



100 John West Way  
Aurora, Ontario  
L4G 6J1  
(905) 727-3123  
aurora.ca

Town of Aurora

# General Committee Report

No. CS22-040

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**Subject:** Deputy Mayor Options

**Prepared by:** Michael de Rond, Town Clerk

**Department:** Corporate Services

**Date:** July 5, 2022

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## Recommendation

1. That Report No. CS22-040 be received; and
2. That staff bring forward an amendment to the Procedure By-law to institute a rotation of the Deputy Mayor position as described in this report; and
3. That the amendment to the Procedure By-law take effect on November 15, 2022.

## Executive Summary

This report makes a recommendation regarding how the Deputy Mayor position can be instituted for the next term of Council. The Town's adoption of a ward system has necessitated a change in the way the Deputy Mayor is selected. This report includes the following;

- The most common approach to the Deputy Mayor position for municipalities similar to Aurora is to rotate the position amongst Councillors.
- The staff recommended rotation model ensures equitable treatment to members of Council.
- There are other options available for designating the Deputy Mayor position, but staff do not recommend they are adopted.

## Background

At the March 29, 2022 Council meeting, Council directed that staff report back regarding options for the Deputy Mayor position for when a ward system is implemented, beginning with the 2022 municipal election.

Within the Town's current 'at-large' Council structure, the Deputy Mayor appointment comes from the Procedure By-law, specifically section 1(j) which defines the Deputy Mayor as "the Councillor who received the highest number of votes in the last regular election." The Deputy Mayor position holds no formal authority, and generally has one responsibility, being to chair Council meetings in the absence of the Mayor or during the discussion of a Motion placed on the agenda by the Mayor. Once the Town moves to the ward system, the current definition will become obsolete, thus the need to define how a new Deputy Mayor will be selected.

It is important to note that the results of the 2022 municipal election will have no bearing on the Deputy Mayor position.

## **Analysis**

**The most common approach to the Deputy Mayor position for municipalities similar to Aurora is to rotate the position amongst Councillors.**

The appointment of the Deputy Mayor, or whether the position exists at all, varies depending on the municipality, and often the circumstances of the municipality. Smaller municipalities like Minden Hills, Strathroy-Caradoc, and Tay Township elect the Deputy Mayor, in addition to the Mayor and Councillors to form a Council. Larger municipalities such as Markham, Richmond Hill and Vaughan each have provisions in place that name the Deputy Mayor as the Regional Councillor who received the most votes in the previous election.

The most common approach for municipalities using a ward system, where the Deputy Mayor is not elected, and the only member of the upper-tier Council is the Mayor, is to rotate the Deputy Mayor position amongst the elected Councillors. This method is employed by fellow York Region municipalities King, East Gwillimbury and Whitchurch-Stouffville, as well as Halton Hills.

The adoption of a rotation for the Deputy Mayor position represents the most equitable way for the Town's ward Councillors to share the appointment. Staff also recommend that should a rotation of the Deputy Mayor position be adopted, that the monthly appointment also include the responsibility of chairing General Committee meetings (currently rotated amongst Councillors after chairing twice).

**The staff recommended rotation model ensures equitable treatment to members of Council**

Should Council agree to rotating the Deputy Mayor position, staff would recommend that a procedure by-law amendment be brought forward with the following parameters;

- The Clerk will create a schedule (draft for 2022-2026 Council term provided below) outlining the months each ward Councillor would be the Deputy Mayor.
- Each Councillor would hold the position of Deputy Mayor for seven (non-consecutive) months throughout the Council term.
- It's generally accepted that the months of July and August are slower for municipal business than the others, and these months will be split evenly so a member is only Deputy Mayor in July/August once over the course of the term.
- To ensure Councillors are given the same amount of opportunities to hold the Deputy Mayor position, there would not be a designated Deputy Mayor in December 2022 or from July-October 2026.
- Councillors would be permitted to trade months should they know of an absence beforehand and can find a willing partner to trade with.
- When an unexpected absence occurs, the member would retain the designation of Deputy Mayor, but the Mayor would be tasked with chairing any General Committee meeting that occurs during the absence.

	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
January		Ward 1	Ward 3	Ward 5	Ward 1
February		Ward 2	Ward 4	Ward 6	Ward 2
March		Ward 3	Ward 5	Ward 1	Ward 3
April		Ward 4	Ward 6	Ward 2	Ward 4
May		Ward 5	Ward 1	Ward 3	Ward 5
June		Ward 6	Ward 2	Ward 4	Ward 6
July		Ward 1	Ward 3	Ward 5	
August		Ward 2	Ward 4	Ward 6	
September		Ward 3	Ward 5	Ward 1	
October		Ward 4	Ward 6	Ward 2	
November		Ward 5	Ward 1	Ward 3	
December		Ward 6	Ward 2	Ward 4	

**There are other options available for designating the Deputy Mayor position, but staff do not recommend they are adopted.**

Council may also choose to designate the Deputy Mayor through one of the following options, however, it would not provide the same equity of opportunity that the recommended option does.

- By motion or by some electoral process (confirmed by motion), Council could designate a single Councillor as the Deputy Mayor for the term of Council.
- Council could delegate the responsibility for selecting the Deputy Mayor to the Mayor.

If one of these options is preferred, staff would recommend that Council refer this report back to staff to develop a process related to the preferred selection.

### **Advisory Committee Review**

None

### **Legal Considerations**

Neither the *Municipal Act* nor any other legislation contain provisions on the necessity to have a Deputy Mayor or the requirements of appointing one. Once Council chooses a method to select the Deputy Mayor, an amendment will be required to the Procedure By-law.

### **Financial Implications**

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

### **Communications Considerations**

Not applicable.

### **Climate Change Considerations**

None

## **Link to Strategic Plan**

The selection and rotation of the Deputy Mayor position supports the Strategic Plan priority of good governance within the Town.

## **Alternative(s) to the Recommendation**

1. Council provide direction.

## **Conclusions**

This report makes a recommendation and provides Council with options regarding the Deputy Mayor position. The Deputy Mayor is not an elected position and has no formal power. For those reasons, the most equitable way to appoint the position is for Councillors to rotate being Deputy Mayor throughout the term of Council.

## **Attachments**

None

## **Previous Reports**

None

## **Pre-submission Review**

Agenda Management Team review on June 16, 2022

## **Approvals**

Approved by Techa Van Leeuwen, Director, Corporate Services

Approved by Doug Nadorozny, Chief Administrative Officer