

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Town Implements Public Access to Committee Meetings

Portugal Cove St. Philip's, NL (January 7, 2024) – The Town of Portugal Cove–St. Philip's is pleased to announce the implementation of new meeting regulations, effective 1 January 2025, in accordance with the recently enacted *Towns and Local Service Districts Act*. These changes align with the Town's ongoing commitment to transparency and the goal of fostering an informed, engaged community.

Key Updates to Meeting Structure

1. Open Committee Meetings:

Residents are now welcome to attend all Committee meetings and observe discussions from the public gallery. Participants attending will follow parliamentary procedure, which means they are permitted to observe but must not engage while attending the meeting. This change offers residents a firsthand view of the decision-making process.

2. Regularly Scheduled Council Meetings:

Meetings will adhere to a recurring three-week schedule. Specific dates for the 2025 year have been adopted by Council and can be found here: <https://pcsp.civicweb.net/Portal/>

Why These Changes Matter

The new legislation represents a significant step toward greater openness and accountability in local governance. By allowing public attendance at Committee meetings, residents gain deeper insights into Town operations, thereby promoting trust and transparency.

"We believe these changes are a welcome addition to the spirit of openness and accessibility that municipalities across the province will embrace," said Mayor Carol McDonald. "By opening Committee meetings to the public and introducing Quarterly Town Halls, we're taking proactive steps to strengthen our connection with residents."

Additional details about potential impacts from changes to the *Towns and Local Service Districts Act* — including meeting schedules and Town Hall dates—can be found online. For general information requests please visit <https://pcsp.ca/contact/> or call 709-895-8000.

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Quarterly Town Halls

To further encourage engagement, the Town is transitioning from public after sessions to quarterly Town Halls. Unlike after sessions, these events will provide structured opportunities for residents to ask questions, receive detailed answers, and engage in meaningful dialogue about key issues and initiatives.

Benefits for Residents

- ◆ **Transparency:** Open meetings offer increased visibility into municipal decision-making.
- ◆ **Improved Communication:** Quarterly Town Halls ensure comprehensive, accurate responses to community questions and concerns.
- ◆ **Enhanced Engagement:** Dedicated time for public dialogue reinforces the Town's commitment to collaboration and resident input. Residents will still have the opportunity to engage with council upon request.

