

March 31, 2020

REPORT TO: Mayor & Council

FROM: Elizabeth (Lisa) Slomke, Clerk

SUBJECT: Amendment to Procedural By-law due to Pandemic

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## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

On March 19, 2020 the Province of Ontario held an emergency sitting in order to pass legislation, *Municipal Emergency Act 2020* (Bill 187). The legislation amends the following (related to municipal procedural by-laws):

- The *Municipal Act, 2001* is amended to provide that, during emergencies declared locally or provincially under the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*, should you choose to, members of councils, local boards and committees who participate electronically in open and closed meetings may be counted for purposes of quorum.
- Municipalities wishing to use this new authority must amend their procedure by-laws to allow for electronic meetings and may do so through electronic participation.
- Meetings held electronically will still be required to follow existing meeting rules, and if municipalities choose to adopt electronic meetings during emergencies, they will need to also determine how best to provide for notice of meetings to the public, maintain meeting minutes, and subject to certain exceptions, continue to make meetings open to the public.

I have attached an information sheet provided by the Province to this report for your information.

In order for Council of the Town of Fort Frances to continue to safely meet and conduct business during this pandemic, I am proposing an amendment to our Procedural By-law 34/95.

I have communicated with the IT Manager to determine the most effective/efficient way to host these meetings and we suggest moving ahead with the use of Microsoft Teams where available, with the additional option of teleconferencing in. The details of each meeting will be made available to Council, Managers and the public on our website. A separate meeting will be scheduled should the need arise for an in-camera discussion.

## **NEXT STEPS**

An amendment for the Procedural By-law 34/95 has been prepared and is expected to be considered in this special council meeting.

Council approval of this report will agree to the recommendation to amend the Procedural By-law 34/95 in order to implement the legislative changes permitting Electronic Participation for Council and Committees which was approved by the Province of Ontario during the Covid-19 Pandemic.