



Stratford City Council Special Council Open Session MINUTES

Meeting #: 4776th
Date: Monday, July 21, 2025
Time: 6:30 P.M.
Location: Council Chamber, City Hall

Council Present: Mayor Ritsma - Chair Presiding, Councillor Beatty, Councillor Biehn, Councillor Briscoe, Councillor Henderson, Councillor Hunter, Councillor McCabe, Councillor Nijjar, Councillor Sebben, Councillor Wordofa

Regrets: Councillor Burbach

Staff Present: Adam Betteridge - Interim Chief Administrative Officer, Tatiana Dafoe - City Clerk, Kim McElroy - Director of Social Services, Taylor Crinklaw - Director of Infrastructure Services, Karmen Krueger - Director of Corporate Services, Tim Wolfe - Director of Community Services, Neil Anderson - Director of Emergency Services/Fire Chief, Audrey Pascual - Deputy Clerk

Also Present: Members of the Public and Media

1. Call to Order:

Mayor Ritsma, Chair presiding, called the Council meeting to order.

Councillor Burbach provided regrets for this meeting.

Land Acknowledgment

Moment of Silent Reflection

Respectful Conduct Statement

2. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof:

The *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act* requires any member of Council declaring a pecuniary interest and the general nature thereof, where the interest of a member of Council has not been disclosed by reason of the member's absence from the meeting, to disclose the interest at the first open meeting attended by the member of Council and to otherwise comply with the *Act*.

Name, Item and General Nature Thereof

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest made by a member at the July 21, 2025 Special Council meeting.

3. Added - Adoption of the Addenda to the Special Council Agenda

R2025-306

Motion by Councillor Henderson

Seconded by Councillor Nijjar

THAT the Addenda to the Special Agenda of Council dated July 21, 2025, be added to the agenda as printed.

Carried

4. Orders of the Day:

4.1 Resolution - Procedural By-law Review - Update (COU28-082)

R2025-307

Motion by Councillor Biehn

Seconded by Councillor Wordofa

THAT Mike Sullivan be heard.

Carried

Mike Sullivan spoke to Council regarding the proposed changes to the Procedural By-law. Highlights of the presentation included:

- the proposed changes to the timeline for the publishing of the agenda being supported;
- clarity being requested regarding delegations to closed meeting items and delegations for items not listed on the agenda;
- there being concerns with the proposed reduction of delegation time limits;

- there being concerns on the proposed two-step process and how it reduces the ability of the public to engage with Council;
- clarity being requested on the process for recording votes;
- there being concerns that the proposed language regarding the points of privilege is limiting;
- there being concerns with the proposed meeting start times and how this can affect the public's ability to attend meetings as well as for those interested in running for Council; and
- clarity being requested on how the 2/3 of Council is calculated.

The City Clerk, referring to a PowerPoint presentation, provided an overview of the recommendations regarding the Procedural By-law Update. Highlights of the presentation included:

- direction being sought from Council regarding the recommendations;
- an overview of the timeline for public consultation on the draft By-law, the approval, and the implementation;
- a background on the review completed by staff and the results of the public engagement;
- an overview of the proposed meeting structure;
- an overview of the proposed Council committees, their mandates, and matters to be considered by each committee;
- an overview of the timelines related to the publishing of the agenda and the duration of presentations and deputations;
- staff recommending the development of a petitions policy;
- an overview on the recommendations related to delegations;
- an overview of the provisions in the By-law relating to decorum at meetings; and
- an overview of other notable changes.

Members of Council and staff held a discussion regarding the following:

- the proposed methods for providing notices regarding meetings;
- the removal of the overview of presentations in the minutes in line with legislation;
- there being support for the use of the vote manager to record votes;
- an open forum being included at the start of the meeting;
- delegations not being permitted at Ad Hoc Committee meetings and instead being directed to Council meetings where the matter will be considered;

The Deputy Clerk left the meeting at 7:27 p.m.

The Deputy Clerk returned to the meeting at 7:29 p.m.

- the provisions regarding the reconsideration of Council decisions;
- the provision for hybrid attendance to meetings for members of the public, staff, and Council;
- Council having the ability to suspend rules to allow for additional time for delegations to speak;
- the proposed two-step decision making process resulting in efficiencies;
- the enforcement of the provisions relating to public conduct during meetings;
- there being consistency in the meeting start times and how early meeting start times may limit the public's ability to attend as well as Council members who may have scheduling conflicts; and
- additional legal review to be completed following the preparation of the draft of the By-law.

Motion by Councillor Sebben

THAT the City Clerk be directed to retain the current three-step decision making process in the draft Procedural By-law.

There was no seconder for the motion.

Motion by Councillor Biehn
Seconded by Councillor Sebben

THAT the City Clerk be directed to include the following time limits for delegations in the draft Procedural By-law:

- a member of the public will be permitted to speak for 10 minutes at a Committee meeting regarding a matter;
- a member of the public will be permitted to speak for 10 minutes at a Council meeting regarding a matter; and
- if a member of the public speaks at a Council meeting for a second time, they will be permitted to speak for 5 minutes and they will be limited to providing new information only.

Members of Council and staff held a discussion regarding the motion as follows:

- a member noting they would prefer ten minutes for each delegation but would support the motion;
- a member noting that a further consideration of the matter beyond the current meeting may be needed if there are a number of delegation requests received; and
- five minutes being sufficient as requestors can provide additional information regarding their delegation prior to the meeting;

Councillor Sebben requested a recorded vote.

The Mayor called the question on the motion and a recorded vote was undertaken.

In Support (5): Councillor Sebben, Councillor Biehn, Councillor Wordofa, Mayor Ritsma, and Councillor Henderson

Opposed (5): Councillor McCabe, Councillor Briscoe, Councillor Beatty, Councillor Hunter, and Councillor Nijjar

Defeated

Motion by Councillor Biehn

Seconded by Councillor Wordofa

THAT the City Clerk be directed to include the following time limits for delegations in the draft Procedural By-law:

- a member of the public will be permitted to speak for 10 minutes at a Committee meeting regarding a matter; and,
- a member of the public will be permitted to speak for 5 minutes at a Council meeting regarding a matter.

Members of Council held a discussion regarding the motion as follows:

- Council members being elected to represent the public and hearing them being part of the job;
- the proposed five-minute limit not stepping beyond the best practice as per the study conducted of other municipalities;
- there being support for the five-minute limit from the public feedback gathered;
- there being mechanisms to enhance discussion such as Council having the ability to suspend the rules; and
- the five-minute limit not being inclusive of the time to address questions from Council.

The Mayor called the question on the motion.

Defeated

R2025-308

Motion by Councillor Biehn
Seconded by Councillor McCabe

THAT the City Clerk be directed to include a start time of 6:00 p.m. or 7:00 p.m. for Regular Council meetings in the draft Procedural By-law.

Members of Council held a discussion regarding the motion as follows:

- a member noting their support for opening up Council meeting start times;
- consistent evening meeting schedules being preferred to avoid confusion; and
- a member noting that not everyone will have the flexibility to adjust their schedules affecting their ability to attend different meeting start times.

The Mayor called the question on the motion.

Carried

Motion by Councillor Hunter
Seconded by Councillor McCabe

That the City Clerk be directed to include a one-hour limit for all scheduled delegations in the draft Procedural By-law.

Members of Council and staff held a discussion regarding the motion as follows:

- a member requesting clarification on how many meetings have occurred where delegations have gone over one hour;
- a member clarifying that they would like to see a one-hour limit for all delegations scheduled in one meeting; and
- the City Clerk noted that staff can gather additional information on the duration of delegations and present this to Council at a future meeting.

The motion was withdrawn.

Motion by Councillor Henderson

Seconded by Councillor Sebben

THAT the City Clerk be directed to include provisions to permit delegations at Ad Hoc Advisory Committee meetings in the draft Procedural By-law.

Members of Council and staff held a discussion regarding the motion as follows:

- delegations being provided the opportunity to present at Council where they can provide their input on the Ad Hoc Committee's recommendation;
- delegations informing the recommendations made by Ad Hoc Committees;
- Ad Hoc Committees having the ability to invite presenters at their meetings to provide information; and,
- a member noting that Ad Hoc Committees can hold open houses and other public consultation events.

The Mayor called the question on the motion.

Defeated

Motion by Councillor Sebben

Seconded by Councillor Wordofa

THAT the City Clerk be directed to include an Open Forum, scheduled at the beginning of the Council meeting, in the draft Procedural By-law.

Members of Council and staff held a discussion regarding the motion as follows:

- a member noting that they would prefer a town hall format instead of open forum at every meeting;
- an open forum providing Council an opportunity to hear from the public regarding concerns;
- Council having a list of items to get through during meetings; and,
- a member noting that having a space in City offices where members of Council can meet with constituents would be helpful.

The Mayor called the question on the motion.

Defeated

Council recessed at 9:07 p.m.

Council reconvened at 9:15 p.m.

R2025-309

Motion by Councillor Biehn

Seconded by Councillor McCabe

THAT the City Clerk be directed to gather information regarding the holding of bi-annual town hall meetings.

Members of Council and staff held a discussion regarding the motion as follows:

- the town hall being an additional avenue for the public to speak with Council;
- clarification being sought regarding quorum;
- a town hall not constituting as a meeting as Council will not be making decisions to advance City business; and
- the City Clerk noting that staff will review options and look at structure considerations for Council.

The Mayor called the question on the motion.

Carried

R2025-310

Motion by Councillor Henderson

Seconded by Councillor Biehn

THAT the proposed revisions to the Procedural By-law as amended be approved;

THAT staff be directed to prepare a draft Procedural By-law;

AND THAT staff be directed to proceed to a Public Meeting to receive comments from members of the public on the draft Procedural By-law.

Members of Council held a discussion regarding the motion as follows:

- a member noting they cannot support the changes related to the reduction of delegation times;
- public input regarding the draft By-law potentially resulting in changes to the recommendations; and,
- the Mayor noting that Council had a fulsome discussion regarding the matter.

The Mayor called the question on the motion.

Carried

4.2 Added - Resolution Appointment of a Chief Administrative Officer

R2025-311

Motion by Councillor Nijjar

Seconded by Councillor Beatty

THAT André Morin be appointed Chief Administrative Officer for The Corporation of the City of Stratford effective September 2, 2025.

Carried

5. Reading of the By-laws:

The following By-laws required First and Second Readings and Third and Final Readings:

Added - 5.1 Appointment of a Chief Administrative Officer - By-law 81-2025

To appoint a Chief Administrative Officer for The Corporation of the City of Stratford.

5.2 Confirmatory By-law - By-law 82-2025

To confirm the proceedings of Council of The Corporation of the City of Stratford at its meeting held on July 21, 2025.

R2025-312

Motion by Councillor Briscoe

Seconded by Councillor Wordofa

THAT By-laws 81-2025 and 82-2025 be taken collectively.

Carried unanimously

R2025-313

Motion by Councillor Henderson

Seconded by Councillor Sebben

THAT By-laws 81-2025 and 82-2025 be read a First and Second Time.

Carried two-thirds support

R2025-314

Motion by Councillor Hunter

Seconded by Councillor Briscoe

THAT By-laws 81-2025 and 82-2025 be read a Third Time and Finally Passed.

Carried

6. Adjournment:

R2025-315

Motion by Councillor Briscoe

Seconded by Councillor Wordofa

THAT the July 21, 2025 Special Council Meeting adjourn.

Carried

Meeting Start Time: 6:43 P.M.

Meeting End Time: 9:24 P.M.

Mayor - Martin Ritsma

Clerk - Tatiana Dafoe