



Policy

POL.COR.19.02

Council Staff Relationship Protocol Policy

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Policy Statement

Positive relationships between Council and Staff are essential to the provision of public service excellence and effective governance in the Town of The Blue Mountains (Town). Successful relationships involve mutual understanding of roles and responsibilities, two-way communication, clarity in reporting relationships and direction from Council to Staff through the CAO. These principles can be achieved when high standards of conduct form the basis of all Council and Staff interaction.

Purpose

Town Staff serve Council as a whole in order to deliver quality public services and programs and effective management of Town resources in a way that serves the greater good of all citizens.

This Protocol offers guidance on Council-Staff relationship issues which may arise, and will serve as a guide to dealing with circumstances as they may arise from time to time, and should ensure that Council Members receive objective and impartial advice and professional support from Town Staff. This Protocol should be used and applied in conjunction with other guiding Town documents listed at the end of this Protocol.

Application

The guiding principals contained in this policy shall apply to all Town Staff and Council Members of Town of The Blue Mountains.

Definitions

Chief Administrative Officer: the head of Town Staff, as the only employee of Council, manages the day-to-day work of Town Staff as directed by Town Council.

Council Members: shall mean the members elected as the legislative body of the Town of The Blue Mountains Council. Council members are public officials and are not employees.

Mayor: the head of Council and the Chief Executive Officer of the Town.

Staff: shall mean full-time, part-time, contract workers and volunteers of the Town.

Town: shall mean The Corporation of the Town of The Blue Mountains.

Procedures

Roles and Accountabilities: The role of Council is to govern. The role of Staff is to advise, implement and manage public service delivery. Council and Staff work in partnership with one another, while performing their respective roles. Although the roles of Council and Staff are distinct, they are interdependent, each one requiring the other to fulfill the Town's mandate and purpose.

Joint Role of Council Members and Staff

- Demonstrate commitment to accountability and transparency among Council and Staff and with the general public;
- Demonstrate leadership by making sound decisions based on knowledge, expert advice and sound judgment;
- Maintain confidentiality in all matters where information is protected under law and/or during the course of business, as prescribed in the Municipal Act;
- Truly, faithfully and impartially exercise their role to the best of their knowledge and ability;
- Enhance public understanding of the political process by providing information about decision making processes;
- Uphold decisions of Council as a whole, regardless of personal opinion or belief, and commit to the implementation of those decisions;
- Refrain from disparaging criticism of Council Members or Staff; and
- Seek to achieve and maintain an environment of mutual respect and trust, with respect and acknowledgement of the different roles in achieving Council's objectives.

Role of Council Members (Mayor and Councillors):

- The role of Council as a whole as expressed collectively through is three-fold:
 1. **Representative role** – to represent constituents in dealing with issues before Council, keeping the greater good of all constituents in mind
 2. **Policy role** – to make policy and establish general principles to guide future actions and decisions

3. **Stewardship role** – to be stewards of municipal resources, and to ensure financial and administrative resources are being used efficiently, consistent with established policy, legislation and the objectives of Council.
- Councillor requests for information or service that are readily available to the public shall be provided to Members in the same manner as it is provided to the public.
 - Councillor requests for new information or service, requiring a commitment of resources (e.g., investigation, analysis, expenditures) beyond the normal course of public service delivery levels shall only be provided after being authorized by the whole of Council through a resolution.
 - Councillor requests for Staff participation and attendance at Councillor-organized community events or meetings shall be in keeping with existing procedures and service levels and shall ensure that the Chief Administrative Officer is aware of and in agreement with the community meeting logistics, purpose and outcomes.
 - Councillor direction or requests to Staff to undertake an action, expend funds, commit resources beyond the normal course of public service delivery levels, or prepare a Staff report to Council or a committee, shall only be acted upon by Staff when authorized by the whole of Council through a resolution.
 - The Mayor, an individual Councillor or informal groups of Councillors cannot make a decision on behalf of the Council unless authorized by Council or statute.
 - Council Members should, to the extent possible:
 - discuss issues with Staff and advise Staff of questions prior to public meetings where the issue will be heard;
 - request advice from the Town Clerk about the appropriate wording of motions, amendments and formal Staff directions in accordance with the Procedural By-law;

Role of Town Staff:

The role of Town Staff is to provide advice, support and recommendations to Council collectively and to Council Members individually, and to implement Council decisions in keeping with legislation, Town policy and procedures.

- Staff responses to a Councillor on specific issues (e.g., complaints, questions, requests) will be provided to all Councillors for consistency.
- Staff responses to a Councillor on Town or Corporate issues will be provided to all Council Members for consistency.
- Staff responses to requests from Council Members for readily-available public information shall be provided within 2 business days whenever possible.

Respectful Reporting Relationship

The formal relationship between Council Members and Staff must be respected to ensure equal treatment. For significant or sensitive issues, Council Members and Staff 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 is to be circulated and responded to in writing and copied to all Council Members.

Respect for Time Priorities

Timelines must be respected by all Council Members 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. Appointments will be made for meetings between Staff and Council Members in order to ensure that all parties are available and prepared for the discussion.

Expectations of Information Flow Outside of Regular Business Hours

It will not be expected that responses will be sent, or actions taken by Staff outside of regular administrative business hours, with the exception of emergencies as defined by the Emergency Response Plan for the Town.

Input and Direction from Council Members

Council Members are required under the Municipal Act to represent the public and to consider the well-being and interests of the municipality as a whole.

The chart below provides an outline of Staff actions to be taken in response to Councillor input and Council direction.

Council Input	Staff Requirement to Report Back	Staff Requirement to Take Action
An individual member of Council provides input on administrative/ operational matters (e.g. informally or during a meeting)	No	At Staff's discretion or at the direction of the CAO.
A Committee or Council gives direction to Staff through the CAO regarding an administrative/ operational matter through a resolution	Yes	Yes
A Committee or Council approves a Staff recommendation	As directed by Council/CAO	Yes

While a report in writing back to Council may not be required, it is often in the interest of relationship building and/or accountability to do so, either informally (i.e. email) or formally, as each circumstance dictates.

Exclusions

There are no exclusions to this protocol except as required by law or for matters that are restricted to Closed Meetings as per the Municipal Act.

References and Related Policies

This Protocol shall be read and applied in conjunction with the following Corporate documents, as updated from time to time:

POL.COR.07.07 Code of Conduct for Members of Council and Local Boards

POL.COR.18.04 Protocol Policy for Complaints Related to Council Members and Local Boards

POL.COR.18.08 Workplace Violence and Harassment

2018-60 Procedural By-law

POL.COR.18.01 Use of Corporate Resources for Election

Consequences of Non-Compliance

In the interest of strengthening Staff and Council relationships both Staff and Council are encouraged to consider informal discussions and/or mediation prior to the submittal of a formal complaint. The following policies will be referenced for all complaints:

1. Protocol Policy for Complaints Related to Council Members and Local Boards
2. Code of Conduct for Council Members and Local Boards
3. Workplace Violence and Harassment

Review Cycle

This policy will be reviewed once per term of Council or as required due to legislative change.