

PURPOSE

This Policy aims to improve accessibility and community participation in relation to decision making processes. It is predicted that live streaming Council Meetings on Council's website will provide more flexible and convenient access of Council debate and decisions to a wider audience.

Live streaming Council Meetings also eliminates geographic and time barriers which may prevent the public from attending meetings in person; thereby resulting in greater community confidence in the integrity and accountability of the decision-making process. The Live Streaming of Council Meetings Policy provides the policy direction and guidelines for Councillors, Staff and the community.

This Council Policy reflects Council's commitment to transparent and accessible decision-making processes, with the introduction of live streaming of Regular and Special Meetings of Council. Any parts of Council's Meetings that are closed to members of the public under Section 239 of the Municipal Act are regarded as confidential and will not be recorded.

SCOPE

This Policy applies to:

- Regular and Special Meetings of Council;
- Regular and Special Meetings of Committees
- Councillors and Officers of Blind River Council; and
- Members of the public, both as visitors in the gallery and when invited to speak in the Meeting.

DEFINITIONS

Closed Section of a Council Meeting - A meeting of the council which has been closed to members of the public under Section 239 of the Municipal Act

Chair - the person who chairs a meeting of the Council or Committee.

Defamation - Intentional false communication which damages the reputation of another individual.

Streaming (Webcasting) The process of delivering multimedia content via the internet, in audio and/or video format from a single content source to multiple listeners/viewers.

Controls Any process, policy, device, practice or other action which impacts on the consequence or likelihood of a particular risk occurring, that is currently in place.

POLICY CONTENT:

Regular and Special Meetings held in the Blind River Council Chamber will be streamed

live, on the Town of Blind River website in accordance with this Policy and will be able to be accessed from Council's website: www.blindriver.ca.

Any parts of Council's Meetings that are closed to members of the public under Section 239 of the Municipal Act are regarded as confidential and will not be recorded.

The Chair and/or the CAO/Clerk (or designate) have the discretion and authority at any time to direct the termination or interruption of live streaming. Such direction will only be given in exceptional circumstances where deemed relevant. Circumstances may include instances where the content of debate is considered misleading, defamatory or potentially inappropriate to be published.

Council will make every effort to ensure that live streaming is available, it takes no responsibility for, and cannot be held liable for technical issues beyond its control. Technical issues may include, but are not limited to, the availability of the internet connection, device failure or malfunction, unavailability of social media platforms or power outages.

The official record of all Council Meetings shall be the written minutes in accordance with the Municipal Act Section 239(1). The live stream file will be archived to the Municipality's eScribe account. Files will be hosted on the Municipality's website during the current year and for one year thereafter.

Video files from live streaming on the internet are part of the public realm and as such, are subject to alteration by a member of the public with no municipal control over such alterations. The Municipality assumes no liability associated with any alterations that may be made by a member of the public on the internet.

Publication of Notices – Informing Attendees

It is not the intention of live streaming to capture those attending the Meeting in the gallery, however this may occur due to camera angles and seating arrangements. By attending the public meeting, attendees are consenting to their image, voice or comments being recorded.

There will be a number of notices informing attendees that live streaming will be taking place. At the commencement of each Meeting, the Chair will read a statement included in the Council Agenda notifying those present that the Meeting will be live streamed on the internet and that a link to the Video can be found on the Council's website. [Attachment 1]

Signage communicating a similar message will be visibly displayed in the foyer of the Municipal Council Chambers. [Attachment 2]

Notice will also be published on Council's website. [Attachment 3]

Public Interaction in Council Meetings

Public Forum

Council's Code of Meeting Practice sets out the requirements for Public Forum guidelines with regards to a Council Meeting.

Any attendee who is invited to speak will be recorded and their voice and image will form part of the live stream.

Should an attendee invited to speak not wish to be recorded, they are required to make this request known to Council staff prior to the meeting commencing.

This request can be made either by emailing the Clerk a minimum of two hours prior to the Meeting or in person no later than 30 minutes prior to the meeting.

Presentation of Awards / Public Acknowledgements

Council’s Code of Meeting Practice sets out the expected behaviours for participation in Council Meetings. Any attendee who is invited to make or receive a presentation or acknowledgement from Council will be recorded and their voice and image will form part of the live stream. In circumstances where time permits, correspondence to the attendee shall be made to include the public notice information that Council undertakes live streaming of its Council Meetings. (Attachment 2]

POLICY COMMUNICATION:

The Clerk will be responsible for:

- Communicating the relevant public notices in Attachments 1, 2 and 3, to be included in:
 - Public Notice in the Council Agenda
 - Public Notice Signage at the Meeting
 - Public Notice on Council’s Website
- Publishing Council Meeting live stream recording links, to Council’s website.
- Including a copy of the recording in Council’s Record Management System and undertaking relevant archiving and destruction procedures.

The Clerk’s Department will be responsible for:

- Setting up, positioning and testing the video equipment for each Council Meeting.
- Provide ongoing support to ensure the live stream is operational for each Meeting.
- Servicing equipment.

POLICY REVIEW:

This policy will be reviewed once per Council Term or more often as needed.

COMPLIANCE

In cases of policy violation, the Municipality may investigate and determine appropriate corrective action.

ADOPTION / REVISION HISTORY

Approval Date:		Approved by:	
1.Revision Date:		Approved by:	
2.Revision Date:		Approved by:	
3.Revision Date:		Approved by:	

Attachment 1 – Public Notice to be included in the Council Agenda and to be read out by the meeting Chair

Live Streaming of Council or Committee Meetings

Today's Meeting is being streamed live on the Town of Blind River website. To those present in the gallery today, by attending a public meeting of the Council you are consenting to your image, voice and comments being recorded.

Anyone who is invited to speak will be recorded and their voice, image and comments will form part of the live stream.

The Chair and/or the CAO/Clerk have the discretion and authority at any time to direct the termination or interruption of live streaming. Such direction will only be given in exceptional circumstances where deemed relevant. Circumstances may include instances where the content of debate is considered misleading, defamatory or potentially inappropriate to be published.

Attendees are advised that they may be subject to legal action if their actions result in inappropriate and/or unacceptable behaviour and/or comments.

Thank you

Attachment 2 – Public Notice to be displayed as signage at the entrance of the Council Meeting

Today's Meeting is being streamed live on the Town of Blind River website.

This Council Meeting is being streamed live in accordance with Council's Live Streaming in Council Meetings Policy. A copy of the Policy can be viewed on the Municipal website.

By attending a public meeting of the Council, you are consenting to your image, voice and comments being recorded. Should you wish to attend and/or speak without being recorded you must make this request to Council staff prior to the meeting commencing. This request can be made either by emailing the Clerk a minimum of two hours prior to the meeting or in person no later than 30 minutes prior to the meeting.

The Chair and/or the CAO/Clerk (or designate) have the discretion and authority at any time to direct the termination or interruption of live streaming. Such direction will only be given in exceptional circumstances where deemed relevant. Circumstances may include instances where the content of debate is considered misleading, defamatory or potentially inappropriate to be published.

Whilst Council will make every effort to ensure that live streaming is available, it takes no responsibility for, and cannot be held liable for technical issues beyond its control. Technical issues may include but are not limited to the availability of the internet connection, device failure or malfunction, unavailability of social media platforms or power outages.

It should be noted that no protection is afforded to Councillors, Council employees or the public for comments made during Meetings which are subsequently challenged in a court of law and/or determined to be defamatory.

Attachment 3 - Public Notice to be included on Council's website

All public meetings of Blind River Council are being streamed live on the Town of Blind River website in accordance with Council's Live Streaming in Council Meetings Policy, which is available on the Town of Blind River website:

While meetings are open to the public, Council recognises that not everyone can attend in person. Livestreaming gives all community members the opportunity to watch and listen to meetings, either in real time or at their convenience, giving greater access to Council decision making and debate. By attending a public meeting of the Council attendees are consenting to their image, voice and comments being recorded. Should attendees wish to attend and/or speak without being recorded they must make this request to Council staff prior to the meeting commencing. This request can be made either by emailing the Clerk two hours prior to the meeting or in person no later than 30 minutes prior to the meeting.

The Chair and/or the CAO/Clerk (or designate) have the discretion and authority at any time to direct the termination or interruption of live streaming. Such direction will only be given in exceptional circumstances where deemed relevant. Circumstances may include instances where the content of debate is considered misleading, defamatory or potentially inappropriate to be published

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