Town of Huntsville Staff Report

Meeting Date: February 25, 2019  To: Council

Report Number: CAO-2019-01  Confidential: No

Author(s): Denise Corry, CAO

Subject: Council-Staff Relations Policy

Report Highlights

Presentation of a Council-Staff Relations Policy as legislated by Bill 68 (Modernizing Ontario's Municipal Legislation Act)

Recommendation


Background

Bill 68, Modernizing Ontario's Municipal Legislation Act received Royal Assent on May 31, 2017. It included several amendments to the Municipal Act, 2001 including the requirement for municipalities to adopt a policy relating to Council-Staff Relations.

Discussion

Section 270 of the Municipal Act, 2001 (the Act) 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 (attached to this report) identifies the legislation, policies, procedures and practices that the municipality complies with to promote a respectful relationship between members of Council and the officers and employees of the Town of Huntsville. This policy is required to be implemented by March 1, 2019.

Once the policy has been adopted, a copy of the policy will be circulated to all members of Council and made available to staff on the Inner Circle, the Town’s internal website.

Options

1. Adopt the Policy as presented
2. Amend the Policy

**Operational**

There are no financial considerations related to this report.

**Council Strategic Direction / Relevant Policies / Legislation / Resolutions**

Bill 68 (Modernizing Ontario's Municipal Legislation Act)

Financial Management and Governance - Goal #2 ensure fiscal transparency related to how Municipal resources are managed. Goal #3 ensure municipal operations are streamlined, efficient and effective.

**Attachments**

- [Council Staff Relations Policy 2019](#)

**Consultations**

Lisa Smith, Manager of Human Resources  
Yvonne Aubichon, Director of Corporate Services  
Tanya Calleja, Municipal Clerk

**Respectfully Submitted:** Denise Corry, CAO

**Manager Approval (if required):**

**Director Approval:**

**CAO Approval:**
CORPORATE POLICY
(Council Staff Relations)

SECTION: Council Staff Relations
EFFECTIVE DATE: March 1, 2019

POLICY:
The Town of Huntsville will promote a respectful, tolerant and harassment-free workplace and relationship between Members of Council and the officers and employees of the corporation.

OBJECTIVE:
This policy provides guidance on how the Town of Huntsville ensures a respectful and harassment-free workplace between Members of Council and the officers and employees of the corporation.

APPLICATION:
In accordance with Section 270 of the Municipal Act, 2001, this policy applies to all members of Council and officers and employees of the Town of Huntsville.

ADMINISTRATION
Members of Council and Staff shall
- 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
- Demonstrate a high degree of confidentiality
- Enhance public education about the political process by providing context and process information about decision making
- Uphold 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 respect and acknowledgement 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 Committee and Council meetings and will prioritize appropriately, according to direction given by Senior Management, Committee or Council. Staff will spend time on significant projects only once direction is given by Committee, Council or the CAO to do so.

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 Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and
- Respond to concerns from the public and refer concerns to staff members through the Mayor and/or CAO or Directors for action – elected officials do not have an administrative managerial role in the day-to-day business of the Corporation.

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
- Adhere to the Code of Conduct for the Members of Council Policy and the oath of office sworn at the inaugural meeting of each term of council; and
- Refrain from behavior that 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
- Refrain from publically 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 CAO or appropriate Director
- Discuss issues with the CAO and advise staff of questions that may arise prior to Committee or Council meetings whenever possible; and
- 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 and/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.

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 Town.

Role 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 that is 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; and
- 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
It is Expected That Staff Members Will

- Ensure the Council members are aware of any issues that may impact upon their decision making process,
- Ensure that the CAO is aware of any issues that may impact upon the municipality and of ongoing activities in each department,
- Refrain from behavior that is an abuse of power or otherwise amounts to discrimination, intimidation, harassment, verbal abuse or the adverse treatment of others; or prejudices the provision or a service or services to the community,
- Respond to inquiries from Council members (through the CAO or Director) 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.

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. Council members are encouraged to primarily direct questions and concerns to the CAO and Directors 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 to all Council members.

Consequence 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 submission of a formal complaint.

Policy Review
The Council-Staff Relations Policy shall be reviewed each term of Council.