



Subject: *2022 Polling District Review Report # 2, Mayor vs Warden*
To: CAO for Corporate & Residential Services Committee, February 15, 2022
Date Prepared: February 8, 2021
Related Motions: CRS22(3), CRS22(4), CRS22(5)
Prepared by: John Woodford, Director of Planning and Development
Approved by: Kim Ramsay, Chief Administrative Officer

Summary

As part of the 2022 polling district review, Council is considering whether to include a discussion on mayor vs warden. To make a decision on this element of the review, Council requested additional information from staff. This report explores the benefits and differences in a mayor vs warden system.

Financial Impact Statement

Unknown, but should the position of mayor be a full-time position, it is likely the salary would be higher than that of the warden. However, if Council decides to move to a mayoral system, it may also decide to reduce the size of council.

Recommendation

Provide direction to staff whether to include mayor vs warden as part of the 2022 polling district review.

Recommended Motion

None

Background

At the January 2022 meeting of Council the following motion was passed:

CRS22(3) Moved that the Corporate & Residential Services Committee recommend to Council that Council direct staff to bring a further report back to Council (Re: Mayor vs. Warden).

As a result, staff have included additional information on a mayoral vs warden system of leadership in this report.

In the 2006 and 2014 polling district reviews, Council reviewed its style of leadership and, after public consultation, decided to keep the warden system.

Discussion

The differences between the mayoral and the warden system, as set out in the Municipal Government Act are as follows:

Warden

- Elected by fellow councillors at the first meeting of Council, following an election.
- Term of office expires when the term of office for Council expires, unless council adopts a shorter term of office prior to the warden's election.
- Should a warden resign, a new warden shall be elected at the next meeting of Council.
- Council, by two thirds vote of the council members, and with twenty days notice, in writing, to the clerk, the warden and the councillors, may remove a warden from office, and proceed to elect a new warden.

Mayor

- A mayor would be voted on, by all eligible voters in the Municipality, regardless of district, at the regular municipal election.
- Term of the mayor ends at the same time as the term of Council.
- A mayor cannot be removed from office by a vote of Council.
- A mayor cannot be removed from office unless she/he:
 - Ceases to be a resident of the Municipality;
 - Misses three consecutive meetings of Council;
 - Is found in violation of the NS *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*.
- Should the mayor resign, or is removed, an election would have to be called, and a new mayor elected.

Commonly cited benefits of the warden system include a potentially more harmonious relationship with Council; however, the opposite can also be said when more than one councillor or faction of councillors vies for warden, and conflict is created.

Commonly cited benefits of the mayoral system include the mayor being the only elected official who is responsible to all the electors of the municipality, rather than to one district and is a more directly democratic means of selecting a municipality's chief magistrate. Potential drawbacks of the mayoral system include the mayor and Council being oppositional due to conflicting priorities.

If Council decides to switch to a mayoral system, they cannot decide to return to the warden system.

If Council so wishes, a switch to a mayoral system must be decided no less than 9 months prior to the next election in October 2024.

Jurisdictional Scan

Municipality	Number of Districts/Councillors	Style of Leadership	Switch to Mayor occurred since 2014 Polling District Review
District of East Hants	11	Warden	
Kings County	9	Mayor	Yes
Region of West Hants	11	Mayor	Yes
Colchester County	11	Mayor	
District of Lunenburg	10	Mayor	
Cumberland County	8	Mayor	Yes
Annapolis County	11	Warden	
Region of Queens	7	Mayor	
Pictou County	12	Warden	
District of Chester	7	Warden	

Options

Option 1 - Council decides not to seek public input and makes the decision to move to a mayoral system now.

Option 2 - Council decides not to seek public input and makes the decision to keep the warden system now.

Option 3 - As part of the polling district review public consultation sessions, staff conducts a public education session and consultation on the issue of “Mayor V. Warden,” that would ensure citizens are knowledgeable of the differences between the two forms of governance and would allow Council to gauge citizens’ appetite for each system prior to making a decision.

Conclusion

Staff have provided additional information on a mayoral vs warden system of leadership, provided 3 options and are now looking for direction from Council on whether the issue should be included in the 2022 polling district review public consultation sessions.

Recommendation

Provide direction to staff whether to include mayor vs warden as part of the 2022 polling district review.