



FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions



InCamera Meetings

You may have heard the term “InCamera” referenced in conversations about Regional Council discussions or municipal documents. This FAQ aims to provide more information about what InCamera meetings are, why they are used, and the legality of their use.

What are InCamera Meetings

As a general rule, discussions and decisions of Regional Council must be open and available to the public, and recorded in the official minutes of their meetings (which are also publically available). For example, there are rules specifying that Council’s cannot vote on the reading or adoption of a bylaw when the meeting is closed to the public. Council’s Procedure Bylaw also contains ‘rules’ about how NRRM Council meetings are structured and conducted.

However, there are circumstances where this general rule can/must be bypassed where the public is excluded from meetings to ensure functional governance. These closed meetings are called InCamera meetings. The ability for Council to hold these closed meetings is established by Provincial legislation, specifically the [Community Charter](#).

When and Why are InCamera Meetings Held

Regional Council cannot close a meeting to the public whenever they want to. Section 90 of the *Community Charter* sets out explicit instances where meetings may or must be closed. Common reasons for going InCamera include: protecting privacy on personnel matters, receiving and discussing legal advice, discussions involving confidential negotiations with senior governments and consideration of information that, if made public, may harm private business or industry’s interests. When in doubt, Council refers to their Corporate Officer as to whether or not a matter is discussed InCamera.

Legal Requirements and Public information

All InCamera meetings are authorized by Council by a resolution in a public meeting that clearly closes the meeting and references the relevant section of the *Community Charter* authorizing the closure. Even if a special InCamera meeting is scheduled, a short public meeting will be held prior to ensure that this resolution can be made and recorded in the minutes. Notice for meetings, including the meeting agendas, are posted [online](#) and in the Municipal Offices front entrance. You can even subscribe to be notified by email when agendas and minutes are posted at the [Northern Rockies CivicWeb Portal](#).

The confidentiality of InCamera information is very important, and it is a serious offense to break this confidentiality. The process of making InCamera information public requires a special resolution of Council called rise and report. Individual Council members, without a resolution to rise and report, are not legally able to share InCamera information.

Often after discussing a matter InCamera, Regional Council will rise and report their decision or even their entire discussion to the public meeting. This information is then included in the public meeting minutes.

For more information about InCamera meetings, the below resources provide some good additional details:

- [Local Government Department Open Meeting Info Page](#)
- [BC Ombudsperson’s Best Practices for Closed Meetings Report](#)
- [Community Charter, Section 90](#)