

REPORT

Legislative Services

To: Mayor Johnstone and Members of Council
Date: February 24, 2025

From: Hanieh Berg
Corporate Officer
File: 05.1035.10

Item #: 2025-54

Subject: **Response to Referral: Costs and Logistical Needs to Convene Additional Council Meetings at Queensborough Community Centre**

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. *THAT the report titled “Response to Referral: Costs and Logistical Needs to Convene Additional Regular Council Meetings at Queensborough Community Centre” from the Corporate Officer, dated February 24, 2025, be received for information.*
 2. *THAT the April 7, 2025 Regular Council meeting be held at Queensborough Community Centre.*
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PURPOSE

To report back on the costs associated with holding additional Regular Council meetings at Queensborough Community Centre and to seek Council’s approval to hold the April 7, 2025 Regular Council meeting at Queensborough Community Centre.

BACKGROUND

At the Regular Council meeting of November 18, 2024, Council adopted the following resolution:

THAT the September 15, 2025 Regular Council meeting be held at the Queensborough Community Centre and that staff report back regarding the costs and logistical needs to holding additional Regular Council meetings in Queensborough.

This report responds to the latter part of the aforementioned resolution and recommends that an additional meeting be held in Queensborough.

DISCUSSION

Since 2013, New Westminster City Council has held a Regular Council meeting in Queensborough to provide residents an opportunity to attend and appear before City Council in the convenience of their neighbourhood, without the need to cross the Fraser River. However, there are a number of technological and logistical needs that make hosting Council meetings offsite challenging.

Venue

Queensborough Community Centre (QCC) has been utilized to host Regular Council meetings outside City Hall and is the preferred venue as a number of operational and financial efficiencies may be achieved with using a City-owned facility. Moreover, it is a well utilized and familiar space for residents and offers ample parking for visitors.

Council meetings held at QCC have been held in Multipurpose Room 1 as this room lends itself best for various information technology needs. Legislative Services works closely with Recreation staff to ensure minimal disruptions to scheduled programs at QCC and when necessary, programs are relocated.

Audio-Visual Needs and Meeting Room Configuration

The audio and visual system in the Council Chamber is complex and there are a number of features that cannot be easily duplicated when hosting Council meetings outside the Council Chamber. Microphones, video cameras, as well as monitors to display various feeds are all brought in by the contractor to facilitate meeting proceedings, including hybrid technologies to allow for a livestream of the meeting and virtual participation by Council members and the public. Although these features support the successful conduct of meetings, their absence may be minor in nature given that Council meetings outside the Council Chamber are not frequent. If Council wished to see additional meetings held offsite, staff would have to report back with a more permanent solution to ensure the proper conduct of Council meetings beyond the Council Chamber. In the interim, staff have utilized an external contractor to facilitate the basic conduct of Council meetings at QCC as there is no in-house expertise in audio-visual technology.

In addition to audio and visual needs, the room is configured as best as possible to mimic the setup of the Council Chamber, whereby Council members are seated together with senior staff adjacent to Council. The room is further arranged to include audience seating as well as a podium for public delegations.

Operational Adjustments

As Council's secretariat, Legislative Services supports the operations and functions of City Council. In order to ensure the smooth conduct of an offsite Council meeting, staff in both the Legislative Services and Information Technology divisions prepare and plan several weeks in advance of the scheduled meeting.

To support and further advance open governance and accessibility of Council's legislative process, staff recommend that the April 7, 2025 Regular Council meeting be relocated to Queensborough Community Centre. In anticipation of Council's consideration of this matter,

staff have made arrangements with both Information Technology and Recreation staff to ensure adequate staff coverage as well as to ensure that the proposed date does not have significant impacts on programming at QCC.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None. The addition of hosting a second Regular Council meeting in Queensborough is anticipated to cost approximately \$10,000 for contracted audio and visual services; these costs may be absorbed in Legislative Services' annual operating budget. For clarity, this does not account for Legislative Services, Information Technology or Recreation staff time as this work can be accommodated as part of daily departmental operations.

NEXT STEPS

Subject to Council-approval, staff will update the 2025 Council Meeting Schedule, approved at the November 18, 2024 Council meeting, to reflect that the April 7, 2025 meeting will be held in Queensborough.

CONCLUSION

This report responds to Council's referral regarding the costs and logistical needs to holding additional Regular Council meetings in Queensborough. It is recommended that the April 7, 2025 Regular Council meeting be held at Queensborough Community Centre to further promote the principles of open government and accessibility to Council.

APPROVALS

This report was prepared by:
Hanieh Berg, Corporate Officer

This report was reviewed by:
Paul Taylor, Senior Manager, Information Technology
Corrine Garrett, Deputy Director, Recreation Services and Facilities

This report was approved by:
Lisa Spitale, Chief Administrative Officer