



Hamilton

Minutes 23-001

Hamilton Women and Gender Equity Committee

Thursday, January 26, 2023

6:00 p.m.

Due to the COVID-19 and the Closure of City Hall All electronic meetings can be viewed at: City's YouTube Channel:

**<https://www.youtube.com/user/InsideCityofHamilton>
Virtual Meeting**

Present: Deanna Allain, Gagan Batra, Melanie Cummings, Anna Davey, Autumn Getty, Adriana Harris, Jan Lukas, Pascale Marchand, Kathleen Shannon, and Yulena Wan

Regrets: Michelle Hutton, Heather Platt, Stephanie Scardellato and Julie Turner

Also

Present: Morgan Stahl, Director of Government Relations and Community Engagement
Loren Kolar, Legislative Coordinator

1. CEREMONIAL ACTIVITIES

(i) Land Acknowledgement

D. Allain provided the Land Acknowledgement.

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA (ITEM 2)

The Clerk advised Committee of the following changes to the agenda:

10. DISCUSSION ITEMS

10.4 Citizen Committee Report respecting Gender Lens Budgeting

(Batra/Harris)

That the agenda for the January 26, 2023 meeting of the Hamilton Women and Gender Equity Committee, be approved, as amended.

CARRIED

3. DECLARATION OF INTEREST (Item 3)

None.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Item 4)

(i) December 22, 2022 (Item 4.1)

(Batra/Harris)

That the Hamilton Women and Gender Equity Committee approve the Minutes of December 22, 2022, as presented.

CARRIED

5. COMMUNICATIONS (Item 5)

(i) Audit, Finance and Administration Committee Report 22-016, Item 5 (b), as Amended by Council, September 28, 2022 respecting Confidential Interview Questions for the Hamilton

Police Services Board Selection Committee (Item 5.1)

(Getty/Harris)

That the Audit, Finance and Administration Committee Report 22-016, Item 5 (b), as Amended by Council, September 28, 2022 respecting Confidential Interview Questions for the Hamilton Police Services Board Selection Committee, be received.

6. DISCUSSION ITEMS (Item 10)

(i) Review of the Citizen Committee Report regarding feedback on the Procedural Handbook (Item 10.1)

The Committee provided the following feedback:

The City of Hamilton Women and Gender Equity Advisory Committee recommends that Council, with the support of staff, consider the following items of feedback respecting the Procedural Handbook, and ensure that commitments listed by the city and staff are upheld.

The document's table of contents and references to by-laws and other pieces of legislation should include hyperlinks for ease of access in electronic format.

Additionally, the document should be available in a plain language format, recognizing that the format and legalese creates a barrier to engagement and ensuring all committee members understand their roles and commitments.

Should council members or staff require additional information related to any of the mentioned feedback, the committee is prepared to provide additional reports or attend meetings to respond to questions.

The following items of feedback were identified by members of the Women and Gender Equity Advisory Committee through working group sessions:

- Page 10: regarding the appointment and recruitment process, there should be a commitment by the City of Hamilton to provide recruitment information to community partners and organizations, with particular focus on encouraging members of marginalized communities to apply, in line with a focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion in the recruitment process.
- Page 12: regarding member training, it is imperative that the City Clerk ensure existing and new members of the committee receive training, as new members to this committee beginning early 2022 did not receive most of the listed training, or materials related to it.

In the sharing of training information and reference documents, it should be readily available and easily accessible for both committee members and the general public to access, including having such information available on the City of Hamilton website along with up-to-date committee information. The City Clerk should have a commitment and procedure to monitor their fulfilment of training and reference documents

provided. Committee members feel that training and orientation has been minimal and insufficient, causing confusion and limiting engagement and the development of action items in formal meetings. Providing additional training in procedure, meeting format, and how to prepare documents such as Citizen Committee Reports or Meeting Minutes would be helpful to effective operation and success.

- Page 14: regarding council representatives on advisory committees, there should be a commitment of attendance, or otherwise a process to allow committees to request another council representative if attendance becomes a challenge. The Women and Gender Equity Advisory Committee has only had a council representative attend one meeting since the beginning of its current term.
- Page 21: regarding consultation on staff reports, this is a practice that has not taken place during this term of the committee. Staff should be committed to utilizing advisory committees for feedback on reports on a frequent and consistent basis, and members of council should be encouraged to directly request staff consult with advisory committees to ensure this takes place. In the absence of this practice, citizen advisory committees often lack notice and necessary time to review documents and generate reports and feedback before items are reviewed by members of council. Again, there should be a commitment by staff to regularly and consistently consult with

advisory committees, and a procedure to ensure the commitment is maintained.

- Page 23: regarding calls to vote, there is no mention of an option to abstain from votes and how they would be recorded. If there is no abstention option for members, it should be clearly stated along with reasoning in this handbook.
- Page 33, regarding public notice of citizen member vacancies, these again should be shared with community organizations with a focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion.

(Harris/Gagan)

- (a) That the feedback from the Hamilton Women and Gender Equity Committee, respecting the Procedural Handbook, be referred to the Clerks Office and the Audit Finance and Administration Committee, and that the Chair be present to speak to and answer questions regarding the report at the standing committee meeting; and
- (b) That the Citizen Committee Report regarding feedback on the Procedural Handbook, be approved.

CARRIED

(ii) Review of the Citizen Committee Report regarding Feedback on the Code of Conduct (Item 10.2)

The Committee provided the following feedback:

- Page 41: regarding the statement, “This Code of Conduct is to be given broad, liberal interpretation in accordance with applicable legislation and the definitions set out herein. Commentary in this Code is illustrative and not exhaustive.”, the committee feels that the Code of Conduct should be explained more thoroughly and in plain language to prevent interpretation which extends beyond the understanding of the public and volunteer advisory committee members.
- Page 43: regarding confidential information, more information is needed to establish exactly what is considered to be confidential, how members can be aware of what the board of city is prevented from disclosing, and how the rule differentiates between items discussed in a closed meeting and information that is already publicly available. There should be a clear system to label and identify confidential information to local boards. Information related to confidentiality for members of council is much clearer in their code of conduct compared to this proposed code for volunteers.
- Page 44: regarding member conduct, more clarity is needed to provide committee members with information on how the City of Hamilton can require decorum “at all times”. For instance, if political protest is a charter protected right, but is not considered conducting oneself with decorum, more clarity is needed to confirm if a volunteer advisory committee member may face consequences or penalties.
- Page 44-45: regarding media communications, the

committee was previously told that the chair could not speak to media without approval from the committee they report to, which does not appear to be the case in the code of conduct. There is no information on the ability of the Chair to speak to media and what, if any, approval is required, or what limitations, if any, exist as part of such media communication. The commentary also identified that the rules of decorum apply to social media, and recommend that members “should consider articulating and posting their own policy of addressing how frequently they will monitor the site for the purpose of identifying and removing disparaging, abusive or hateful comments.” It is in the opinion of the advisory committee that the City of Hamilton should not be applying rules of decorum to volunteer committee members on their personal social media accounts, or outside of their duties as committee members, as it may infringe on their rights to expression and political protest. Further, it is unreasonable to apply responsibility for filtering hateful and abusive comments on the posts of volunteer advisory committee members. The City of Hamilton should not expect anyone to read through abusive and hateful comments on personal social media as part of code of conduct, and especially should not do so without providing support and resources for the additional harm such exposure to hate and abuse can cause.

- Page 45: regarding the expectation that members “adhere to and encourage public respect for the Local Board, the municipality and its by-laws, policies and procedures”, the committee feels the

Code of Conduct must provide clearer definitions of respect and what is considered disrespectful. Further to this, more clarity is needed to ensure members understand whether their rights to expression and political protest will be restricted or prohibited when agreeing to volunteer on a citizen advisory committee.

- Page 45: regarding the workplace harassment and violence policies in place for staff, members of this advisory committee have not received copies of such policies, and these policies, in addition to the code of conduct, must be easily and readily available to members so they can comply.
- Page 46: regarding the advice to consult the integrity commissioner if members seek clarification, there should be direction or information on who or how to contact the integrity commissioner included in the code of conduct.
- Page 46: the formatting of "Part 2" to include additional context for previously mentioned rules and the addition of new rules makes this part of the document particularly difficult to read and follow, and revision may be needed.
- Page 47: regarding the consequences of failure to adhere to code of conduct, and in addition to the aforementioned feedback on this item, "reprimand" must be clearly defined, and this section must clearly identify what reprimand and remedial actions will look like for volunteer citizen committee members.

- Page 49: the numbering of the items on this page include two separate items numbered as 4, rather than a continued sequential order. More clarify is needed on the operating procedure regarding any requirements for approval that are needed before a chair can speak to media on behalf of the committee, and what restrictions might be in place for such engagement.
- Page 53: regarding the note at the bottom of the page, the Chair or Vice-Chair and the Secretary have never signed the meeting minutes in practice on this committee, and more clarification is needed on if digital signatures would be acceptable if this is now going to be required, considering the hybrid operation of most committees.

(Harris/Marchand)

- (a) That the feedback from the Hamilton Women and Gender Equity Committee, respecting the Feedback on the Code of Conduct, be referred to the Clerks Office and the Audit Finance and Administration Committee, and that the Chair be present to speak to and answer questions regarding the report at the standing committee meeting; and
- (b) That the Citizen Committee Report regarding Feedback on the Code of Conduct, be approved.

CARRIED

(iii) Women of Distinction Awards, March 2, 2023 – discussion & table purchase (Item 10.3)

(Marchand/Shannon)

That the HWGEC committee approve the purchase of 2 tables, to a maximum amount of \$3000, with \$1500 from the Operating Budget and \$1500 from the Reserve Fund for the 2023 Women of Distinction Awards.

CARRIED

(Cummings/Getty)

That the remaining funds from the WGEC 2022 budget be allocated to the 2022 Reserve for the committee, to the maximum amount.

CARRIED

(iv) Citizen Committee Report respecting Gender Lens Budgeting (Added Item 10.4)

(Lukas/Getty)

- (a) That the City of Hamilton consider applying a gender lens to the City of Hamilton for the 2023 Operational Budget, with implementation in the 2024 Operational Budget;
- (b) That the City of Hamilton continue to promote gender equity in society through the operational budget, in support of the City of Hamilton's 2016-2025 Strategic Plan, including economic prosperity and growth, healthy and safe communities, clean and green, built environment and infrastructure, and culture and diversity;
- (c) Consider gender and diversity in taxation and resource allocation decisions; and

- (d) That the Citizen Committee Report be approved, and referred to the Audit, Finance and Administration Committee for consideration.

CARRIED

7. PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL (Item 14)

(Davey/Getty)

That the Hamilton Women and Gender Equity Committee move into Closed Session respecting Item 14.1, Pursuant to Section 9.1, Sub-section (i) of the City's Procedural By-law 21-021, as amended, and Section 239(2), Sub-section (i) of the Ontario Municipal Act, 2001, as amended, as the subject matter pertains to a trade secret or scientific, technical, commercial, financial or labour relations information, supplied in confidence to the City or local board, which, if disclosed, could reasonably be expected to prejudice significantly the competitive position or interfere significantly with the contractual or other negotiations of a person, group of persons, or organization.

(i) Confidential Interview Questions for Police Services Board Selection Committee

(Getty/Harris)

That staff be directed to forward the confidential interview questions from the Hamilton Women and Gender Equity Committee to the Police Services Board, and that the questions remain confidential.

8. ADJOURNMENT (Item 15)

(Marchand/Wan)

That the Hamilton Women and Gender Equity Committee be adjourned at 7:34pm.

**CARRIED
Respectfully,**

**Deanna Allain, Chair
Women and Gender Equity
Advisory Committee**