PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT DURING COUNCIL MEETINGS POLICY

1. PURPOSE

1.1.   This policy provides guidance for the conduct of public engagement opportunities during regular council meetings that are open to the public. This policy replaces Open Question Period Policy COU-002.

2. POLICY

Scope

2.1.   This policy applies to regular open meetings of the Village of Pemberton council. The policy may be adopted by committees or commissions of council at their discretion.

Definitions

2.2.   In this policy,

Attendee means a non-voting person attending an open meeting.

In-person attendee means a person attending an open meeting in Council Chambers or another location where a meeting is being held.

Virtual attendee means a person attending an open meeting by electronic means.

Policy

2.3.   The rules of conduct at a meeting set out in Council Procedure Bylaw No. 993, 2025 apply to public engagement at a meeting of council.

2.4.   Two public engagement opportunities are available at a regular meeting of council:

   a. Public Input Period, which is scheduled near the beginning of a regular meeting, during which meeting attendees are encouraged to provide comments to council on Village business, and

   b. Open Question Period, which is scheduled before the termination of a regular meeting, during which attendees are encouraged to ask questions of council on Village business.

2.3.   An *attendee* may speak for up to two minutes at each engagement opportunity after being recognized by the chair. The chair may extend the speaking time at their discretion.

Permitted Topics

2.4.   An *attendee* may ask questions or make comments relating to matters on the agenda of the current meeting or the previous meeting of council.

2.5.   An *attendee* wishing to ask questions or make comments regarding a matter not appearing on the agenda of the current meeting or the previous meeting must pre-register using the form provided for this purpose on the Village website or by providing their questions in writing to the corporate officer no less than seven days before the meeting. Pre-registration is intended to provide staff and council with time to prepare an informed response.

2.6.   The chair may, at their sole discretion, grant an attendee who has not pre-registered permission to ask a question or make a comment on a matter of Village business not appearing on the agenda of the current meeting or the previous meeting.

Procedure for Asking a Question or Making a Comment

2.7.   An *in-person attendee* who wishes to make a comment or ask a question will raise their hand when the chair opens the floor to questions or comments. The attendee may speak when the chair recognizes them.

2.8.   A *virtual attendee* who wishes to make a comment or ask a question will use the "raise hand" feature of the webinar when the chair opens the floor to questions or comments. The attendee may speak when staff unmute their microphone.

2.9.   After being recognized by the chair and before asking a question or making a comment, an *attendee* must state their full name and their address or their municipality or regional district area of residence.

2.10.   A *virtual attendee* who prefers to have staff ask their question or make their comment may enter their name and municipality or regional district area of residence, followed by the questions or comments, in the webinar chat. Staff will state the name and municipality or regional district area of residence and read the question or comment after being recognized by the chair.

2.11.   Attendees will address questions and comments to the chair who may refer a question to a member of council or to staff for response.

2.12.   Public Input Period is an opportunity for council to hear the views of the public. Members of council may ask questions of clarification but will not engage in dialogue with attendees.

3. ADMINISTRATION

3.1.   Council is responsible for approving, reviewing, administering, and making substantive amendments to this policy.

3.2.   The chief administrative officer is responsible for administrative amendments to this policy.