



**The Corporation of the City of Cornwall  
Environment and Climate Change Committee  
Report**

Department: Infrastructure and Municipal Works  
Division: Environment  
Report Number: 2021-15-Infrastructure and Municipal Works  
Prepared By: Manon Levesque, City Clerk  
Meeting Date: March 17, 2021  
Subject: The Art of Effective Meetings

**Purpose**

To review the manner in which an effective meeting should be conducted.

**Recommendation**

That the Committee receive Report 2021-15-IMW for information purposes.

**Background / Discussion**

Oftentimes the difference between a successful committee and one that is challenged comes down to how organized the committee meetings are.

**1. Agenda**

The agenda keeps the members on track during the meeting. Because each member receives a copy of the agenda in advance of the meeting, it also serves to help members prepare and thus participate fully in the meeting.

It is the responsibility of the Chair, with the assistance of the Recording Secretary and Division Manager, to set the agenda for the meeting.

The Recording Secretary should attach all handouts, reports and other documents that support the agenda items in advance of the meeting so that the members may prepare for the upcoming meeting.

It is the members' responsibility to read the proposed agenda and prepare for meaningful discussion at the meeting.

At the start of the meeting, the agenda is approved by motion by recording the mover and seconder.

## **2. Minutes**

The minutes of a meeting act as the public record for all the interactions throughout the meeting. They are accurate records of the actions during committee meetings and a summary of discussions.

The Recording Secretary and Division Manager will assist the Chair in planning, conducting, and concluding a meeting. While the Recording Secretary and Division Manager are conducting their duties of recording the meeting, the Chair can spend his/her time more effectively and efficiently.

Recording Secretaries often take on many tasks. Their responsibilities start before meetings and continue during and beyond the meeting. Preparation, administrative, clerical, and follow up work falls under the roles of the Recording Secretary.

Just as the agenda requires an approved format, so do the minutes.

## **3. Motions**

Making decisions or taking action is done through motions, thus making them critical to an effective meeting. A motion is a proposal by a member that the group take certain action.

Recording motions and who made them is also important for the history of that committee. A mover makes a formal motion that requires a seconder. For a motion to move forward, it must have support.

The seconder is one who agrees or is willing to support a motion. Following the 'second', the motion is open for debate and discussion. The Chair reads out the motion that is now before the committee for discussion. The motion is open for discussion. The mover has the first opportunity to speak about the motion set for discussion.

In order for any motion to be valid, a quorum must be present as indicated in the by-laws. A quorum is the minimum number of members whose attendance is required to conduct business at the meeting. Since there are 9 voting members on the Environment and Climate Change Committee, quorum will be 5. Once quorum is established, the number of yea votes must exceed the number of nay votes as designated in the by-law for the motion to pass.

The Chair must determine if a quorum is present. The only business that is not null and void without quorum is the motion to adjourn the meeting in the absence of quorum.

#### **4. How to Pass a Vote**

When deciding the fate of an issue, it is not always as easy as a show of hands; the vote determines the direction that the members wish to take the organization. The close of the vote commits members to that decision.

Once a motion is made, seconded, and sufficient debate has taken place, the Chair calls for a vote.

In order for any motion to be valid:

- A quorum must be present as indicated in the by-laws.
- The number of yea votes must exceed a certain number of nay votes as designated in the by-laws for the motion to pass.
- The only business that is not null and void without quorum is the motion to adjourn the meeting in the absence of quorum.

The Chair must also determine who of those present are actually eligible to vote, as it is a privilege of those with full membership on the committee. Guests are not eligible to vote.

## 5. CARE

The **CARE** model calls on participants in discussion to be clear, concise, adaptable, respectful, and exact. As a participant, you can adhere to the following:

**Clear and Concise** - During any discussion, carefully formulate your ideas before you speak so that you are clear and concise.

**Adaptable** - Be flexible and willing to adapt your view to the views of others.

**Respectful** - Always be respectful to others that are participating in a discussion.

**Exact** - When participating in a discussion, make comments that are exact and on topic.

## 6. Proper Conduct at a Meeting

In a meeting it is important for members to keep on track and stay focused. If any difficulties arise, the Chair should use parliamentary procedure to ensure cooperation from all members and to resolve any conflict.

All members play an important role in the committee meeting ensuring a positive working environment and ensuring the committee accomplishes its goals. Each member needs to approach the committee in a professional manner and display respect for all other members, those they represent and the public who interacts with the committee. However, it falls to the Chair to demand a professional, respectful, equitable and orderly environment during a meeting.

Trust and respect are the base for effective meetings and the basis for ground rules.

Here are keys to a great meeting:

- Remember to have fun.
- Be prepared, be early and bring the needed documentation.
- It is best to have only one person talking at a time.
- When you participate, sit up straight, and pay attention to your body language.

- A good rule of thumb is to turn off all electrical devices.
- Keep your ego in check, do not interrupt or start a side meeting.
- Remember to challenge the idea, not the person.

## **7. Duties of the Chair**

- Determine quorum and call the meeting to order Identify agenda items.
- Gauge discussion among members and ensure adequate consideration has been given to each item.
- Offer guidance and ask questions without taking a specific position on a matter
- Keep a record and determine speaking order and ensure all members have had an opportunity to provide their input
- Ensure Administration has an opportunity to comment, where appropriate
- Facilitate consideration of main motions, ensuring there are seconders
- Rule on procedures with the assistance of staff, as appropriate
- Ensure items are dispensed with in a timely and fair manner
- Facilitate decorum and appropriate behaviour

Document Title:	The Art of Effective Meetings - 2021-15-Infrastructure and Municipal Works.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Mar 12, 2021

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

**Carl Goodwin - Mar 9, 2021 - 9:34 AM**

**Bill de Wit - Mar 12, 2021 - 11:06 AM**