

**POLICY: Council – 01-2024**

**Subject:** Question Period on the Council Agenda

**Purpose:** To set the standards and regulations for Public Question Period at regular Council meetings.

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Council holds that the community has an inherent entitlement to access information and pose inquiries regarding municipal governance. Various methods are currently in place to support this entitlement. On July 9, 2024, Council enacted Resolution Number 6 to enhance community engagement by incorporating a public open question period into the agenda. While questions may be regarding general municipal governance, the meeting agenda is issued the Friday prior to the meeting and the community may also submit a question regarding an agenda item.

The following policy provisions shall be followed to ensure a professional, meaningful experience for all parties.

1. Fundamentals

- A. Open Question Period shall be a maximum of ten (10) minutes immediately following the adoption of Correspondence on the agenda.
- B. Any member of the public may ask a question regarding municipal governance in Bonfield, subject to section 3. of this policy.
- C. Questions shall be submitted in writing by 12:00 noon the Monday prior to the Council meeting to the Clerk of the municipality through email or drop off at the municipal office.
- D. Only one question per meeting may be submitted by the same individual. Any unread questions will be forwarded to the next agenda should it be requested.
- E. A member of the public submitting a question will be provided with two (2) minutes for the opportunity to ask one main question and one follow up clarifying question.
- F. Council reserves the right to not answer a question or to defer an answer for a maximum period of 30 days to provide the most appropriate answer.
- G. The Mayor may remove any individual from the meeting for misconduct. The individual will lose the privilege of asking future questions should there be two separate incidents of misconduct.
- H. All submissions of questions will become part of the record for the meeting and information will be considered public. Questions submitted will be posted with the agenda for review by end of day on the Monday prior to the meeting.

2. Procedures for Questions on the Agenda

- A. A member of the public must submit their question to the Clerk by noon on the Monday immediately prior to the regular Council meeting. Questions, and any background explanatory information, must be concise.

- B. The submission must be a question seeking general information, not a statement or comment.
- C. At the meeting the Mayor will open question period and call on individuals who have submitted a question to come forward one at a time.
- D. The individual must state their name and residential address.
- E. The individual must direct their question to the Mayor.
- F. The Mayor will direct a municipal official to answer based on who the most appropriate municipal official is to reply (for example, Chair of a Committee, Councillor knowledgeable in the field of the question)
- G. Municipal officials may answer the question, defer the response or not answer the questions.
- H. If time permits after the answer, a clarification question from the same individual may be asked.

### 3. Meeting Conduct

- a. All members of the public attending in person shall uphold the goal of fostering a safe, respectful and orderly environment by:
  - i. Refraining from disruptive behaviour
  - ii. Comply with directives from the Mayor in a prompt and orderly fashion
  - iii. Restrict questions to the appropriate time on the agenda
  - iv. Not using offensive or aggressive language
- b. Ineligible questions will not be answered and consist of questions regarding
  - i. Staff, conduct or performance
  - ii. Closed session matters
  - iii. Confidential or private individual matters



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