



STAFF REPORT

Title: Policy No. 203-AD-16 - Flag Display Policy Amendment for Half-Masting Protocols

Meeting Date: May 17, 2022

Executive Summary:

At the March 22, 2022 regular meeting of Council, Council moved to amend the 2022 Operating Budget to fund and install two (2) additional flag poles in front of City Hall to fly the Treaty 6 and Métis Nation flag, in recognition of the region's Indigenous Peoples.

Further to the discussion of Council's regular meeting on February 8, 2022, and the Corporate Priorities Committee meetings on February 15 and March 15, 2022, Administration has prepared the following report for the Committee's feedback on potential amendments to the half-masting protocol of flags at municipal facilities with the addition of permanently flying Indigenous flags at City Hall.

Background:

Council passed Policy No. 203-AD-16, Flag Display Policy on November 22, 2016, to ensure that flags on City properties are displayed in a consistent and appropriate manner, and to recognize the symbolic importance of the displaying of flags. The policy outlines a standardized process around flag display and half-masting of flags.

At Council's regular meeting on February 8, 2022, Council passed an amendment to Bylaw No. 653-BD-19, Procedure Bylaw to incorporate an indigenous land acknowledgment at Council and Council Committee meetings. During the Corporate Priorities Committee meeting on February 15, 2022, Council was presented with discussion points to seek direction related to further expanding the application of the Indigenous land acknowledgment and also further opportunities to acknowledge Indigenous Peoples in the City of Cold Lake. At that time, discussion was raised around the potential opportunity to raise one or more Indigenous flags at municipal facilities. At the Corporate Priorities Committee meeting on March 15, 2022, the Committee was provided a detailed report outlining key considerations for deciding if and/or how the City of Cold Lake may display an Indigenous flag or flags, at one or more municipal facilities. At the March 22, 2022 regular meeting, Council moved to approve the purchase and installation of two (2) additional flag poles to be placed at City Hall. These poles are to permanently fly the Treaty 6 Flag and Métis Nation Flag.



At the Corporate Priorities Committee meeting on March 15, 2022, the Committee directed that steps be taken such that the Treaty 6 Flag, and Métis Nation Flag, be flown permanently in front of City Hall, in addition to the federal, provincial and municipal flags, in the following order (left to right):

1. National Flag of Canada,
2. Provincial Flag of Alberta,
3. Municipal Flag
4. Treaty 6 Flag
5. Métis Nation Flag
6. Community Flag pole

With the addition of the two (2) Indigenous flags in front of City Hall, Administration is asking the Committee for feedback on if and/or how the Committee wishes to honour additional dates of significance to Indigenous communities, by half-masting all or some of the flags to be flown at City Hall and/or other municipal facilities. These discussions will direct Administration to develop amendments to Policy No. 203-AD-16, Flag Display Policy which will be brought to Council's regular meeting.

The following questions are to be considered in regards to half-masting protocols:

1. What (if any) additional days of significance to Indigenous communities shall be recognized by half-masting flags?
2. When half-masting occurs, which flags will be lowered?
3. Will the flags chosen to be half-masted at all municipal facilities or only the flags flown in front of City Hall?

Current Protocol and Etiquette on Half-Masting

As outlined in the National Flag of Canada Etiquette by the Department of Canadian Heritage, the authority to determine the flag policy falls on the Municipality, though the national etiquette can be followed as a guideline;

Given the importance of the symbol of half-masting, the Government of Canada adopted the [Rules for half-masting the National Flag of Canada](#) to ensure a consistent approach to half-masting the National Flag at all federal buildings and installations. Similar rules are adopted by provinces, territories, municipalities and other organizations within their own jurisdictions.



They are not mandatory beyond the federal government, and other jurisdictions and organizations may have their own protocols. Individuals may also wish to fly the National Flag at half-mast to express mourning. In all cases, the Government of Canada's half-masting protocols may serve as guidelines when expressing a collective sense of sorrow during a time of mourning. [Half-masting and flag etiquette in times of mourning - Canada.ca](http://Canada.ca)

Currently, the Department of Canadian Heritage in its "Rules for half-masting the National Flag of Canada, recognizes the following "Special Days" where the flag is half-masted on all federal buildings and establishments in Canada, including the Peace Tower, from sunrise to sunset which are shown in the table below. The City's Policy No. 203-AD-16, Flag Display Policy intended to recognize all days that the Department of Canadian Heritage recognized. When the City's Policy No. 203-AD-16, Flag Display Policy was passed, there were only five (5) of the above days recognized. Since the City's policy was passed in 2016, two additional days have been recognized by the Department of Canadian Heritage (included in red in the table below):

Department of Canadian Heritage "Special days" for half mast*	City of Cold Lake Days of Half Mast Policy No. 203-AD-16 (section 4.11)
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. April 28, Day of Mourning for Persons Killed or Injured in the Workplace (Workers' Mourning Day);2. June 23, National Day of Remembrance for Victims of Terrorism;3. Last Sunday in September, Police and Peace Officers' National Memorial Day, unless Half-masting occurs near the place where a memorial is being observed, then Half-masting can occur according to the prescribed order of service;4. November 11, Remembrance Day, unless Half-masting occurs at the National War Memorial or a place where remembrance is being observed, then Half-masting can occur at 11:00 or according to the prescribed order of service;5. December 6, National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.6. Second Sunday in September, Firefighters' National Memorial Day, unless Half-masting occurs near the place where a memorial is being observed, then Half-masting can occur according to the prescribed order of service;7. September 30, National Day for Truth and Reconciliation;	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. April 28, Day of Mourning for Persons Killed or Injured in the Workplace (Workers' Mourning Day);2. June 23, National Day of Remembrance for Victims of Terrorism;3. Last Sunday in September, Police and Peace Officers' National Memorial Day, unless Half-masting occurs near the place where a memorial is being observed, then Half-masting can occur according to the prescribed order of service;4. November 11, Remembrance Day, unless Half-masting occurs at the National War Memorial or a place where remembrance is being observed, then Half-masting can occur at 11:00 or according to the prescribed order of service;5. December 6, National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.

In addition, the Flag will be Half-masted on the Peace Tower: **April 9, Vimy Ridge Day; and for the duration of the annual Memorial Service on Parliament Hill to remember deceased Parliamentarians.*



It is important to note that the National Flag must be flown at full-mast on Victoria Day and Canada Day, unless the flag is at half-mast for the death of: a British monarch; the Canadian prime minister; or the Governor General; as per the Department of Canadian Heritage. [Rules for half-masting the National Flag of Canada - Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/1134761.html)

What (if any) additional days of significance to Indigenous communities shall be recognized by half-masting flags?

Based on the information that Administration was able to gather, when indigenous flags were permanently raised at a municipal facility, there were instances where one or more of the flags were half-mast for additional days to recognize days of significance to indigenous communities. There were two main types of days recognized:

1. Half-masting for National Days of Awareness
2. Half-masting to honor the death of a significant indigenous leader

1. Half-Masting for National Days of Awareness

Of the Alberta municipalities researched, some half-mast one or more flags for the following days of awareness:

- **May 5**, National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit
- **September 30**, National Day of Truth and Reconciliation (as of June 3, 2021, officially recognized as a statutory holiday)
- **October 4**, Sisters in Spirit Day
- **November 8**, Indigenous Veterans Day
- **November 16**, Louis Riel Day

An attachment has been included to this report which provides greater information about the significance of each of the above days.

The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo recognizes all of the above days (except November 8, Indigenous Veterans Day) and half mast all flags on these days. The Department of Canadian Heritage does not officially include the November 8, Indigenous Veterans Day as a day to half mast flags, but it is included on their website as a day to half mast flags.

2. Half-Mast to Honour the Death of Significant Leaders

Several municipalities, including the Regional Municipal of Wood Buffalo, Calgary, Regina, and Strathcona County, lower flags to half-mast for solemn occasion(s) for the



community and/or specifically for the death of an Indigenous elected leader and/or Indigenous elder. Additional details related to these communities is included in an attachment to this report for reference.

Currently in the City of Cold Lake's Policy No. 203-AD-16, Flag Display Policy, section 4.12 establishes that flags may be half-mast for a death:

4.12 Flags flown on municipal flag poles may be flown at half-mast upon notification of death until sunset the day of the funeral or memorial services:

4.12.1 To commemorate the death of a member of the Canadian Forces whose residence was in Cold Lake, Alberta who has died in the line of duty;

4.12.2 To commemorate the death of a member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), Cold Lake Fire Services personnel, or ambulance service personnel whose residence was in Cold Lake, Alberta who has died in the line of duty.

At this time, the City of Cold Lake Flag Display Policy does not lower flags at Half Mast for the death of a member of Cold Lake City Council or Indigenous elected leaders or elders.

Additionally, section 4.13 of the Policy No. 203-AD-16, Flag Display Policy, provides discretion which could be utilized to recognize the death of a community leader:

4.13 Flags flown on municipal flag poles may be flown at half-mast as a result of a significant event or circumstance not already specified in this policy, at the discretion of the CAO. The CAO may deem it appropriate to specify whether flags flown on municipal flag poles shall be lowered to half-mast at all City locations or only specific City locations.

From an administrative perspective, it could be challenging to ensure that the City has the most up to date information to ensure that flags are being lowered to honour various deaths in an indigenous community (or any other community) and no commemoration is missed.

The community flag pole is also available to fly flags at the request of community members for various occasions (as approved by CAO).

Conclusion

Administration requests the Committee's feedback on the following options related to each of the questions identified in this report:



1. When half-masting occurs, which flags will be lowered?

Section 4.14 of City of Cold Lake, Flag Display Policy states: *All flags flown together at the same location shall be flown either at half-mast or full mast.* Options include:

- a) Keep the status quo; lower ALL flags at a location from sunrise to sunset any time half-masting occurs at an individual location.
- b) Amend policy to specify that one or more (but not all) flags will be at half-mast at a location (i.e. just municipal, Treaty 6, Métis Flag and community flag at City Hall be lowered for specific dates and/or a solemn occasion.)

2. Will the flags chosen be half-masted at all municipal facilities or only the flags flown in front of City Hall?

Currently sections 4.11, 4.12 and 4.13 of the City of Cold Lake, Flag Display Policy states: *...flags flown on municipal flag poles shall be flown at half-mast from sunrise to sunset...* Options include:

- a) Keep the policy as it is: When flags are lowered to half-mast, they are lowered at ALL municipal facilities from sunrise to sunset.
- b) Amend policy to specify half-masting and specific locations ONLY on specific dates (i.e. half-mast at City Hall ONLY for Oct. 4, Nov. 16 etc.)

3. What (if any) additional days of significance to Indigenous communities shall be recognized by half-masting facility flags? Options include:

- a) Add one or more of the following days to half mast flags:
 - May 5, National Day of Awareness for MMIWG2S
 - September 30, National Day of Truth and Reconciliation
 - October 4, Sisters in Spirit Day
 - November 8, Indigenous Veterans Day
 - November 16, Louis Riel Day
- b) Add half mast flags to honour the deaths of current Mayor, Council and Indigenous leaders of Treaty 6 territory and the Métis Nation.
- c) Add half mast of flags on September 30th, National Day of Truth and Reconciliation and Second Sunday in September, Firefighters' National Memorial Day to reflect the days recognized by the Department of Canadian Heritage.
- d) Add no additional days to half mast flags.



Alternatives:

The Committee may choose to:

1. Direct Administration to bring Policy No. 203-AD-16, Flag Display Policy with the amendments to the next regular meeting of Council for approval.
2. Direct Administration to bring further recommendations related to Policy No. 203-AD-16, Flag Display Policy to the Corporate Priorities Committee for further discussion.

Recommended Action:

That the Corporate Priorities Committee of Council direct Administration to bring Policy No. 203-AD-16, Flag Display Policy with the amendments, to the next regular meeting of Council being May 24, 2022 for approval.

Budget Implications (Yes or No):

No

Submitted by:

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