



The Corporation of the Town of Tecumseh

Legislative & Clerk Services

To: Mayor and Members of Council

From: Robert Auger, Director Legislative Services & Clerk

Date to Council: Tuesday, July 22, 2025

Report Number: LCS-2025-21

Subject: Council Chambers – Security & Safety Measures

Recommendations

It is recommended:

That Report LCS-2025-21 entitled “Council Chambers – Security and Safety Measures” **be received;**

And further, that Council **provide direction** to use ad hoc security guard services for security at Council Meetings, where conditions merit.

Background

In light of recent experiences in other municipalities with overly disruptive Council meetings involving interactions with certain members of the public who failed to conduct themselves in a manner that was safe and respectful, municipalities have increasingly taken measures to maintain decorum and order and ensure the health and safety of those at the meetings. Tecumseh is among these municipalities.

It has become evident from a review of events in Ontario municipalities that there is a need to establish general guidelines for members of the public in circumstances where they are interacting with members of Council, Committee members, employees of the Town, or other members of the public. There is also the need to ensure and maintain a proper balance between the rights of the public to engage in the democratic process

and the need for order, proper protocol and respectful behaviours when such engagement takes place.

In addition, pursuant to the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. O.1 and the *Occupiers' Liability Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. O.2, the Town is legally obligated to comply with statutory duties to take every reasonable precaution, as the circumstances allow, to ensure the safety of the Town's employees and visitors. Further, municipal property is protected under the *Trespass Act*, R.S.O. 1990, which protects the right of employees and visitors to the enjoyment and use of municipal property without undue interference by others. Administration takes these responsibilities very seriously and, accordingly, have taken measures to secure the safety of people and property as outlined in the Comments below.

The Town has a Council Code of Conduct, rules regarding employee conduct and the rules of the Procedural By-Law which includes decorum rules with respect to delegations at public meetings. At the January 23, 2024 Regular Council Meeting (RCM), Council adopted the Visitor Conduct Policy No. 121 which established the expectations related to the behaviour of the public when interacting with Town Council or staff and the No Trespass Policy No.122 which provides measures that can be taken to issue a Notice of No Trespass to one or more members of the public.

Administration has continued to assess and implement other safety procedures, as well as undertake an ongoing review of additional measures. Recent measures are summarized below, including one for Council's consideration.

Comments

The following is a list of additional security measures which have been implemented provisionally already:

Sign In Measures

While Town policies already require members of the public to sign in when attending Council Chambers for a meeting, this requirement has not been consistently implemented. Going forward any and all members of the public will consistently be asked at the meeting to sign in with the Clerks office prior to and as a condition of entrance into Council Chambers. It is felt that this requirement, if consistently applied, will help to deter inappropriate conduct by members of the public while in Council Chambers. A further purpose of this protocol is that attendees are required to complete and sign the Sign-In Sheet to confirm in writing their intent to abide by the published conduct requirements for attendance.

Members of the public will be asked to provide their name, address and contact information and, if necessary, such Sign-in may require the provision of identification to confirm a person's identity. All such information will be collected pursuant to the

requirements of privacy legislation. These sign in requirements are typical for a number of municipalities but much less intrusive than the requirements of some other municipalities in the province that require additional security screening measures such as metal detectors and/or bag inspections prior to entry into Council Chambers.

During a recent public council meeting, Administration instituted and required online pre-registration to attend or be a delegate at the public council meeting. This was done to manage overall capacity limits at the meeting and ensure optimal public consultation by way of delegations. This was instituted in circumstances where a high volume of public attendance was anticipated for this meeting. While Administration does not intend nor anticipates requiring pre-registration as a regular ongoing requirement for Council Meetings, it should remain an option to consider on an ad hoc basis for certain meetings where and when deemed necessary and appropriate under the circumstances.

Reinforcement of Decorum Expectations

While the expectations for decorum in Council Chambers are already identified in the Town's policies and procedural rules, the further practice at some local municipalities is for the Clerk to read the rules of decorum at the start of Council meetings. This practice provides an opportunity for persons attending the meeting to clearly hear and be aware of the decorum expectations and should a matter arise during the course of the meeting, the Chair and/or the Clerk can refer back to the rules stated at commencement.

Some municipalities have also elected to visually display in slide show format in Council Chambers the guidelines for the meeting including references to no signs/banners, silencing devices, observe without disruption, etc.

Recently, Administration piloted these practices by reading and displaying the rules of decorum at the start of a public council meeting. Decorum signage was also erected in Council Chambers and the entrance way into Council Chambers. Administration will continue the reading and displaying of decorum measures for all Council meetings going forward so as to establish clear behavioural and safety expectations of all persons in attendance.

Panic Button

The Town Hall facility is already equipped with panic buttons for staff to engage in the case of an emergency which directly notifies the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) to attend on site.

A wireless panic button has now also been installed in Council Chambers which, if pressed in an emergency situation (being a situation where the health and/or safety of anyone at the meeting is at risk), directly contacts the OPP for assistance on site. The

monthly subscription for the additional panic button is already included in the Town's current fee for the existing devices.

Stanchions

Stanchions, on loan from the Arena, have been placed in Council Chambers to help mitigate crowd congestion but more importantly to help delineate a clear physical separation between the public Council Gallery (audience) area and the Council 'horseshoe' area where entrance is normally reserved for members of Council, Administration and delegations for the purposes of participating in the business of the meeting. Earlier this year there was an incident at a Council Meeting in which a member of the public confronted and followed a member of Administration into the Council horseshoe area to continue to confront that member of Administration in a threatening manner.

The installation of stanchions on a permanent basis going forward will help to make clear the appropriate boundaries within Council Chambers and may further serve as a safety measure for Council and staff should a member of the public fail to conduct themselves in a manner that was safe and respectful.

Some municipalities have even installed more physical and/or permanent delineation options such as glass half walls or doors through which to enter the Council horseshoe area. However, the use of stanchions provides the flexible ability to add or remove stanchions as necessary to allow Council Chambers to remain available for use for various other Town events. Administration will purchase stanchions for Council Chamber use going forward (at an approximate cost of \$750 plus HST which includes the stanchion base and imprinting of the Town's logo on one side of the ribbon). When not in use for Council meetings, the stanchions could also be utilized for other events if needed.

Emergency Plan Standard Operating Procedure

While the Town has established emergency plans for various situations, it has been identified that the Town does not have a specific plan for emergencies that may arise during Council meetings. As a best practice, standard operating procedures (SOP) provide detailed instructions to ensure consistent and clear guidelines for a specific procedure(s). Administration will develop an Emergency Plan SOP for Council meetings which outlines the protocol for emergency preparedness including communication measures, evacuation areas and plans, designated meeting locations and a process for resuming normal operations.

Additional Security Measure for Councils Consideration - Security Personnel

A further security enhancement option that some municipalities have chosen to implement is for a security personnel presence at Council meetings, either at every Council meeting or on an ad hoc basis as and when deemed necessary such as a contentious matter to be discussed by Council or a meeting where a high public attendance number is anticipated.

The presence of security personnel can help to deter and prevent inappropriate conduct at a Council meeting and, additionally, a security presence can help detect or deal with any perceived threats that might arise and be present at that meeting. Should Council wish to engage the services of security personnel at Council meetings, an outside service provider would need to be contracted.

As an example, Commissionaires, a regional company with a local branch, has extensive experience in providing security services. To provide security guard services at Council meetings, a routine level guard is recommended as the most suitable balance for this service (meaning no use of force by the guard).

The security guard service includes building safety with an active patrol of the facility (interior and/or exterior), escort services if necessary for Council and staff, reception services (entering persons into the facility/meeting room) and assistance should a member of the public become disruptive.

Again, as an example, Commissionaires offer the following security guard options:

- Scheduled Service Guard (recurring) – attendance at every Council held on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month
- Ad-Hoc Guard Services – occasional attendance based on need
- Use of Force Guard Services – security guard has ability to arrest and remove person

Scheduled Service Guard (recurring): The Town would have to enter a formal agreement with Commissionaires to secure pricing, however the estimated cost for a scheduled service guard would be approximately \$2,400 annually for one guard (\$29.85/hour with a 4-hour minimum billing) to attend each Council meeting (average 20 meetings annually).

Ad-Hoc Guard Services: Ad-Hoc Guard Services for one guard (\$33.60/hour at 4-hour minimum billing) based on security guard services for an average of five (5) meetings per year would be approximately \$672 annually. This estimate could fluctuate depending on the subject matter meetings requiring security personnel.

Administration is seeking Council direction with respect to the above-noted security enhancement options for security personnel. Should Council wish to implement the scheduled services guard or ad hoc guard services for the remaining quarter of 2025, funding would be allocated from the Town's operating budget and if necessary, be funded through the Tax Rate Stabilization Reserve. If Council elects for a 2026 commencement of security guard services, funding would be referred to the 2026 Budget deliberations. It is Administration's recommendation that ad hoc guard services be used should conditions merit.

Consultations

Chief Administrative Officer and People & Culture
Financial Services

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications for the recommended passive measures relating to decorum and development of an Emergency Safety SOP for Council Chambers.

The monthly subscription for the panic button installed in Council Chambers is included in the Town's existing service fee.

The purchase of six (6) stanchions for Council Chambers is approximately \$750 plus HST (\$125.16/stanchion) which includes the base and one-sided imprint of the Town's Logo on the ribbon, which would be funded from the Small Equipment budget.

A formal agreement would need to be secured with an external service provider for security personnel. Ballpark estimates for a scheduled service guard would be approximately \$2,400 annually for one guard (approximately \$29.85/hour with a 4-hour minimum billing) to attend each Council meeting (average 20 meetings annually).

Ad-Hoc Guard Services for one guard (\$33.60/hour at 4-hour minimum billing) based on security guard services an average of five (5) meetings per year would be approximately \$672 annually.

There is no current budget allocation for security personnel. Should Council wish to engage the services of security personnel for the remaining quarter of 2025, the cost for the service would be charged to Council's operating budget and would ultimately be funded from the Town's Tax Rate Stabilization Reserve. Alternatively, if seeking a 2026 start date, funding would be referred to the 2026 Budget deliberations.

Applicable	<u>2023-2026 Strategic Priorities</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sustainable Growth: Achieve prosperity and a livable community through sustainable growth.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Community Health and Inclusion: Integrate community health and inclusion into our places and spaces and everything we do.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Service Experience: Enhance the experience of Team Tecumseh and our citizens through responsive and respectful service.

Communications

Not applicable ☒

Website ☐

Social Media ☐

News Release ☐

Local Newspaper ☐

This report has been reviewed by Senior Administration as indicated below and recommended for submission by the Chief Administrative Officer.

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Reviewed by:

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Director Legislative Services & Clerk

Recommended by:

Margaret Misek-Evans, MCIP, RPP
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachment Number	Attachment Name
None	None