

CITY OF FORT SASKATCHEWAN
Notice of Motion – Council Meeting Times

Motion:

Whereas regularly scheduled meetings of Council currently commence at 6:00 p.m., and whereas the benefit of changing the start time of Council meetings include:

1. a better work-life balance for Council members and staff;
2. major decisions are deliberated at a time in which minds may be more alert;
3. financial savings to the City;
4. an increase in members of the public who may attend as it does not interfere with evening commitments; and
5. allows additional time for the local media to meet production deadlines.

Therefore, that effective the first Council meeting following the 2017 municipal election, regular Council meetings commence at 2:00 p.m.

Purpose:

To consider an alternative start time for regular public Council meetings.

Background:

At the December 13, 2016 regular Council meeting, Councillor Garritsen presented a notice of motion to change the start times for regular Council meetings from 6:00 to 2:00 p.m.

Following a review of Council meeting times for 20 municipalities in the Capital Region, 8 hold their meetings during the day, and 12 hold their meetings after 5:00 p.m.

Those municipalities who hold daytime meetings are:

- City of Edmonton, City of St. Albert, Town of Gibbons, Lamont County, Leduc County, Parkland County, Strathcona County, and Sturgeon County

Those municipalities who hold evening meetings are:

- City of Leduc, City of Spruce Grove, Town of Beaumont, Town of Bon Accord, Town of Bruderheim, Town of Calmar, Town of Devon, Town of Lamont, Town of Legal, Town of Morinville, Town of Redwater, and Town of Stony Plain

Typically, Council members have three meetings per month to attend – Council meetings (open to the public) on the second and fourth Tuesday, and Committee of the Whole Workshops (not open to the public) on the third Tuesday. Advantages and disadvantages exist for holding Council meetings during the daytime, as well as for the evening hours.

Advantages for daytime Council meetings and Workshops include:

1. supports a work-life balance for both Council and Administration;
2. an increased alertness in the afternoon, as opposed to the evening or late evening hours;
3. increased availability of Administration during the day should there be Council inquiries;
4. reduction in meeting costs;

5. accessibility for public members during the day;
6. would allow an increased timeframe for local media to prepare for their print deadlines; and
7. as Workshops are not open to the public, the earlier time would not impact their attendance.

Disadvantages for daytime Council meetings include:

1. may impact availability of working members of Council;
2. may impact availability of the public and community groups;
3. reduced availability of Administration to attend other meetings or activities; and
4. possible distraction for staff working daytime hours while the Council meeting is underway.

As an alternative to changing meeting times from 6:00 to 2:00 p.m., Council could consider a phased-in approach, such as changing meeting start times from 6:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. This helps to achieve a balance between daytime and evening Council meetings.

Recommendation:

That Council advise how they wish to proceed.

Prepared by:	Brenda Molter, Director, Legislative Services	Date: January 11, 2017
Approved by:	Troy Fleming, Acting City Manager	Date: January 17, 2017
Submitted to:	City Council	Date: January 24, 2017