



# TOWN OF FAIRFAX

## STAFF REPORT

### June 2, 2021

**TO:** Mayor and Town Council

**FROM:** Garrett Toy, Town Manager

**SUBJECT:** Discuss/consider report on data collected to evaluate the 6-month pilot program of 2 Council meetings per month; consider proposed schedule for Special Council meetings thru December 2021; and provide direction to staff

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

Discuss/consider report, consider special meeting schedule, and direct staff as appropriate.

### **BACKGROUND**

During its May 15, 2020, Budget Workshop, the Council discussed the concept of holding two regular Council meetings per month. Public comment was received, and the item was discussed briefly at meetings on June 17<sup>th</sup>, July 1<sup>st</sup>, and September 2<sup>nd</sup>.

At a special meeting on October 28<sup>th</sup>, after more discussion and public comment, the Council reached consensus to pilot a program to schedule one special meeting per month in addition to the regular meeting for a period of six months and to evaluate the results in month 7. The Council's primary objective for holding two meetings per month was to get to agenda items earlier in the evening to maximize both Council and public participation. Another objective was to shorten the duration of each meeting.

On November 4, 2020, the Council scheduled the 6 special meetings on the third Wednesday of the month beginning with November 18, 2020 and ending with May 21, 2021, except for January 2021 (for logistical considerations due to the winter furlough).

On December 16, 2020, the Council directed staff to collect data to allow the Council to evaluate the effectiveness of the two meetings per month structure.

### **DISCUSSION**

Specifically, we collected the following data to evaluate the 6-month pilot program:

- a) Start and end time of each meeting
- b) Meeting Length
- c) Number of Open Time speakers and total time
- d) Time spent on Meeting preliminaries (Land Acknowledgment, Protocols, Announcements)
- e) Number of Agenda Items and amount of time spent on each matter
  - i. Number of Consent items
  - ii. Number of Public Hearing and Regular agenda items
  - iii. Number of items pulled from consent and the time spent discussing
  - iv. Number of items discussed and continued to another meeting
  - v. Number of items not discussed and continued to another meeting

- f) Number of public comments and amount of time spent on public comments for all agenda items not including Open Time or Meeting Preliminaries.

The key data is summarized as follows:

|  |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| Average length of Council meetings:                | 340 minutes (5 hours, 40 minutes) |
| Average length of Open Time:                       | 30 minutes                        |
| Average length of "Preliminaries":                 | 14 minutes                        |
| Average length of public comments on agenda items: | 75 minutes (1 hour, 15 minutes)   |

We found that Regular and Special Council meetings take the same amount of time per meeting. The difference is that Special meetings do not have Open Time and preliminaries and the meetings start earlier in the evening.

Of the average of 340 minutes (5 hrs. 40 min.) per Regular meeting, Preliminaries, Open Time, and Public Comment on items constitute approximately 120 minutes or 2 hours. This would imply that Council deliberations and staff/other presentations represent 220 minutes (3 hours, 40 min) of the remaining time. For special meetings, Council deliberations and staff presentations represent a larger portion of the meeting time (almost 5 hours) because there is no Open Time or Preliminaries. In essence, the Council is spending twice as much time to discuss items each month as compared to one meeting per month.

Staff will provide more analysis at the Council meeting, including the impacts on staff to prepare Council agendas twice a month. However, it is clear there is a need for Special Council meetings. It should be noted that even with a Special meeting every month, the Council still continued a total of 19 agenda items, without any Council discussion, to the next Council meeting.

Staff recommends the Council continue with Special meetings (third Wednesday of the Month), but with a modified schedule as follows thru the end of year:

June 16

July/August- No special meetings to provide for a summer break for the Council, staff, and attendees. Many communities that have 2 meeting per month do provide for a summer break.

September 15

October 20

November- No meeting because the week before Thanksgiving, staff is preparing the agenda packet for the December 1<sup>st</sup> Council meeting.

December 15

Please note the Council would continue to hold its regular meeting the first Wednesday of every month. Also, the Council would approve a Special Meeting Schedule for every six months period.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

None at this time.

**ATTACHMENT**

Meeting Stats

**MEETING STATISTICS**  
**For the Period from November 4, 2020 through May 27, 2021**

There were 16 separate dates on which Council meetings held in the 6-month period.

Number of **Regular Meetings**: 7

1. Nov 4
2. Dec 2
3. Jan 20, 2021
4. Feb 3, 2021
5. Mar 3, 2021
6. April 7
7. May 5

Number of **Monthly Special Meetings** for the pilot: 6

1. Nov 18
2. Dec 16
3. Feb 17
4. Mar 17
5. April 21
6. May 27

**Number of special meetings in addition to the monthly special meetings**: 3

1. Jan 12 (closed session)
2. Feb 6 (listening session)
3. March 26 (annual retreat)

**End times of regular and monthly special meetings**

| <b>End Time</b> | <b>Monthly Regular (7)*</b>    | <b>Monthly Special (5)*</b>  |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|--|
| 10 – 11:00      | 0                              | 1  |
| 11 – 11:59      | 3                              | 2  |
| 12 – 12:59 am   | 2                              | 2  |
| 1 – 1:59 am     | 2                              | 0  |
|                 | *Includes November through May | *Does not include May 27 (daytime meeting) or January (no special meeting) |

**Average** end time of regular meetings: **12:25 am**

**Average** end time of special meetings: **11:36 pm**

Note: meeting start times vary (see chart on next page)

**Average length of regular meetings**: **5 hrs 40 minutes**

**Average length of monthly special meetings**: **5 hours 40 minutes**

**Combined average amount of meeting time per month**: **10 hours 20 minutes**

Note: this does not include additional special meetings.

| Meeting date             | Start-end time  | Meeting length  | Total # of Agenda Items   | # of Regular & Public Hearing items | # of Consent items pulled and time spent disc. | # of Items continued after discussing (time spent) | # of Items continued without discussing |
|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Nov 4                    | 7-11:45         | 4 hrs 45 min    | 14                        | 6                                   | 0  | 1 (2 hrs)  | 1                                       |
| Nov 18 spec              | 6:30-10:30      | 4 hrs           | 3                         | 3                                   | n/a  | 0  | 0                                       |
| Dec 2                    | 7-11:45         | 4 hrs 45 min    | 16                        | 13                                  | 0  | 0  | 3                                       |
| Dec 16 spec              | 6:30-12:11      | 5 hrs 40 min    | 11                        |                                     | 0  | 0  | 3                                       |
| Jan 2021                 | 7-12:20         | 5 hrs 20 min    | 9                         | 5                                   | 0  | 0  | 2                                       |
| Feb 3                    | 6:40-11:40      | 5 hrs           | 15                        | 7                                   | 2 (45 min total)                               | 0  | 1                                       |
| Feb 6 spec               | 10 am -12 noon  | 2 hrs           | 1 (SFD Listening Session) | n/a                                 | n/a  | n/a  | n/a                                     |
| Feb 17 spec              | 6:30-12:30      | 6 hrs           | 9                         | 5                                   | 1 (1 hr 20 min)                                | 0  | 0                                       |
| Mar 3                    | 7-12:20         | 5 hrs 20 min    | 17                        | 5                                   | 0  | 0  | 3                                       |
| Mar 17 spec + Joint CAC  | 5:30-11:40      | 6 hrs 10 min    | 7                         | 4                                   | 0  | 1 (1hr 26 min)                                     | 1                                       |
| Mar 26 retreat           | 10:00am-4:40pm  | 6 hrs 40 min    | 1 (Annual Retreat)        | n/a                                 | n/a  | n/a  | n/a                                     |
| April 7                  | 6:40-1:20       | 6 hrs 40 min    | 25                        | 6                                   | 1 (22 min)                                     | 0  | 2                                       |
| April 21 spec + Joint PC | 5:30-11:05      | 5 hrs 35 min    | 6                         | 5                                   | 0  | 0  | 0                                       |
| May 5                    | 6:15 pm-1:45 am | 7 hrs 30 min    | 16                        | 5                                   | 0  | 0  | 2                                       |
| May 27 Budget ws         | 10 am – 4:45 pm | 6 hrs 30 min    | 1 (Budget workshop)       | n/a                                 | n/a  | n/a  | n/a                                     |
| <b>Pilot Pd. Totals</b>  |                 | <b>81 hours</b> |                           |                                     | 4 items (2 hrs 27 min)                         | 2 items (3 hrs 26 min)                             | 18 (without appeal: <b>11</b> )         |

**Average length of regular meetings: 5 hrs 40 minutes**

**Average length of monthly special meetings: 5 hours 40 minutes**

**Combined average amount of meeting time per month: 10 hours 20 minutes**

Note: this does not include additional special meetings.

**Open Time and Meeting Preliminaries** (Approval of Agenda, Land Acknowledgement, Meeting Protocols, Announcements).

Note: only regular meetings have Open Time.

| Regular Meeting | Open Time # of comments      | Open Time length of time      | Preliminaries Length of time | Prelim & Open Time combined time |
|-----------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Nov 4           | 7                            | 17                            | 9                            | 26                               |
| Dec 2           | 14                           | 45                            | 20                           | 65                               |
| Jan 2021        | 14                           | 50                            | 10                           | 60                               |
| Feb 3           | 10                           | 30                            | 10                           | 40                               |
| Mar 3           | 9                            | 35                            | 30                           | 65                               |
| Apr 7           | 9                            | 22                            | 10                           | 32                               |
| May 5           | 6                            | 13                            | 7                            | 20                               |
| <b>Totals:</b>  | <b>69 Open time comments</b> | <b>212 min (3 hrs 32 min)</b> | <b>96 min (1 hr 36 min)</b>  | <b>308 min (5 hrs 8 min)</b>     |

Average number of Open Time comments per meeting: **10 comments**

Average length of Open Time: **30 minutes**

Average length of Preliminaries: **14 minutes**

**Public Comments** (not including Open Time)

| Meeting (Reg & Spec) | # of Public comments | Total Time (minutes)     | Total # of Agenda items | # of Consent items                                    |
|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| Nov 4                | 25                   | 84                       | 14                      | 8/2/10  |
| Nov 18               | 17                   | 54                       | 3                       | 0   |
| Dec 2                | 31                   | 65                       | 16                      | 8/4/12  |
| Dec 16               | 44                   | 105                      | 11                      | 4/1/2   |
| Jan 2021             | 31                   | 69                       | 9                       | 4/1/2   |
| Feb 3                | 18                   | 41                       | 15                      | 8/1/2*  |
| Feb 6                | 32                   | 120                      | 1                       | 0   |
| Feb 17               | 39                   | 96                       | 9                       | 4/0/0*  |
| Mar 3                | 22                   | 78                       | 17                      | 12/1/3  |
| Mar 17               | 41                   | 99                       | 7                       | 3/5/8**   |
| Apr 7                | 39                   | 84                       | 25                      | 16/2/5**  |
| Apr 21               | 16                   | 35                       | 6                       | 1/2/5   |
| May 5                | 53                   | 146                      | 16                      | 11/0/0  |
| May 27               | 1                    | 3                        | n/a                     | No consent items                                      |
| <b>Totals:</b>       | <b>356 comments</b>  | <b>959 min. (18 hrs)</b> | <b>149 items</b>        | *2 items pulled for disc<br>** 1 item pulled for disc |

Average number of comments per meeting: **27 comments**

Average total public comment time (not incl. open time) per meeting: **1 hour 15 min**

Note: Feb. 6 and May 27 are not included because they were single issue meetings.