



March 28, 2025

City Council Committee Report

To: Kyle Attanasio, CAO

Fr: Heather Pihulak, Director of Corporate Services/City Clerk

Re: Appointing a Permanent Term Deputy Mayor

Recommendation:

That Council hereby receives the report on appointing a permanent term, Deputy Mayor.

Background:

The Municipal Act, 2001, (the Act) does not require municipalities to appoint a Deputy Mayor. Section 225 of the Act outlines the role of the Head of Council, being the Mayor, but is silent on the appointment of a Deputy Mayor. Section 242 of the Act, provides that Council may appoint a member:

- to act in the place of the Head of Council; and
- to preside at meetings in the absence of the Head of Council with all the powers and duties of the Head of Council with respect to the role of presiding at meetings.

The role of the Deputy Mayor has traditionally been to cover for the Mayor in his/her absence.

In accordance with Council's Procedural Bylaw, Council has used a rotational appointment for the Deputy Mayor since Amalgamation in 2000, rotating in alphabetical order every eight months for the duration of the term. This rotating appointment allows the opportunity for each member of Council to have experience with mayoral duties.

The demands in the office of the Mayor have grown and therefore require increased demand for the role of Deputy Mayor. Having a consistent Deputy Mayor allows the Mayor to share duties and makes it possible to attend more events and meetings if portfolios were created where the Deputy represents and remains current on the issue.

At the January 2025 Committee of the Whole meeting, Council provided formal direction to Administration to explore options with respect to changing the current process and making the position of Deputy Mayor a permanent Council term appointment.

This report will be broken into two sections to address the immediate option for Council to choose a permanent Deputy Mayor and the longer-term option for future Councils.

2022-2026 Term of Council

We are more than halfway through our term of the current Council which means half of the members have been in the role of Deputy Mayor. Mayor Poirier has been asked to be part of several advocacy groups and boards which have direct benefit to the municipality by having our Mayor attend strategic meetings and collaborating to address issues that have great impact on us. Further, having a dedicated Deputy Mayor will

provide the Mayor with the opportunity to assign certain portfolios and responsibilities to the Deputy to act on his behalf.

Options to Consider for balance of 2022-2026 term:

Option #1

Maintain the current 8-month rotation of Deputy Mayor duties completing the next three members of Council as Deputy Mayor.

Option #2

Appoint a Deputy permanent term Deputy Mayor by:

- Individual member of Council expressing interest by way of letter to Council
- Nomination by members of Council
- Council would then vote by secret ballot

Challenges with Option #2

- a) any member of Council who has not had their rotation in the Deputy Mayor duties would lose that opportunity.
- b) under this new model, only one deputy mayor would be appointed, and should several members of Council be interested, the opportunity would be lost.
- c) Council may consider additional compensation for a permanent term appointment, increasing budget allocation.

Potential Options re: Election of Deputy Mayor – 2026 Election:

Section 271 of the Act provides Council the ability via by-law to change the composition of council structure. This section provides as follows:

CHANGES TO COUNCIL

Composition of council of local municipality

217. (1) Without limiting sections 9, 10 and 11, those sections authorize a local municipality to change the composition of its council subject to the following rules:

1. There shall be a minimum of five members, one of whom shall be the head of council.
2. The members of council shall be elected in accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*.
3. The head of council shall be elected by general vote.
4. The members, other than the head of council, shall be elected by general vote or by ward or by any combination of general vote and wards.

In reviewing the above, this section states a few things to note. The members, other than the Head of Council, shall be elected by general vote or by any combination of general vote. Additionally, Council by way of by-law may change the composition of Council but for the by-law to be effective for the 2026 election it will need to be passed prior to January 1, 2026. If it is not passed prior to that date, then the by-law will not be in effect for the 2026 election but will apply to the subsequent 2030 election.

Option #1:

Council passes a bylaw to alter the composition of Council and the Deputy Mayor position becomes an elected at large position.

Option #2:

The Deputy Mayor position to be appointed at the inaugural Meeting of each new Council, a Deputy would be filled by by-law, by the Councillor who received the greatest number of votes in the election.

Option #3:

Council elects to not have the position of Deputy Mayor as part of the election ballot and Council chooses the Deputy Mayor from the elected Councillor in accordance with established criteria.

Options under the criteria to be established include:

- Individual members of Council provide express interest by way of letter or resume
- Nomination by members of Council
- Council would then vote by secret ballot
- Mayor recommends a member to be appointed by Council. Consensus would still require approval by Council.
- The Deputy Mayor could serve a two-year term and then Council votes to appoint a Deputy for the next two years, OR it can be the same Councillor for the entire Council term.

Potential Procedure:

- The Clerk shall include an item on the agenda for the first meeting of Council following the inaugural meeting, specifying the need to appoint a Deputy Mayor.
- Members of Council may nominate themselves or another eligible member of Council for the role of Deputy Mayor. Nominations must be seconded.
- If there is only one nominee, Council shall proceed to appoint the nominee by resolution.
- If there is more than one nominee, Council shall vote by secret ballot to select the Deputy Mayor. The Clerk shall administer the voting process, and the member receiving the most votes shall be appointed as the Deputy Mayor.
- In the event of a tie, the Clerk shall draw the name of one of the tied nominees to break the tie, and that member shall be appointed as the Deputy Mayor.
- If the position of Deputy Mayor becomes vacant during the term of Council, Council shall appoint a new Deputy Mayor. The appointment shall take effect immediately upon passage of the by-law appointing the new Alternate Mayor.

The Deputy Mayor portfolio could assist the Mayor in conducting mayoral duties, and to further develop skills of the Members of Council. The Deputy Mayor portfolio aims to make best use of the diverse experience and background of the Members of Council through attendance at meetings/events on behalf of the Mayor; participation/representation on civic committees, local boards, commissions or agencies and other related organizations and assistance with advocacy as required.

It is anticipated that the experience earned as Deputy Mayor will create subject matter expertise amongst Members of Council and may support succession planning.

Budget: Current City of Kenora Councillor annual remuneration is \$20,706.50 and the Mayor receives an annual remuneration of \$41,263.61. Currently the Deputy Mayor position does not receive additional remuneration to factor in the additional role/responsibilities expected over and above their dual role as Councillor. If under an elected at large scenario, the role of the Deputy Mayor becomes more active or enhanced then a review of the current Deputy Mayor remuneration may be considered.

Risk Analysis: There is a low risk associated with this report, and it provides guidance to Council on the options for a permanent term Deputy Mayor.

Communication Plan/Notice By-law Requirements: A communication plan will be established once direction is provided by Council.

Strategic Plan or another Guiding Document: Procedural Bylaw and *Municipal Act*