

# **Governance, Finance & Civic Engagement Committee (NOTLRA)**

## **Meeting Minutes**

Date: Friday, March 27, 2026

Time: 2:00 PM – ~3:40 PM

Location: Board Room, Community Centre

Chair: Carolyn Polgrabia

Secretary: Stuart McCormack

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### **1. Call to Order, Attendance & Approvals (2:00 – 2:05 PM)**

- Meeting called to order at approximately 2:00 PM
- Attendance: Not formally recorded
- Approval of Agenda: Not formally recorded
- Approval of Minutes (March 13): Not formally recorded

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### **2. Election Countdown & Key Dates Recap (2:05 – 2:10 PM)**

- Committee reviewed key election timelines:
  - Approx. 147 days to nomination close
  - Approx. 213 days to election day
- Noted that Integrity Commissioner complaints must be filed prior to May 1

Outcome:

- General alignment on urgency of pre-election actions
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### **3. Municipal Restructuring in Niagara (2:10 – 2:40 PM)**

#### **Discussion**

- Review of Guiding Principles and Desired Outcomes
  - Submissions had been consolidated into six outcomes
  - Noted:
    - Regional Council motion returning governance discussions to lower-tier municipalities
    - CAOs expected to meet (no outcomes reported)
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#### **Council Composition (Embedded Discussion)**

##### **Process Vote**

- Committee Position:
  - Rejected the process as lacking transparency and clarity

##### **Substantive Vote (8 → 6)**

- Committee Position:
  - Rejected the outcome, citing:
    - Deficient process
    - Insufficient governance analysis
    - Election timing concerns

##### **Escalation Vote (Committee)**

- Committee voted to refer matter to the Board for consideration of:
  - Ombudsman complaint
  - Judicial review

### **Additional Evidence**

- Steve to provide screenshots to Stuart relating to text exchanges with Maria Mavridis
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### **Outcome / Actions**

- Consolidation of principles completed
  - Further refinement and circulation required
  - Matter to be elevated to Board with supporting materials
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## **4. Candidate Engagement Plan Update (2:40 – 2:45 PM)**

Lead: Betty Anne James

### **Discussion**

- Need to accelerate engagement in advance of nomination period

Outcome:

- No formal decisions recorded
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## **5. Candidate Questionnaire Refinement (2:45 – 3:10 PM)**

### **Discussion**

- Review of submitted questions
- Emphasis on:
  - 1–2 strong questions per category

- Comparability across candidates

## **Outcome**

- Further consolidation required
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## **6. Candidate Outreach Email / Letter (3:10 – 3:15 PM)**

Lead: Betty Anne James

## **Discussion**

- Outreach tied to questionnaire and engagement strategy

Outcome:

- Drafting to proceed pending alignment on questionnaire
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## **7. Workstream Updates & Assignments (3:15 – 3:20 PM)**

### **Municipal Finance / Infrastructure (Steve / Stuart)**

## **Discussion**

- Governance concerns identified:
  - Procedural by-law practices
  - Use of committee minutes to advance decisions
  - Lack of recorded votes

Example:

- Royal George Theatre demolition advanced without full debate
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## **Election Strategy Discussion**

### **Endorsement vs. Scorecard**

- Discussion regarding whether to:
  - Endorse candidates, or
  - Use a scorecard approach

Outcome:

- No decision taken
  - Referred to Board for direction
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## **Candidate Support / Capacity Building**

### **Discussion**

- Need for:
  - Educational tools
  - Mentorship support

### **Assignments**

- Betty Anne James:
  - Develop candidate educational tools
- Caroline Polgrabia:
  - Identify potential mentors, including:
    - Agriculture (example raised)

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## **8. Review of Action Items, Owners & Deadlines (3:20 – 3:25 PM)**

### **Key Actions Confirmed**

- Prepare Board briefing on:
  - Council process and outcome (8 → 6)
  - Committee rejection of both
  - Escalation options
- Prepare Board options memo:
  - Endorsement vs. scorecard
- Steve → Stuart:
  - Provide screenshots (Maria Mavridis text exchanges)
- Members:
  - Review guiding principles and provide feedback
- Liz Bennian:
  - Engagement and collaboration to be pursued
- Stuart Monitor:
  - CAO discussions
- Councillor survey:
  - Ownership to be confirmed

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## **9. Any Other Business (3:25 – 3:40 PM)**

### **Discussion**

- Strategic positioning:
  - Candidate landscape
  - Leadership considerations
  - Regional coordination

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## **10. Adjournment (~3:40 PM)**

- Meeting adjourned at approximately 3:40 PM

