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## Memorandum

**PBLRC-C 6-2024**

**Subject:** Singing of National Anthem at Council Meetings

**Date:** June 25, 2024

**To:** Procedural By-law Review Committee

**From:** Ann-Marie Norio, Regional Clerk

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At its meeting held on May 27, 2024, the following Other Business item was raised:

Councillor Rigby enquired about when the singing of O' Canada at Regional Council meetings stopped. Ann-Marie Norio, Regional Clerk, advised that the singing of O' Canada ceased during the COVID pandemic as meetings were electronic which was not conducive to provide for the singing of O' Canada. The Clerk indicated this matter would be added for discussion at the next Committee meeting.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Members of Council would sing the National Anthem at each regular Council meeting. There was no musical accompaniment. A Member who was a strong singer, would start the anthem off with Council and staff joining in. Due to the pandemic and the move to electronic meetings, it was not feasible to sing the anthem. While pandemic restrictions eased and Councillors were allowed to return to the Council Chamber in a limited capacity, face coverings were still required and the practice of singing in public had become less commonplace due to the related public health concerns. As a result, the anthem has not been included as an agenda item since early 2020.

A jurisdictional scan of other Regions, some single-tier municipalities, and other larger municipalities demonstrates that most do not have the National Anthem as part of their Council agendas. In comparison, many of the local area municipalities do include it but have local talent in attendance to sing the anthem.

Should Committee recommend that the practice of singing the anthem be re-introduced, staff would recommend that an audio and/or video recording be used in order to eliminate the need to have a Member of Council start off the anthem. There would likely be associated costs with this course of action. If desired staff could provide additional information in that regard.

Respectfully submitted and signed by

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Ann-Marie Norio  
Regional Clerk