

THE CORPORATION OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF NEEBING

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF COUNCIL

Held using GoToMeeting Web Conference System and in-person at Blake Hall
On Wednesday, September 29, 2021

PRESENT: Mayor Erwin Butikofer
Blake Councillor Mark Thibert
Councillor at Large Gordon Cuthbertson
Crooks Councillor Brian Wright
Pearson Councillor Gary Gardner
Pardee Councillor Curtis Coulson
Scoble Councillor Brian Kurikka

Erika Kromm, Clerk-Treasurer
Laura Jones, Deputy Clerk-Treasurer

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:

Ev and Mike MacGray (participating via web conference)
Tracy Gardner
Gertrude Belanger
Bill Lankinen
Marilyn Lankinen
Shannon Loukola
Clara Butikofer

1. PRELIMINARY MATTERS:

- (a) Call to Order: Mayor Butikofer called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
- (b) Attendance: Attendance was recorded.
- (c) Declarations of Interest:

No declarations of pecuniary interests under the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act were brought forward.

2. PUBLIC MEETING RELATING TO THE REVIEW OF COUNCIL COMPOSITION

2.1 Report from Clerk-Treasurer Regarding Council Composition

Council is proposing a reduction in the number of Councillors from 7 to 5 people, and Council also requested feedback as to how that could occur. Ms. Kromm highlighted the number of ways that the reduction in Council members could occur.

The Mayor spoke in support of the Council size reduction. He listed the population of each of the wards and stated that most surrounding Municipalities have five Councillors and by reducing Neebing to four Councillors and a Mayor that the expected cost savings of \$20,000 could be used by the Municipality towards other budget items.

2.2 Hear from Members of the Public Regarding Council Composition (

Bill Lankinen spoke and stated he disputed the amount of the savings and while he was not opposed to the reduction in the number of Council representatives from seven to five, he was strongly opposed to having the representation all from one area of the Municipality. He also inquired if Councillor received separate remuneration for being on committees and was informed that they do not receive extra remuneration.

Mayor Butikofer stated the savings would be applied to other areas. Mayor Butikofer and other Councillors spoke of how each Councillor representing Neebing as a whole.

Shannon Loukala spoke and stated she also did not believe there would be \$20,000 saved. Ms. Loukala stated she thinks something will be lost by the reduction in the size of the Council and she is not in support of the reduction. She stated her father informed her that when amalgamation occurred the deal was that each area would have representation. Ms. Loukala is also not in favour of having all Councillors from the same geographic area of the Municipality.

Councillor Coulson stated that he personally supports the existing system, however he can also see the reasoning behind why the change is being recommended. He stated that in the past Pearson and Pardee had their own recreation organization.

Councillor Cuthbertson stated there are problems finding people to run for Council. Scoble has had no one from Scoble wanting to run for the past three terms. In the last election all the Councillors were acclaimed and the only election was for the position of Mayor.

Gertrude Belanger spoke and stated that there are areas within the Municipality that have specific interests such as Oliver Lake, and those areas would still want to have representation.

Ev MacGray asked what the online survey results showed. Ms. Kromm responded and said there were 32 respondents and that approximately 40 % were in favour of five Councillor and 60% in favour of maintaining the existing system.

Tracy Gardner stated that the survey had several options, and that the number of options was concerning, and that people were apprehensive. She asked what process would be followed prior to making a decision, and where does public opinion fit into the decision

The Mayor stated that that Council wanted to know if residents wanted to have representation by numbers or neighbourhood. He informed Mrs. Gardner that there were attempts to engage the public in 2019 with newspaper articles regarding Council Composition and there was no response. He stated that what Council would likely discuss is Council representation from Pearson/Pardee, Blake, Scoble, Crooks and a Mayor.

Mrs. Gardner said that was not clear on the survey. No one wants to lose their Councillor. She asked if the survey could be condensed to two options.

Mrs. Gardner also stated that because Pearson and Pardee represent about ½ of the area's geography, she had concerns about the workload for that Councillor.

Councillor Wright reiterated that Council works as a whole to solve the problems of the Municipality, and that workload would be shared amongst the Councillors.

The Clerk-Treasurer stated that the survey provided all options to reduce the size of Council, as Council had not yet indicated a direction for any one form of representation. She will bring a report to the next Council meeting so Council can provide direction.

3. ADJOURN THE MEETING:

There being no further business to attend to, Mayor Butikofer adjourned the meeting at 7:28 p.m.

REGULAR MEETING OF COUNCIL


Erwin Butikofer
MAYOR


Erika Kromm
CLERK-TREASURER