

5 Committees

Types of Committees

There are several methods of handling matters that are brought before council for consideration.

1. The mayor may establish a **standing committee** for any matter the mayor considers would be better regulated and managed by means of such a committee [CC s. 141]. A standing committee considers matters that are referred to it, and reports to council with or without a recommendation.
2. Council may establish a **select committee** to consider or inquire into any matter, and report their findings and opinions to council [CC s. 142].
3. Council may sit as a **committee of the whole** and formally report to council its findings and recommendations.

The provisions of the *Community Charter* concerning open meetings apply to meetings of the committee of the whole, select committees and standing committees [CC s. 93].

Appointment

The mayor appoints standing committees [CC s. 141], with at least half the members of each standing committee required to be council members.

Council appoints select committees [CC s. 142], and at least one member of each select committee must be a member of council.

Delegation to Committees

Council may delegate certain of its powers, duties, and functions to council committees by bylaw [CC s. 154(1)].

Approval of Committee Decisions

The proceedings of all committees are subject to the approval of the council, except where council delegates authority to a committee to exercise any of the powers of council, subject to restrictions or conditions that may be specified by the bylaw.

Committee Procedures

Council must, by bylaw, establish the general procedures to be followed by council committees in conducting their business [CC s. 124(1)].

The procedure bylaw must set out the means of providing notice of committee meetings [CC s. 124(2)].

At times, in order to address urgent or emergent matters, council may decide to call a special meeting and waive the notice requirement by unanimous consent. In such cases, there is a danger that the public might not be aware of the special meeting. To minimize criticism of council's activities, consider posting notice of a special meeting even when the notice requirement is waived.

Minutes of all committee meetings must be kept and must be signed by the chair and open for public inspection [CC s. 124(2)(c)].

Committee of the Whole

Council, by moving to committee of the whole, indicates intent to discuss a subject in a less formal manner than would be necessary during a council meeting. Any item of business may be discussed by the committee of the whole.

While many councils hold regular meetings of committee of the whole, a council may often move to committee of the whole during the course of a regular or special meeting of council.

Procedurally, on a motion of council to resolve itself into committee of the whole, the mayor or designate would step down and another member of council would be named chair of the committee. After the discussion on the item had concluded, the committee would “rise and report” back to council. The finding of the committee would be reported back to council formally, by way of recommendation.

Council could act on the recommendation or just record the report of the committee of the whole.

The formal minutes of a council meeting would record:

- (a) resolution to go into committee of the whole;
- (b) report or recommendation from the committee (making reference to the subject matter discussed); and
- (c) action taken by council, if any.

The committee of the whole itself cannot enact bylaws, only council members meeting as “council” in an open meeting can do so.

“Committee of the whole” should not be used when a meeting is intended to be closed to the public. Meetings closed to the public are proper meetings of council where members of the public and/or staff are excluded, held to deal with subjects that meet specific criteria set out in the *Community Charter* [s. 90]. (See Fact Sheet #4: Meetings)

NOTE: Related provisions for regional districts regarding Committees can be found under Part 6, Division 4 & 5 of the *Local Government Act*.

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