



POLICY

TITLE: Council Staff Relations Policy
NUMBER: COU-006
CATEGORY: Council
DATE: August 29, 2018
REFERENCES: By-law 2018-78
Section 270 (1) (2.1) of the Municipal Act, 2001

1.0 Policy Statement

The Municipality of Centre Hastings will promote a respectful, tolerant and harassment-free relationship and workplace between members of Council and the officers and employees of the corporation.

2.0 Legislative Authority

Section 270 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, as revised by Bill 68 requires Council to adopt and maintain a policy with respect to the relationship between members of Council and the officers and employees of the corporation. The Council-Staff Relations Policy identifies the legislation, policies, procedures and practices that the Municipality complies with in order to promote a respectful relationship between members of Council and the officers and employees of the Municipality of Centre Hastings.

Members of Council and Staff Shall:

- Demonstrate a commitment to accountability and transparency among Council and staff and with the general public;
- Demonstrate leadership by making sound decisions based on knowledge areas of expertise and sound judgment;
- Demonstrate a high degree of confidentiality;
- Enhance public education about the political process by providing context and process information about decision making;
- Uphold the decisions of Council, regardless of personal opinion or belief, and commit to the implementation of those decisions;
- Refrain from publically criticizing members of Council or staff; and
- Seek to achieve a team approach in an environment of mutual respect and trust, with acceptance of the different roles in achieving Council's objectives.

Respect for Time

Priorities and timelines must be respected by all members of Council and staff. It is expected that all participants will be well prepared for meetings and will prioritize appropriately, according to direction given by management or Council. Staff will spend time on significant projects only once direction is given by Council to do so.

It is expected that appointments will be made for meetings between staff members and Council members in order to ensure that all parties are available and prepared for the discussion.

Role of Members of Council

- Seek to advance the common good of the community which they serve;
- Truly, faithfully and impartially exercise the office to the best of their knowledge and ability;
- Govern and provide political direction;
- Act in a way that enhances public confidence in local government;

- Set strategic objectives and goals for the organization based on consultation with staff and community members;
- Give direction to staff through resolution by Council as a whole;
- Govern the management of the organization through the CAO;
- Respond to concerns from the public and refer concerns to staff members through the mayor and CAO for action – elected officials do not have an administrative managerial role in the day to day business of the organization;
- Adhere to the Code of Conduct for Members of Council and Local Boards Policy (COU-004) and the oath of office sworn at the inaugural meeting of each term of council; and
- Refrain from behaviour that could constitute an act of disorder or misbehaviour; is an abuse of power or otherwise amounts to discrimination, intimidation, harassment, verbal abuse, or the adverse treatment of others; or prejudices the provision of a service or services to the community.

It Is Expected That Council Members Will:

- Acknowledge that only Council as a whole has the capacity to direct staff members to carry out specific tasks or functions;
- Refrain from using their position to improperly influence members of staff in their duties or functions or to gain an advantage for themselves or others;
- Refrain from publicly criticizing individual members of staff in a way that casts aspersions on their professional competence and credibility;
- Request the CAO's input prior to making important policy decisions;
- Direct questions or concerns regarding departmental activities to the Mayor and/or CAO or use the Request for Service Form ADM-001 Schedule A or Complaint Form ADM-001 Schedule B;
- Discuss issues with the CAO and advise staff of questions that may arise prior to Committee or Council meetings whenever possible;
- Understand that their discussions with staff may be communicated and that a member of Council cannot compel a member of staff to confidentiality;
- Consult with the CAO prior to making commitments to agencies, groups, citizens, or likewise.

Intergovernmental Communications

The Mayor is the spokesperson for Council regarding communications with other governments or agencies. If a member of Council is interested in formally communicating with another government or agency, they should take their request to the Mayor and/or the CAO through Notice of Motion to Council.

Members of Council should not directly contact any regulatory bodies regarding any regulatory compliance concerns.

Individual members of Council should not be directly involved in any negotiations to secure contracts or agreements on behalf of the Municipality of Centre Hastings, unless direction is given to this effect through resolution by Council as a whole.

Role of Members of Staff

- Provide timely reports to Council outlining factors that will assist in their decision making process and provide information based upon professional expertise and good judgement, and free from undue influence from any individual member or members of Council;
- Research policy issues as required;
- Implement Council's decisions;
- Manage and identify the means for achieving corporate goals and outcomes;
- Provide appropriate follow-up to Council inquiries and keep members of Council up-to-date and informed, as appropriate – staff do not have a political role;
- Refrain from behaviour that could constitute an act of disorder or misbehaviour; is an abuse of power or otherwise amounts to discrimination, intimidation, harassment, verbal abuse, or the adverse treatment of others; or prejudices the provision of a service or services to the community.

It Is Expected That Staff Members Will:

- Ensure the Council members are aware of any issues that may impact upon their decision making process;
- Management will ensure that the CAO is aware of any issues that may impact upon the municipality and of ongoing activities in each department;
- The CAO will ensure that managers are aware of any issues that may impact upon their departments;
- Respond to inquiries from Council members (through the CAO or Mayor) in a timely fashion, when appropriate during business hours with the exception of emergencies.
- Present a professional opinion/recommendation in writing or in person, at Council meetings or Committee meetings.
- Notify Council members of changes to legislation and any unexpected impacts of policy decisions through written material circulated electronically or at a Council or Committee meeting; and
- Through the CAO, convey feedback to Council members who may be unaware of existing policies or staff workload demands, and other related issues.

3.0 Respectful Reporting Relationship

The formal relationship between staff and members of Council must be respected to ensure that all members of staff and Council are treated equally. There is a chain of command in place to deal with significant issues, and Council members are encouraged to primarily direct questions and concerns to the Mayor and/or CAO for their consideration. Any request for information from a Council member that is not received and answered at a Committee or Council meeting, shall be received in writing and circulated in writing to all Council members.

4.0 Policy Review

The Council Staff Relations Policy (COU-006) shall be reviewed each term of Council.