



**City of Kingston  
Report to Council  
Report Number 21-235**

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**To:** Mayor and Members of Council  
**From:** Brad Joyce, Commissioner, Corporate Services  
**Resource Staff:** John Bolognone, City Clerk  
**Date of Meeting:** September 7, 2021  
**Subject:** Options for In-Person and Hybrid City Council Meetings

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**Council Strategic Plan Alignment:**

Theme: Corporate business

Goal: See above

**Executive Summary:**

COVID-19 continues to be a public health risk and a number of public health guidelines remain in effect, including two-metre distancing and wearing a face covering. However, with the increased rate of vaccination and the re-opening of businesses, community facilities and schools, staff recognize that there may be a desire to return to in-person Council meetings.

This report provides three options for Council's consideration for Council Meetings. Standing Committee meetings are not included within this report, but they could be amended at a later time.

The first option is for Council to continue with fully electronic meetings for a period of up to six months following the termination of the declaration of emergency, as contemplated in Section 6.24 of the Council Procedural By-Law.

The second option is for Council to return to in-person meetings. Any in-person meetings will be subject to COVID-19 precautionary measures as detailed in the Options/Discussion section of this report, applicable laws, and the availability, installation, and testing of enhanced technology. In-person meetings would commence once the renovations to the Council Chamber have been completed. A limited number of City staff would attend in-person and support the meetings.

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Members of the public including, without limitation, delegations and presenters would participate virtually.

The third option allows for a temporary hybrid meeting model, which would enable Members of Council to participate either in-person or virtually at any given meeting. A limited number of City staff would attend in-person and support the meetings. Members of the public including, without limitation, delegations and presenters would participate virtually.

The [Council Procedural By-Law](#) (By-Law 2021-41) does not currently permit a mix of in-person and virtual participation for Members of Council, but at a meeting where Members are required to be physically present, City staff and members of the public are entitled to participate electronically, subject to applicable laws and available technology. In order to permit a mix of in-person and virtual participation for Members of Council, Section 6.25 of the Council Procedural By-Law would need to be waived.

Staff are currently reviewing best practices of other municipalities and developing more permanent options for draft hybrid meeting procedures for Council's approval, which would enable the adoption of a permanent hybrid meeting model, if desired by Council. In the interim, this report provides an option for hybrid participation on a temporary basis.

**Recommendation:**

**That** Council consider and provide direction on one of the following options:

1. **That** Council continues to hold virtual meetings during the period permitted pursuant to Section 6.24 of the Council Procedural By-Law.

OR

2. **That** Council returns to holding in-person meetings, subject to COVID-19 precautionary measures as detailed in Report Number 21-235, applicable laws, and the availability, installation, and testing of enhanced technology.

OR

3. **That** Council waive Section 6.25 of the Council Procedural By-Law until December 31, 2021, to permit a mix of in-person and virtual participation for Members of Council, subject to the Conditions for Member Participation set out in Report Number 21-235 and the availability, installation, and testing of enhanced technology.

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**Authorizing Signatures:**

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY COMMISSIONER

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**Brad Joyce, Commissioner,  
Corporate Services**

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY CHIEF  
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

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**Lanie Hurdle, Chief  
Administrative Officer**

**Consultation with the following Members of the Corporate Management Team:**

Paige Agnew, Commissioner, Community Services	Not required
Peter Huigenbos, Commissioner, Business, Environment & Projects	Not required
Jim Keech, President & CEO, Utilities Kingston	Not required
Desirée Kennedy, Chief Financial Officer & City Treasurer	Not required
Sheila Kidd, Commissioner, Transportation & Public Works	Not required

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**Options/Discussion:****Option 1**

No change to current process. Meetings would continue in an electronic format, with Members, staff and the public participating electronically during the period permitted pursuant to Section 6.24 of the Council Procedural By-Law, being a period of up to six months following the termination of the declaration of emergency.

**Option 2**

Meetings will be held in-person. Appropriate physical distancing measures in place, and face coverings will be required except when speaking. COVID-19 precautionary measures, as further described below, will be in place in the Council Chamber. A limited number of City staff would attend in-person and support the meetings. Members of the public including, without limitation, delegations and presenters would participate virtually.

**Option 3**

In a hybrid meeting model, Members would be permitted to participate in the meeting either in-person or via electronic means. Members of Council participating via electronic means will be required to comply with the Conditions for Member Participation described below. A limited number of City staff would attend in-person and support the meetings. Members of the public including, without limitation, delegations and presenters would participate virtually.

**COVID-19 Precautionary Measures**

Staff have consulted with Kingston Frontenac Lennox & Addington Public Health to determine what measures are recommended to hold in-person meetings in Council Chamber, particularly in light of the fourth wave of the pandemic now having begun. Recommended measures include:

- All persons in the Council Chamber will be required to wear 3-ply surgical masks (provided), except when speaking.
- Since maintaining two metre separation between Members around the horseshoe is not possible, physical dividers will be in place between the Members when they are at their regular assigned seating. The dividers on the table will be approximately 31" high by 24" wide and will be just on the sides. On the floor between the seating will be a divider providing a barrier extending from approximately 75" down to table height. See photo (Image 1 below) of setup.

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Image 1



### Technology Upgrades

Council Chamber is the only venue which has the technology that will, with some upgrades, be capable of facilitating, recording and live-streaming a meeting that has both in-person and virtual participation. The existing technology is being upgraded so that the audio-visual of both the in-person and electronic components of the meeting can be integrated.

At this time, technology is not available to facilitate electronic voting during meetings that have a mix of in-person and virtual participation by Members of Council. Voting during a hybrid meeting would be undertaken by a show of hands, as is the current process for virtual meetings.

Staff are investigating/demoing technology options and best practices/procedures needed for the adoption of a permanent hybrid model for Members in accordance with the March 18, 2021 [resolution](#) of Council. Staff expect that a report for Council consideration will be brought forth before the end of 2021 that will include required changes to the Council Procedural By-Law.

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**Conditions for Member Participation**

If a temporary hybrid meeting model is adopted, Members will be required to provide written notice to the City Clerk and the Mayor, not less than 24 hours prior to the commencement of the meeting, of their intention to participate virtually in the meeting.

**Advisory Committee Meetings**

As noted above, Council Chamber is the only venue that will be capable of facilitating, recording and live-streaming a meeting that has both in-person and electronic participation by members of staff and the public.

Prior to the onset of COVID-19 and the implementation of fully electronic meetings, most Advisory Committee meetings were not held in Council Chamber and were not recorded.

Advisory Committees will continue in a fully electronic format for the time being. This will allow for the meetings to be recorded, live-streamed and closed captioned. As additional cleaning and sanitizing will be needed after each in-person meeting it is important that the Council Chamber not be overbooked.

Further, by remaining in a fully electronic format, consultation can be undertaken with these committees, all of which have citizen members, to determine their preferred method of meeting.

**Existing Policy/By-Law:**

None

**Notice Provisions:**

None

**Accessibility Considerations:**

None

**Financial Considerations:**

The costs for the necessary technology upgrades to the Council Chamber are \$66,350.50. Sufficient funds to cover these unbudgeted costs are available in existing budgets.

**Contacts:**

John Bolognone, City Clerk 613-546-4291 extension 1247

**Other City of Kingston Staff Consulted:**

Janet Jaynes, Deputy City Clerk

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Jenna Morley, City Solicitor & Director of Legal Services

**Exhibits Attached:**

None