



## New General Meeting Policy

### Approved *In-Principle*

#### **Background:**

General Meetings are usually a gathering of the members of an organization. Since the founding of the Squamish Nation in 1923 with the amalgamation of the several Squamish Indian Bands under Section 17 of the Indian Act, there have been different forms of ‘general meetings’. Elders say they were originally called ‘mass meetings’ then later called ‘general meetings’.

The Squamish Nation Council is a government exercising the right to self-determination by the Squamish People, and it is also a council exercising authorities of a Band Council under the authorities granted to Band Councils under the Indian Act. However, General Meetings are not required under any federal law concerning Indian Bands. If required, they are usually required through a code, by-law, or policy of the First Nation itself.

General Meetings in the Squamish Nation have never had written and formal rules or procedures. The rules were often ad-hoc -- meaning the rules were created over time and each rule was created for a specific purpose. There were no agreed-upon rules for General Meetings. There was no description of roles and responsibilities of those involved in the General Meeting, and there was no transparent process for debating and approving motions or resolutions at a General Meeting. The lack of clear rules led to confusion and challenged the usefulness of General Meetings.

The Governance Manual approved by Council in April 2016 did create some formal rules around the calling of the Annual General Assembly and “Membership Information Meetings.” The Annual General Assembly must occur on an annual basis no later than November 30 and include a presentation on the audited financial statements. “Membership Information Meetings” are called by Council or by a petition with signatures from 30% of eligible voters. For clarity purposes, “Membership Information Meetings” as described in the Council Governance Policy are not considered ‘General Meetings’ in this policy, but the Annual General Meetings are.

#### **The Objective of the General Meeting Policy:**

On May 22nd, 2018 Council approved a General Meeting Policy *in-principle* -- which means general idea or plan but not yet officially approved. Council would like to share this policy with you to review and then come to the Sunday, July 22nd, 2018 Special General Meeting to bring forward amendments to be considered by Membership or voice your support or opposition to this policy.



Policy is a tool created to address specific objectives. The objectives of this policy are:

- Create formal rules and procedures for General Meetings, so they can be successful.
- Define success of General Meetings as the consideration and debate of resolutions submitted by Membership.
- Address issues that in the past made General Meetings unsafe and unproductive.

A goal of this policy was to keep it brief, in plain language, and short to create success for their approval by Membership.

### **Summary of General Meeting Policy:**

The General Meeting Policy was written by Councilor Dustin Rivers and developed based on direct input by an ad-hoc and informal committee of Council consisting of Jennifer Campo, Kristen Rivers, Carla George, Brandon Darbyshire-Joseph, Orene Askew, Dustin Rivers and Jacob E. Lewis. Acting E.O.O/Liaison Monica Jacobs reviewed the policy. Feedback submitted by Nation member Michael Gonzales was also included.

The General Meeting policy is twelve sections that explain the rules and procedures related to that topic. The document is a concise policy with a total of ten pages, including the title page and table of contents. This policy was to be brief and simple and address the most critical questions.

### **Approval:**

The approval section requested that Council approve this policy *in-principle*, so it can be used to conduct the next General Meeting under these rules as a pilot.

Then the policy must be approved by Membership at the first General Meeting scheduled for July 22nd, 2018 as the first item in the 'special business' section of the agenda. Members would be invited to put forward amendments to the policy, and all amendments would have to be approved by Members in attendance.

The next part of this memo outlines the differences between the previous process for General Meetings and the new process for General Meetings.

Thank you.

Squamish Nation Council



# General Meeting Process

## Previous vs. New Comparison

Sec.	Previous (Unwritten) Process:	New General Meeting Process:
1	No clear definition on the roles and responsibilities or terms used in the General Meeting process.	A clear definition section on key terms used.
2	Doesn't exist.	A clear definition on the purpose of General Meetings.
3	Doesn't exist.	A clear definition on the role of the meeting chair.
3	Meeting chair is chosen by Membership.	Meeting chair is chosen by Membership.
3	Doesn't exist.	A clear definition on the role of the sergeant-at-arms.
3	Doesn't exist.	A clear definition on the role of Membership.
4	Minutes were verbatim (word for word) transcripts of the meeting discussion and debate.	Minutes are a record of all motions and resolutions deliberated or voted on.
4	Verbatim transcripts had to be approved by Membership at the next General Meeting.	Verbatim transcripts are still done but no longer requires approval by Membership. This is ensuring meetings are more productive and efficient.



5	Only one type of General Meeting and no clear rules on how one is called.	<p>There are two types of General Meetings:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Annual General Assembly that happens every year before November 30 and includes a presentation on the financial audited statements.</li> <li>2. Special General Meetings that can be called by Council or 10% of eligible voters writing to the Band Manager.</li> </ol>
5	General Meetings are audio recorded and transcribed.	General Meetings are audio recorded and transcribed, but live streaming must now be included.
5	No clear rules on calling point of order to ensure the rules of the meeting are being followed.	Members are given yellow signs with ‘point of order’ written on them to be raised when a member feels the meeting rules are not being followed. The meeting chair can then make a ruling if a point of order is called.
6	Quorum was said to be 110.	<p>Quorum is 10% of eligible voters to fair voice from a broad-section of Membership. As of May 2018, 10% would equal around 308 members.</p> <p>All resolutions would also require 10% of the eligible voters in order to pass.</p>
7	30-day notice is required before a General Meeting.	60-day notice is required before a General Meeting.



7	Resolutions can only be submitted at the meeting, not before.	Resolutions are to be submitted 30 days before a General Meeting.
7	No resolutions are sent out to Members for consideration at the upcoming General Meeting.	Resolutions submitted by members are sent out to Membership 15 days before a General Meeting with a reminder notice.
7	None.	Council must respond to Membership within 40 days of a resolution being approved.
8	There are no clear rules on how the agenda is created. The agenda is often created by Council, or at the General Meeting and approved at the General Meeting.	<p>The agenda is defined as two items: Regular Business and Special Business.</p> <p>Regular business is the activities that happen at every General Meeting such as calling the meeting to order, appointing the chair, accepting the previous meetings minutes, etc.</p> <p>Special business is the resolutions submitted by Membership.</p>
8	No clear style guide on how to write resolutions.	A template style guide is provided to help members wishing to write and submit a resolution.
9	One notice is sent out 30 days prior to a meeting.	Two notices are sent out prior to a General meeting. The first is sent out 60 days before a General Meeting and the second is sent out 15 days before a General Meeting.



10	No clear definition of what a ‘motion’ is or what a ‘resolution’ is or what they can be used for.	<p>Motions are defined as process for moving a meeting forward, such as a motion to approve the agenda, amend a resolution, or cease debate.</p> <p>Resolutions are defined as a decision on having action take place related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Recommending changes to specific Squamish Nation policy</li> <li>b) Issue a statement of support or opposition to a particular course of action</li> <li>c) Request a summary report on a particular subject</li> </ul>
11	Motion or resolution approval requires 50%+1 of those present.	Motion or resolution approval requires 50%+1 of those present.
11	<p>No clear process for how amendments to motions or resolutions can be made.</p> <p>“Friendly amendments” are often used where the mover and seconder are asked to agree to the amendment.</p>	<p>Amendments can be introduced by a member if supported by a second.</p> <p>Amendments can only be approved by Membership. Friendly amendments are no longer a part of the process to allow for Membership to decide on the amendments. Amendments are approved by 50%+1 of those in attendance.</p>
11	Voting is done by way of hand.	<p>Voting may be done by way of hand or by an electronic voting system to allow for a secret ballot.</p> <p>The electronic voting system must be secure, reliable, and accurate. If an electronic voting system is not possible, votes shall be done by way of raising of hands.</p>
11	No clear rules on how hand voting is counted.	Clear rules outline there must be two counts of the hand vote to ensure accuracy.



11	No clear rules on how to cease debate on a motion or resolution.	<p>If a super majority of Membership would like to move on to the next agenda item, a member can put forward a motion to ‘cease debate’.</p> <p>If 75% of the members in attendance agree with ceasing the debate on that particular motion, the debate closes and the vote on the motion takes place.</p> <p>This is standard practice in other General Meeting procedures.</p>
11	Approval at two General Meetings is needed to approve a resolution.	Approval at one General Meetings is needed to approve a resolution.
11	No clear rules on the powers of General Meeting resolutions.	<p>Resolutions cannot be acted upon by Council if it harms Council’s fiduciary obligations to the Squamish Membership or conflicts with a Squamish Nation Code or Law (such as the Membership Code or Election Code).</p> <p>This is to protect the collective interests of the Squamish Nation as a whole. For example, if 10% of eligible voters voted to sell the Nation’s land, that would be something that harms Council’s fiduciary obligations to the Squamish Membership.</p> <p>Another example is if 10% of eligible voters wanted to alter or change the Membership Code. This couldn’t happen because that code has its own requirements for amendments as approved by a larger number of Members.</p>
12	No clear rules on how to amend the General Meeting procedures.	The General Meeting Policy can be amendment by Membership through approval in a resolution at a General Meeting.

