

STAFF REPORT TO COUNCIL

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DATE: February 17, 2022

TO: MAYOR AND COUNCIL

NAME AND TITLE: WALTER BABICZ, CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: COVID-19 Vaccine Program and Volunteers on Council Committees

ATTACHMENTS: Proposed Update to Committees, Commissions, and Boards Procedures Manual (Sections 12 & 29)

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council **APPROVES** the amendments to the *Committees, Commissions, and Boards Procedures Manual* as attached to the report dated February 17, 2022 from the City Manager titled "COVID-19 Vaccine Program and Volunteers on Council Committees."

PURPOSE:

For a Council decision regarding COVID-19 vaccination requirements, as it relates to Council-appointed volunteer members serving on Council committees.

BACKGROUND:

The Province continues to emphasize the importance of vaccinations and recently announced that its vaccine card program to access certain non-essential indoor facilities, which was set to expire at the end of January, has been extended to June 30th. The program will continue to be evaluated as vaccination is seen as an important health tool given the rate of hospitalizations across the province. As conditions evolve, updates on public health measures from the province can be expected.

Along with the City of Prince George, many other local governments have adopted mandatory vaccine requirements for employees and service providers. The City's mandatory vaccine program does not specifically cover Council-appointed volunteers serving on Council committees.

DISCUSSION:

Each year, City Council appoints volunteer members of the public to serve on its Council Committees and currently has 27 volunteers on the following Committees. In addition, each group has two members of staff appointed as staff liaisons and to provide legislative and administrative support:

- Advisory Committee on Accessibility (9 Volunteer Members of the Public);
- Advisory Committee on Development Design (9 Volunteer Members of the Public); and
- Prince George Heritage Commission (9 Volunteer Members of the Public).

Since mid-2020, Committee meetings have been delivered in a hybrid format providing for both in-person and remote attendance. With the authorization of electronic participation in fall 2021, all

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committee meetings have been comprised of both in-person and electronic attendance of committee members with City staff, presenters, and the committee chairperson required to attend in-person as outlined in Section 12 of the *Committees, Commissions, and Boards Procedures Manual*. Based on a general review of the meetings held over the past several months, in-person vs. remote attendance has remained at 40% and 60% of the total attendance, respectively.

In an effort to further remove barriers to full participation of all committee members, staff, and scheduled presenters/guest speakers, Administration recommends further amendments to Section 12: Electronic Participation of the *Committees, Commissions, and Boards Procedures Manual* to encourage in-person attendance at committee meetings when possible, but to no longer require in-person attendance of the committee chairperson, City staff, nor presenters.

Further, a new Section 29: COVID-19 Safety Protocols is proposed to be added to the manual that would require Council-appointed committee volunteers and their designated alternates to be fully vaccinated in order to attend committee meetings in person. If Council-appointed volunteer members do not provide confirmation of vaccination, they could continue to participate in committee meetings electronically (e.g. telephone, Zoom, etc.).

ALTERNATIVES:

Administration recommends that Council approve the amendments to the *Committees, Commissions, and Boards Procedures Manual* as outlined in the report. Alternative options for consideration include:

1. Maintain the existing arrangements; or
2. Provide direction to Administration on an alternate approach.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

Currently, under the City's mandatory COVID-19 vaccine program, volunteer members appointed to Council Committees have not been required to show proof of vaccination. Many committee members have chosen to participate in meetings electronically and for those attending in person, measures continue to be in place, in accordance with the organization's COVID-19 Safety Plan, to support the health and safety of committee members, public attendees and staff.

Administration recommends that Council approve the proposed amendments to the *Committees, Commissions, and Boards Procedures Manual*. The proposed amendments would permit Council committee members who provide proof of vaccination to attend committee meetings in person at City Hall or other civic facilities. Those Council committee members that do not provide proof of vaccination would continue to attend meetings electronically.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Walter Babicz, City Manager

PREPARED BY: L. Kellett, Deputy Corporate Officer
M. Connelly, Manager of Legislative Services

Meeting Date: 2022/02/28