

CITY OF PRINCE ALBERT

SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING

A G E N D A



MONDAY,
NOVEMBER 19, 2007

4:00 P.M.

COUNCIL CHAMBER
CITY HALL

1. **CALL TO ORDER:**

2. **PRAYER:**

3. **REPORTS OF ADMINISTRATION & COMMITTEES:**

- 3.1 Report from City Manager dated November 16, 2007, with respect to **Information Requests from Elected Officials (RPT#CM-07-17)**.

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4. **ADJOURNMENT:**



City of Prince Albert

REPORT APPROVAL FORM

Report Title:	Information Requests from Elected Officials (RPT#CM-07-17)	Date:	November 16, 2007
Prepared By:	Roman Martiuk, City Manager		
Prepared For:	City Council		
Approval Required By:		Report Type:	
		Routine <input type="checkbox"/> Substantive <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Financial <input type="checkbox"/>	
City Manager	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>R Martiuk</i>	
Director of Financial Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	
Director of Public Works	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	
Director of Community Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	
Director of Ec.Dev & Planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	
Director of Fire & Emerg. Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	
Director of Corporate Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	
City Solicitor	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	
Chief of Police	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	

Report Type ~ Definitions:

Routine	Matters that are routine in nature and/or follow existing Council policy require Department Head approval only
Substantive	Matters that require the concurrence of more than one department and/or are complex in nature and require the approval of the City Manager prior to being provided to elected officials
Financial	Matters that have substantial or unusual financial implications require the approval of the Director of Financial Services



City of Prince Albert

REPORT

Report Title: Information Requests from Elected Officials
(RPT#CM-07-17)

Date: November 16, 2007

Prepared By: Roman Martiuk, City Manager

Prepared For: City Council

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the Administration continue the practice of sharing information with all members of Council.
2. That Resolution 050. of the March 24, 2003 Committee of the Whole Council be rescinded.

JUSTIFICATION FOR INCAMERA:

N/A

BACKGROUND:

Resolution 050. of the March 24, 2003 Committee of the Whole Council meeting has been brought to my attention.

The motion reads as follows:

“That Administration treat every information request as confidential information and provide the response only to the person making the request, unless the person requesting the information specifically asks to share the information, or the information request was made at a City Council or Committee of the Whole Council meeting.”

DISCUSSION:

Administration was not aware of and had not been complying with this motion. Administration has been taking the approach that in an open and transparent governance process, information should be shared. It is believed that meetings are more productive if all members of Council possess information rather than a single Councillor possessing additional information unknown to all Councillors and Administrators.

As a practical illustration of this approach, City Administration was asked numerous questions with respect to the Budget in Retreats, Council meetings and one on one. Except for verbal explanation, such questions did not result in individual responses to a single member of Council. Typically, reports/schedules were amended or additional schedules provided such that all members of Council had the benefit of the additional data or analysis.

Recently, a Council member as a result of reviewing Accounts Lists on a Public Council Agenda, asked for the source documents for a number of transactions. The City Manager was asked to review the matter. As information dealt with a matter on the Council Agenda and in an effort to maintain transparency, I directed that this information be shared with all members of Council contrary to the motion above.

An opinion was advanced that the above motion means that Department Heads do not report to the City Manager for the purposes of information requests and that they are effectively barred from disclosing the nature of the inquiry to Council members or other Administrators. In the writer's opinion, this is a totally inappropriate view point. Often an inquiry identifies an error, omission or a line of questioning that will be pursued in an upcoming Council meeting. Sharing this information is essential in ensuring that appropriate preparation occurs so that inquiries can be answered intelligently at Council meetings.

A further concern was advanced that the Councillor is being treated unfairly and that Mayor's requests are not reported in the same fashion. Recognizing that the role of the Mayor is somewhat different than a member of Council, Administration has tried to apply the same philosophy to the Mayor's requests. Matters initiated by the Mayor often resulted in reports, with those reports being shared with Council through the normal Council Process. A sample review of requests in June of 2007 indicate the following statistics:

Request Type	Disposition	Number
Requests with respect to the timing and scheduling of Neat and Clean Projects, Public Works and Community Services Work or Council Reports.	Not viewed as material to Council.	30
Requests of City Manager or Department Heads to discuss/explain policy or brief Mayor.	Did not typically result in documentation. Any policy changes arising reported to Council via normal reports.	13
Requests for existing documents already in Public domain.	Viewed as incidental. Already in Public domain.	3
Requests resulting directly in a report to Council or media release.	Shared with all Councillors.	5
Request for water arrears information.	May have been of interest to members of Council. Was not disclosed.	1

A related procedure is the Inquiry process. In 2006, the Inquiry was amended to provide for responses by way of a Council Report or by way of a direct communication to the member of Council.

The 2006 Report states:

“However, if during the investigation of any matter marked response to the member, Administration is of the opinion the information would be of interest to all of Council, a report would be prepared.”

OPTIONS:

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

PUBLIC NOTICE/COMMUNICATIONS:

ATTACHMENTS:

- Motion 050. dated March 24, 2003.
- Report from A. McKay, City Manager, dated March 12, 2003, regarding Information Requests from Elected Officials.

CONCLUSION:

The administration has been operating contrary to Resolution 050. dated March 24, 2003. It is the writer's considered opinion that the Resolution does not reflect the principles of open and transparent municipal governance and should be rescinded.

Respectfully Submitted,



Roman Martiuk
City Manager

CONFIDENTIAL

11. Memo from City Manager dated March 12, 2003, with respect to Information Requests from Elected Officials.

050. Moved by Councillor A. Lindberg, AND RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

That the Memo from City Manager dated March 12, 2003, with respect to Information Requests from Elected Officials be received; and, that the following recommendation of the City Manager, as amended, be approved:

That Administration treat every information request as confidential information and provide the response only to the person making the request, unless the person requesting the information specifically asks to share the information, or the information request was made at a City Council or Committee of the Whole Council meeting.

INCAMERA – COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE COUNCIL – MARCH 24, 2003

Memo

CONFIDENTIAL

TO: <i>Committee of the Whole</i>	
CITY CLERK & DIRECTOR OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES	
MAR 19 2003	
<input type="checkbox"/> Report & Return	<input type="checkbox"/> File <i>[Signature]</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Attend to This	<input type="checkbox"/>

DATE: March 12, 2003

TO: Committee of the Whole Council

FROM: City Manager

RE: INFORMATION REQUESTS FROM ELECTED OFFICIALS

BACKGROUND:

Members of Council often ask for information from administration. Some of those requests can be simple and easy to provide while other requests require substantial time to accommodate.

We have provided this information in a variety of ways over the years. At one time, we provided the information with an accompanying estimate of the staff costs to do the work. Information has been provided to the Elected Officials verbally, by email or by letter. Some of the information has been provided only to the person asking for information, while at other times, the response has been included in the "Information Only" section of City Council agendas.

DISCUSSION/JUSTIFICATION:

I have been asked by Councillor Atkinson to ensure there is some consistency in the manner in which this information is provided. That is a fair request and I have examined ways of providing information to Members of Council in a fair and consistent manner. The options provided should give Council some choice in how they want the information distributed.

OPTIONS/IMPLICATIONS:

1. We can treat every information request as non-confidential information and include it in the "Information Only" portion of the City Council agenda. This would be substantial work for those questions that can be easily answered and would needlessly tax our resources. It is also a bother for those members of Council who have no interest in reading the requests of others.

2. We can treat every information request as confidential information and provide the response only to the person making the request, unless the person requesting the information specifically asks to share the information.
3. We can rely on the City Manager's discretion to determine which of the requests should be shared with other members of Council. This can be viewed by some as subjective.

Bear in mind that the City Manager will determine if any request is of a type or magnitude that requires Council's direction.

COMMUNICATIONS/ATTACHMENTS:

None.

CONCLUSIONS:

I believe that Option 2 provides the most reasonable process to deal with information requests from Members of Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Members of Council approve Option 2 described above as the process to be used when Members of Council request information from administration.



A. F. McKay, P. Eng.
CITY MANAGER