
TITLE: COUNCIL-STAFF RELATIONS POLICY
POLICY NO: POL-ADMIN-02-2018
APPROVAL DATE: December 17, 2018
EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2019

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the relationship between members of Council and staff of the municipality is co-operative and supportive, with a clear understanding of each's roles and responsibilities.

SCOPE:

This Policy shall apply to municipal staff and members of Council.

DEFINITIONS:

"Members of Council" means a member or members of the municipal Council of the Township of West Lincoln.

"Municipality" means the corporation of the Township of West Lincoln.

"Staff" means any of the following:

- I. A person, not including members of Council, who performs work for the municipality for wages
- II. A person who supplies services to the municipality for wages
- III. Such other persons as may be prescribed who perform work or supply services to the municipality for no monetary compensation

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Role of Council:

Policy Focus:

- Represent the municipality, provide direction and create policy

Role of the Chief Administrative Officer:

Direction Focus:

- Liaison between Council and Staff, direct implementation of Council's policies, hire and develop a team of competent staff

Role of Staff:

Implementation Focus:

- Research policy and programs, give best professional advice, implement decisions of Council, fulfil statutory duties, follow direction of CAO generally to see the operation of the municipal organization

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

1. RESPECT

Both Council and staff should work hard at fostering a climate of mutual respect; respect that each group are intelligent and professional, but face different challenges, and recognize the mutual goal is to serve the best interest of our community and citizens.

2. A "FORMAL" RELATIONSHIP

Treat Council as a collective decision-making body, avoid favouritism, and treat all Council members as equals. Staff should stay out of political lobbying.

3. WHAT'S IN A NAME

Staff should refer to Councillors as Councillors or elected representatives, but not politicians. Council should refer to staff as staff or professional titles such as the Director of Finance, but never bureaucrats. What you call each other tells the world what you think about them.

4. POLITICS OR MANAGEMENT – NOT BOTH

Elected representatives give political directions, staffs gives professional judgment. Councillors are not elected to be technical experts or managers, and staff are definitely not political. Advice comes from staff, decisions are made by Council.

5. NO SURPRISES

Council should avoid the temptation to "air dirty laundry" and play up divisions or conflicts, as staff should not be seen as targets. The public expects us to do the job we have been hired/elected to do. Comments on staff performance can be directed through the appropriate confidential human resources processes. Council and staff should try to avoid surprises in the public forum. In West Lincoln we work hard at the proposition that when elected representatives look good, staff look good and vice versa.

6. REPRESENT THE WHOLE COMMUNITY

Council and staff both work together for the good of the public. Decisions need to be made on the basis of complete information and recommendation from staff. Councillors need to rely on their own judgment and show leadership on issues.

7. YOUR TIME IS VALUABLE

Council needs to ensure that to the greatest extent possible, they control the use of their own time. Staff presentations should be short, as longer presentations have a tendency to take away from the time for debate. Public input is important but is not the whole story. Public process should inform decision making, not impede it. Unless Council faces fundamental new information, or lack of essential facts, discourage deferrals or referring back to staff for reports.

8. MAKE GOOD USE OF STAFF TIME

Staff reports cost money. Staff time used on one issue is staff time taken away from another issue. Discourage asking for staff reports as a means of getting past a delegation. The public respects political courage and decisiveness.

9. RESPECT THE CHAIN OF COMMAND

Council members should know clearly, which staff they should contact on which issues as determined by the CAO. Staff should respond quickly to Councillor requests. All Councillor requests are equally important. Council members are governors, not customer service reps.

10. COUNCIL MEMBERS ARE PUBLIC FIGURES, NOT STAFF

Once a matter is proposed or decided, staff should only comment on matters of fact or history in discussion issues with the media. Formal or informal rules for staff dealing with the media and the public should be in place. Dealing with the media, is part of an elected representative's job.

COMPLAINTS:

The Municipal Clerk shall be responsible for receiving complaints and/or concerns related to this policy. Upon receipt of a complaint and/or a concern, the Clerk shall notify:

1. In the case of staff other than the CAO, the CAO;
2. In the case of the CAO, Council; or
3. In the case of a member of Council, the Integrity Commissioner.

Handling of complaints shall be done in the manner set out in the applicable Code of Conduct or policy.