

# TOWN OF THE BLUE MOUNTAINS

## POLICY & PROCEDURES

Subject Title: Accountability and Transparency of Town Actions to the Public

Corporate Policy (Approved by Council)

Policy Ref. No.: POL.AD.07.01

Administrative Policy (Approved by CAO)

By-law No.: 2007-

Department Policy: (Approved by Mgr.)

Name of Dept.: Administration

Date Approved:

Staff Report: A.07.30

### Policy Statement

Policy direction for the manner in which the municipality will try to ensure that it is accountable to the public for its actions and the manner in which the municipality will try to ensure that its actions are transparent to the public.

### Purpose

Compliance with Section 270 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*.

### Application

This policy applies to the actions or decisions to be undertaken or made by Council, Staff, Committees and Local Boards, so as to increase the accountability and transparency of the municipal decision-making process.

Council acknowledges that it is responsible to provide good government for its residents in an accountable and transparent manner by encouraging public access and participation to ensure that decision making is responsive to the needs of its residents and receptive to their opinions.

The provisions for accountability and transparency as contained in this Policy as well as related Policies are considered a minimum and may be exceeded by Council, Staff, Committees and Local Boards at their discretion.

The *Municipal Act, 2001* requires a municipality to adopt a Policy detailing how the corporation *will try* to demonstrate accountability and transparency in its actions, and any non-compliance does not constitute an offence in and of itself.

## Definitions

Accountability: the principle that the municipality will be responsible to its residents for decisions made and policies implemented, as well as its actions or inactions.

Transparency: the principle that the municipality actively encourages and fosters resident participation and openness in its decision making processes and that the decision making process is open and clear to the public.

## Procedures

1. Council, Staff, Committees and local Boards will comply with the requirements of this Policy document and:

Town Policy POL.AD.07.02, Sale and Other Disposition of Land,  
Town Policy POL.AD.07.03, Hiring of Employees,  
Town Policy POL.AD.07.04, Procurement of Goods and Services,  
Town Policy POL.AD.07.05, Provision of Notice to the Public,  
Town Policy POL.AD.07.06, Delegation of Powers and Duties, and  
Town Policy POL.AD.07.07, Council Code of Conduct

as they are approved, so as to demonstrate accountability and transparency in the municipal decision-making process.

2. Council, Staff, Committees and Local Boards will comply with the requirements and provisions of By-law No. 2007- 29, being a By-law for governing the calling, place and proceedings of meetings of the Municipal Council for the Town of The Blue Mountains. This By-law also applies to meetings of Town Committees and Local Boards. By-law No. 2007- 29 contains extensive requirements for the giving of notice of meetings, early production and release of Agendas, pre-circulation of Agenda items and openness of meetings.

3. Council, Committee and Local Board Meeting Agendas shall contain a Staff Recommendation for consideration on every Agenda item and while such Recommendations are not binding, members of the public will be aware of Staff positions on Agenda items upon the release of the meeting Agendas prior to the meeting. Council, Committee and Staff shall make every effort to minimize addendums to Agendas.

4. Council and Staff will be open, accountable and transparent in financial decision-making as required by the *Municipal Act, 2001*. Examples would include completion of an annual external audit by an independent auditor and reporting of a Financial Information Return to the Province, as well as production of Monthly Budget Variance Summary Reports. A Public Consultation is also scheduled and advertised annually prior to any final consideration of a corporate budget.

5. Council, Committees and Local Boards may schedule public meetings from time to time to hear public input on various matters. These public meetings may be conducted on a statutory, optional or ad-hoc basis and where a public meeting is scheduled to hear input on a matter, no decision shall be considered or made on the matter until a subsequent meeting. Any exception shall be allowed only with the support of a majority of Council, Committee or the Local Board as indicated in an open vote and with reason(s) noted in a Motion.
6. Council will adopt a Code of Conduct for members of Council, Town Committees and Local Boards detailing the responsibilities of elected and appointed officials in the public sector.
7. Council will appoint a Closed Meeting Investigator with the function to investigate in an independent manner, on a complaint made to him or her by any person, whether Council, a Committee or a Local Board has complied with Section 239 of the *Municipal Act, 2001* or the Town Procedural By-law with regard to any meeting closed to the public.
8. Council and Staff are committed to providing a strong, well-managed municipal government.
9. Council and Staff are committed to practicing open and proactive communications and involving the community, business sector, developers, public partners and others in the ongoing work of the municipality.

### **Exclusions**

This Policy would apply to all actions and decisions of Council, Staff, Committees and Local Boards without exclusion or exception, unless previously authorized in an open meeting of Council.

### **References and Related Policies**

The *Municipal Act, 2001*, Town Policies POL.AD.07.02 through POL.AD.07.07 inclusive, as approved, together with this Policy document and the Town of The Blue Mountains Strategic Plan.

### **Consequences of Non-Compliance**

Non-compliance with the *Municipal Act, 2001* is subject to the remedies prescribed therein.

### **Review Cycle**

This policy will be reviewed in six month cycles by the C.A.O., Senior Management Team and Council in open session.