

BRIEFING NOTE

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Governance Committee

DATE: September 28, 2026

SUBJECT: Board Meeting Process Policy (4-22)

☒ For Decision

☐ For Information

☐ Monitoring Report

Purpose:

To review and consider approval of proposed amendments to the Board Meeting Process Policy (4-22) to formally establish the format of the Board's annual meeting schedule.

Background:

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Board held quarterly meetings in person at the College's offices in downtown Toronto, with teleconference participation available when travel or scheduling constraints arose. During the pandemic, the Board transitioned to virtual meetings via Zoom, which improved accessibility, engagement, and participation while reducing travel and costs. In 2023, the Board adopted a hybrid model of two in-person and two virtual meetings annually to balance the benefits of in-person collaboration with the accessibility and cost savings of virtual participation.

At its March 2026 meeting, the Board discussed whether a fully virtual model would be more fiscally responsible and identified a need to formalize the required number of in-person meetings through policy. A survey was conducted to gather Board members' perspectives on preferred meeting formats; however, the results did not indicate a majority preference for any single model. A second survey was then conducted, asking members to choose between maintaining the current hybrid model and holding all four meetings in person. The results of the second Board survey indicated a preference to maintain the current model of two in-person meetings per year and two virtual.

The Finance Committee reviewed the survey results in May 2026 and recommended formalizing the hybrid model through policy. During the reflection period following the June Board meeting, the Board held an informal discussion and reached a consensus to proceed with formalizing this model into policy. The matter was subsequently referred to the Governance Committee.

For Consideration:

At its Q3 meeting, the Governance Committee reviewed the Board Meeting Process Policy and recommended amendments to establish an annual schedule of two in-person and two virtual Board meetings. As the policy already addresses the planning and conduct of Board meetings, the

committee determined that amending this existing policy was the most appropriate approach, rather than creating a separate standalone policy.

The proposed amended policy can be found at **Appendix A**.

The policy is currently scheduled for review every three years in accordance with the Board's policy review cycle. The Governance Committee recommends maintaining this schedule, as it provides a regular opportunity to reassess the Board's meeting format while supporting continuity, predictability and effective planning.

Public Interest Considerations:

Board meetings support the College's public interest mandate. The majority of Board members considered that the current hybrid meeting model appropriately balances cost, accessibility and effective collaboration.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Considerations:

Board and committee members have noted that fully in-person meetings can create barriers to participation. The current hybrid meeting model supports accessibility by balancing the benefits of in-person participation with the needs of members who are managing their College work alongside family, professional and other commitments.

Risk Management Considerations:

The majority of Board members considered that the hybrid meeting model appropriately balances the costs of in-person meetings and the responsible use of College resources with the benefits of collaboration, effective meetings, and team building.

Recommendations/Action Required:

The Governance Committee recommends that the Board approve the proposed amendments to the **Board Meeting Process Policy (4-22)**.

POLICY TYPE: GOVERNANCE PROCESS

4-22 Board Meeting Process Policy

PURPOSE

The College of Opticians of Ontario (COO) Board of Directors is committed to conducting its business in a manner that is transparent, organized, fair, and consistent with its mandate to regulate the opticianry profession in the public interest.

POLICY**Agendas**

1. Agendas for Board meetings will be prepared by the Registrar, CEO in collaboration with the Board Chair, and will be aligned with the Board's Annual Work Plan.
2. Directors or Appointed Committee Members who wish to request that an item be added to the agenda may bring the matter to the attention of the Board Chair and/or the Registrar, CEO at least 30 days prior to the scheduled meeting. In considering the request, the Board Chair and/or the Registrar, CEO will take the following factors into account:
 - a. Board meeting time/capacity.
 - b. Alignment with the Board's Annual Work Plan, strategic priorities and Policy Governance Manual.

Chairing Board Meetings

3. Board meetings will be chaired or co-chaired by a Meeting Chair, who may be the Chair of the Board or any other person selected by the Board to chair the meeting, in accordance with the By-laws. During the meeting, the Meeting Chair will directly, or through delegation to an appropriate co-chair or facilitator:
 - a. Read motions as required.
 - b. Keep a speakers list as required.
 - c. Preserve order, with reference to the Rules of Order set out in the by-laws.
 - d. Make efforts to ensure that all Directors are engaged and participating.

Meeting Guidelines

4. Public Board Meetings:
 - a. The Board will hold four regular public Board meetings each calendar year, consisting of two in-person meetings and two meetings conducted virtually. Additional public meetings may be held on an as-needed basis, and will generally be conducted virtually unless the Board directs otherwise.
 - ~~a-b.~~ These meetings are open to the public in accordance with the RHPA and are where the majority of Board business is conducted.
 - ~~b-c.~~ The Board will ensure that reasonable notice is provided to registrants, the public and the Minister of Board meetings in accordance with the *Health Professions Procedural Code*. Meeting dates and times will be posted on the College's website. Changes in the schedule will be posted on the College's website at least 48 hours prior to the scheduled meeting (where

possible).

~~e.d.~~ Appointed Committee Members will be invited to attend public Board meetings as guests/observers, meaning they may not provide comments or ask questions during the meeting, unless they have been invited to present to the Board in their capacity as chair or representative of a statutory or non-statutory committee of the College.

~~d.e.~~ ~~Where a public Board meeting is being held in-person, To ensure adequate space and preparation,~~ any other individuals wishing to attend ~~a public Board meeting~~ the meeting in-person shall advise the College in advance by phone or email, to ensure adequate space and preparation. It is recommended that, wherever possible, guests provide at least 48 hours' notice. Anyone who attends a public Board meeting without providing notice may be asked to leave at the request of the Chair if sufficient space is not available.

~~e.f.~~ Other individuals who attend a public Board meeting will have observer status, meaning that they may not provide comments or questions during the meetings. The Meeting Chair and/or the Board Chair may ask anyone who is disrupting the proceedings to leave and may prohibit such individual from attending future meetings.

~~f.g.~~ Meetings will include regular breaks, during which Directors will suspend all discussion of COO or Board business.

~~g.h.~~ Meeting materials for public Board meetings will be posted to the COO website in advance of meetings in accordance with the *Health Professions Procedural Code* and the Posting of Board Materials Policy, 4-23.

5. *In Camera* Board Meetings:

a. In camera meetings are closed to the public and will be held where the Board has made a motion to exclude the public in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Health Professions Procedural Code.

b. In deciding to go in camera, the Board will consider whether the need for confidentiality outweighs the desirability of adhering to the principle that Board meetings be open to the public.

c. In camera meetings will include Directors and the Registrar, CEO and may also include the Deputy Registrar and any other staff members or external advisors requested by the Board (e.g. legal, auditor, consultant). Appointed Committee Members will not be included in in camera sessions unless circumstances require their attendance in order to address a particular agenda item (e.g. as chair of a committee) and a motion is carried permitting such attendance. Such attendance will be limited to the portion of the in camera session where their presence is required.

d. No Board meetings will be held without the presence of any COO staff person unless the meeting is for the purpose of:

i. Voting to terminate the Registrar, CEO; or

ii. A discussion about Registrar, CEO performance that must be held on an emergency basis in between regularly scheduled annual performance evaluations held in accordance with the Registrar, CEO Performance Evaluation and Compensation Process Policy, 3-06. For the purpose of this policy, an emergency refers to a situation where a serious risk to the COO has been identified that requires immediate action to avoid irreparable harm to the COO or the public interest.

e. In the event that the Board holds a meeting without the presence of any COO staff, it shall retain appropriate external legal counsel to attend the meeting and keep a record of any discussion or votes.

f. The Board may order that materials relating to in camera sessions will not be published or

- broadcast, in accordance with the Health Professions Procedural Code.
- g. The Board may report on the topics covered during the in camera session at the next public Board meeting.

Board Meeting Minutes

6. Minutes will be taken and retained for all Board meetings and will serve as the official record of the decisions/motions, rationale and actions of the Board.
7. Minutes will include:
 - a. Details of the meeting, including the date, time, place, format (e.g. in person, teleconference, videoconference), Directors present, Directors absent, staff and guests present.
 - b. A record of any votes, motions and/or decisions made by the Board, including a record of the number of “yes”, “no” or “abstain” votes. All Directors who choose to abstain from a vote will provide a reason for the abstention, which will be recorded in the minutes.
 - c. The rationale for decisions made by the Board. For clarity, the minutes will not include details of deliberations, only the rationale for the eventual decision.
8. Draft minutes will be circulated to Directors as soon as possible (or within approximately 14 days) following the Board meeting for their review and feedback.
9. Drafts of Board meeting minutes will be placed on the agenda at the following Board meeting for validation and approval. Minutes from in camera sessions will be placed on the agenda of the following in camera Board meeting.
10. Minutes will not be considered official until they have been approved by a majority of Directors present and voting.
11. Minutes from in camera sessions will be marked “confidential” and will not be made available to the public.