting;
- The name and title of the person to whom written comments are to be sent, together with the address of the official and the deadline for receipt of such submissions.

Manner of Notice:

- Notice of Public Meeting to be published once at least 10 calendar days prior to the scheduled public meeting in a newspaper, Municipal website, and City Hall Bulletin Board.”

Analysis: Traditionally the Deputy Mayor appointed at the beginning of a new term of office has served a minimum of one term of Council and has experience with Council proceedings.

It is noted that with an elected Deputy Mayor position, the Deputy Mayor would continue to have one vote.

The following options have been identified for consideration by Council:

1. Status Quo: Appointment of the deputy mayor continues to be completed by the Mayor and Council.
2. Elected at Large by the Electorate: Electors directly vote for the deputy mayor position.
3. Rotation: Development of a policy which outlines the rotation of members of Council serving as Deputy Mayor. The appointments to be confirmed by By-law.

All three options are in use throughout Ontario. The most commonly used approach within Ontario is having the electorate select the Deputy Mayor, either by position or by appointing the elected official that receives the most votes.

Financial Implications:

Financial impact to current year operating budget:

There are no financial implications to the 2025 operating budget.

Financial impact on future year operating budget:

With respect to the 2026 election budget, there would be increased costs for adding another race to the voting system and in counting an additional race on the ballot. The financial impact has not been estimated at this time.

Remuneration for the deputy mayor is included in the annual budget.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Not applicable: Consideration of this report and the appointment of a deputy mayor do not necessarily align with the strategic priorities developed.

Alignment with One Planet Principles:

Not applicable: Consideration of this report and the appointment of a deputy mayor do not necessarily align with the One Planet Principles.

Staff Recommendation: THAT direction be given to the City Clerk on the process for selecting a Deputy Mayor for the City commencing with the 2026-2030 term of office.

Prepared by: Tatiana Dafoe, City Clerk

Recommended by: Karmen Krueger, CPA, CA, Director of Corporate Services
Adam Betteridge, Interim Chief Administrative Officer