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**REPORT TO GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2017**

SUBJECT **Electronic Participation at Capital Regional District (CRD) Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Area Commission Meetings**

ISSUE

To consider expanding the ability of members of Southern Gulf Island Electoral Area Commissions to participate in meetings electronically.

BACKGROUND

The CRD Board Procedures Bylaw (Bylaw No. 3828) allows for a member of a CRD Commission to participate in a meeting by means of electronic or other communication facilities that enable the meeting's participants to hear each other and also enable the public to hear the member.

Section 29.1 of the Board Procedures Bylaw sets the following boundaries on electronic participation:

- The Chair (or person presiding) must not participate electronically
- No more than one person at a time may participate electronically
- The person wishing to participate electronically must advise the Corporate Officer at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting
- If more than one person wishes to participate electronically, the Corporate Officer makes a choice by drawing lots
- Electronic participation is only permitted where existing technical facilities are available at the location of the meeting to accommodate it

Section 29.1 was included in the Board Procedures Bylaw to facilitate the ability of CRD Local Service Area Committees and Commissions to conduct business by allowing a meeting to continue in the event that a member is not physically able to attend.

The Gulf Islands Electoral Area Director has indicated that notwithstanding section 29.1, it remains difficult for members of Commissions in the Electoral Area to attend meetings because members live on many different islands and islets and limited commercial ferry times make attending off-island meetings difficult. The travel difficulty does not arise where a Commission only serves part of the Electoral Area and the members are located on the same island (such as Pender Island).

A bylaw amendment (attached as Appendix A) has been drafted that would amend section 29.1 of the Board Procedures Bylaw to allow all members of Commissions that serve the entire Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Area to participate in meetings electronically, with the exception of the person presiding over the meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

Alternative 1

That the Governance Committee recommend to the Capital Regional District Board:

1. That Bylaw 4206, “Capital Regional District Board Procedures Bylaw, 2012, Amendment Bylaw No. 6, 2017,” be introduced and read a first and second time;
2. That Bylaw 4206, “Capital Regional District Board Procedures Bylaw, 2012, Amendment Bylaw No. 6, 2017,” be read a third time; and
3. That Bylaw 4206, “Capital Regional District Board Procedures Bylaw, 2012, Amendment Bylaw No. 6, 2017,” be adopted.

Alternative 2

That the matter be referred back to staff for additional information.

IMPLICATIONS

Geographical considerations unique to the Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Area make volunteer attendance at Commission meetings difficult and operate as a barrier to volunteer participation. The proposed amendment bylaw addresses the barrier by allowing all members of Commissions that serve the entire Electoral Area, with the exception of the person presiding at the meeting, to participate electronically. For clarity, the amendment would not apply to the members of bodies that serve less than the entire electoral area (such as Local Area Service Committees); the existing rule – one electronic participant per meeting – would continue to apply to members of these bodies.

There are no direct financial implications associated with the bylaw change. Electronic participation would only be permitted where existing technical facilities at the meeting location could accommodate it. Each meeting would still need to have a physical location, at which the person presiding would be present and members of the public could attend to hear the proceedings.

CONCLUSION

Members of Commissions that serve the entire Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Area face travel barriers that make it difficult for them to attend meetings located on other islands. The proposed bylaw amendment would allow for all members of these Commissions, with the exception of the presiding member, to participate in a Commission meeting by phone.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Governance Committee recommend to the Capital Regional District Board:

1. That Bylaw 4206, “Capital Regional District Board Procedures Bylaw, 2012, Amendment Bylaw No. 6, 2017,” be introduced and read a first and second time;
2. That Bylaw 4206, “Capital Regional District Board Procedures Bylaw, 2012, Amendment Bylaw No. 6, 2017,” be read a third time; and
3. That Bylaw 4206, “Capital Regional District Board Procedures Bylaw, 2012, Amendment Bylaw No. 6, 2017,” be adopted.

Submitted by:	Brent Reems, MA, LLB, Senior Manager Legislative & Corporate Services
Concurrence:	Larisa Hutcheson, P.Eng, Acting Chief Administrative Officer

Attachments: Appendix A – Bylaw 4206