

COUNCIL / STAFF PROTOCOL

This Council/Staff Protocol augments the existing Oath of Office sworn by each Council member, the Code of Conduct for Staff, Council Code of Practice and other related Town policies and procedures. The purpose of a Council/Staff Protocol is to clarify roles and expectations and to support highly effective working relationships. It is intended to be reviewed at the beginning of each term of a new Council.

1. ROLES

Role clarification and sensitivity are fundamental to the success of our working relationship and there are some shared aspects of Council/Staff protocol. Both Council and Staff are expected to enhance public education about the political process by providing context and process information about decision making. Both Council and Staff are required to have a solid understanding of the following:

(i) Roles of Council and Staff

- To demonstrate commitment to communication and consultation among ourselves and with the general public.
- To show leadership, relying on our knowledge and judgment, and respond based upon our areas of expertise.
- To maintain confidentiality. Confidential issues will be dealt with in camera at Committee and Council meetings.

(ii) Roles of Council

- To govern and provide political direction.
- To ensure that management systems work properly by establishing vision, goals, determining needs and outcomes to be achieved, and empowering effective staff performance.
- To determine corporate policy and make decisions about issues following consultation with Staff and community residents.
- To respond to constituent concerns. To keep Staff informed by delegating to the appropriate Manager and to be open to discussion when clarification is needed.

Elected representatives do not have an administrative managerial role in the day to day business of the organization, with the exception of the Mayor, as defined under the *Municipal Act*.

(iii) Roles of Staff

- To provide timely reports to Council outlining factors that will assist in their decision making process, research policy issues as required, provide sufficient information based upon analysis and best professional expertise and judgment. Timely information ensures that Council Members are provided information early enough to allow for review and consultation. Timeliness also ensures that deadlines and commitments requiring adjustment are communicated to the management committee rather than after the fact.
- To implement Council's decisions.
- To manage and identify the means for achieving corporate goals and outcomes.
- To provide appropriate follow-up to Council inquiries, to keep members of Council up to date and informed, to be open to discussion, and to ask when clarification is needed.

Town Staff do not have a political role.

2. HIGHLY EFFECTIVE WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

Given that Staff and the Elected Representatives are all individuals with different personalities and styles, there must be some flexibility within the guidelines for working relationships. In all cases, we commit to the following requirements of a highly effective working relationship together:

(i) Respect

- A formal relationship exists between Town Staff and Members of Council. This will ensure that all members of Staff and Council are treated equitably without favouritism.
- A chain of command exists to deal with issues of significance. Council members are encouraged to discuss clarification of reports and related information directly with the author of the report. Issues, additions, changes and/or challenges to the content of any report are to be addressed through senior staff at the Manager, Director or General Manager Level in order to ensure an appropriate Department response.
- Senior Staff may suggest direct consultation with other Staff Members and/or continue open communication through the senior staff channel. All Staff should feel comfortable responding appropriately to straightforward Council requests, advising their supervisors of the inquiry.
- Any request for information from a member of Council between Committee and Council Meetings on a report to Council, will be answered in writing and circulated to all Council Members.

Staff are encouraged to provide information memos and reports for inclusion in the Information Package distributed weekly to Council Members in their Thursday bundles. The information package printing deadline is Wednesday at 4:30 p.m. to the Clerk with instructions to include it in that day's information package. Confidential information should be provided on orange paper, sealed in an envelope and labelled with the individual Council Member's name.

Where memos and reports are not included in the agenda package, copies to the appropriate Department Director, Manager and C.A.O., or to all members of Management Committee are the responsibilities of the originator of the information.

No surprises - open lines of communication are essential.

It is expected that Council Members will:

- Request Staff input prior to making important policy decisions and conveys feedback to staff.
- Discuss issues with Staff and advise Staff of questions prior to Council/Committee Meetings whenever possible.
- Request advice from the Clerk about the appropriate wording of motions, amendments, and formal staff directions in accordance with the Procedural By-law.
- Consult with Staff prior to making commitments to constituents.

(ii) Office Environment

Appointments are encouraged to ensure that both parties are able to meet and be prepared and be able to give their undivided attention to the content of the meeting. Drop-in visits are discouraged.

It is expected that Staff will:

- Ensure that Council is apprised of any issues that may impact upon their decision-making process.
- Present a departmental or corporate perspective, in writing, at Council or, in person, at Committee. In answer to questions where a department position may not be available, Staff may clarify if they are comfortable that, "Although I cannot speak for the Department, my professional opinion....."
- Notify Council of changes to legislation and any unintended or unexpected impacts of policy decisions through written reports and/or presentations in a timely fashion.
- Through Senior Staff at the Manager, Director, and C.A.O level, conveys feedback to Council members who may not be aware of existing policy or other workload demands and related issues.

(iii) Time Is Valuable

Priorities and timelines must be respected. All must make good use of time, understanding the other's demands, being well prepared for meetings, and communicating if there are changes to the timelines. When asked to complete a task, clarify the timeline: "Is this needed today?", "Could I get it for you next week?". Staff will spend time on larger assignments only as directed by Council through the CAO. Larger assignments include community wide issues, complex or contentious issues.

(iv) Forms Of Address

Delegations will be addressed formally as "Mr., Mrs., or Ms." at Committee and Council meetings and all will be addressed by first initial and last name or last name only in the minutes.

At any public function, including social events to which members of the public are invited, the terms “elected representatives”, “Councillors” or “Mayor” (rather than “politicians”) and formal address are expected. Introduce “Mayor ...last name” or “Councillor....last name” to members of the public. Sensitive or difficult situations may also suggest formal address. In an informal situation where members of the public are not present or during a work group meeting that has established a relationship among the members, Council and Staff may wish to communicate on a first name basis.