

SUMMARY OF BOARD MEMBER CONSULTATIONS

Board member consultations on the Procedural By-law were conducted from November 30 to December 8, 2015.

The Board members who participated were:

- Mr. Ron Carinci
- Ms. Lindsay Colley
- Councillor Mary Fragedakis
- Ms. Dianne LeBreton
- Mr. Strahan McCarten.

The following issues and themes arose from the consultations:

1. By-Law Goals

There was general consensus that the purpose of the Procedural By-law was to ensure an organized framework for meetings that allow the Board to make decisions fairly and expeditiously. Fairness includes allowing all Board members to speak and to participate on an equal basis. The By-law should also govern Board members conduct during meetings.

Board members agreed that the current By-law achieves these goals to a certain extent.

2. Need for Increased Support

a. How the By-law Works in Practice

Board members expressed a desire for increased support, especially during orientation, on learning how the By-law works in practice.

b. Meeting preparation

Multiple members expressed a desire for having more staff support leading up to meetings in relation to gathering information and asking questions about agenda items and issues raised in accompanying reports. Some members would like a similar level of support that the Chair receives before a meeting.

3. Length of Meetings

a. Discussions

Members felt that meetings were too long. At times, discussions were lengthy and there appears to be no provision in the current By-law to curtail them. Time limits are not enforced. Consequently, some members refrain from speaking in order to avoid prolonging the discussion. There was a suggestion that committees would be useful to allow for longer discussions on issues. It must also be noted that others expressed a desire to stay away from the Committee structure.

- b. Agenda and Reports
The number of agenda items and length of reports was also a concern. Both were considered by some members to be excessive and contributed to the lengthy meetings.
 - c. Presentations
There do not seem to be any rules, or enforced rules, related to when presentations (including public presentations) are permitted. Presentations and follow-up questions tend to prolong meetings.
4. Structure and Format of By-law
There was disagreement on whether the By-law was too complicated. Some felt the By-law's level of complexity was appropriate others wanted a simplified By-law.
- There was some disagreement on whether the By-law should emulate Council's meeting procedures. Most felt it should not. However, most also felt it would be appropriate to model the Library's By-law on similar-sized City ABC's.
5. Issues Experienced at Meetings
- a. Motions – Notice
Member motions are not being presented in advance.
 - b. Voting
There is lack of clarity of when a vote is required or just a direction to staff. There is a tendency to ask for staff reports which delays action and unnecessarily adds items to future meetings.
 - c. Member Conduct
Some members felt the conduct and level of debate could be elevated at times. More clarity around acceptable conduct at meetings is desirable.
6. Communications Outside of Board Meetings
There is a high level of concern regarding a lack of clear rules about when Board members can meet and communicate (with each other and/or staff) outside of meetings. Members wanted clarity on Open Meeting rules.
7. Materiality of some matters before the Board
Most Board members interviewed cited motions being made which deal with operational issues (e.g. library programming) when there was a prevailing belief that the Board should play a role in oversight, accountability and organizational strategy.