



Council-Staff Relations Policy

Township of the North Shore

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1. Introduction

As of March 1, 2019, amendments to section 270 of the *Municipal Act, 2001* will require the Municipality to adopt and maintain a policy with respect to the relationship between Members of Council and the Officers and Staff of the Municipality.

The Municipality has proactively adopted this Council-Staff Relations Policy to ensure that the Municipality will be in full compliance with the above-noted amendments upon their coming into force.

2. Scope and Intent

This Policy shall apply to all Municipal Staff, Officers and Members of Council.

The intent of this Policy is to ensure that the relationship between Members of Council and the Officers and Staff of the Municipality is co-operative and supportive with a clear understanding of the respective roles and responsibilities.

3. Definitions

"Member(s) of Council" means a member or members of the municipal council of the North Shore.

"Municipality" means the Township of the North Shore.

"Officer(s)" means a person who holds a position of responsibility with definite rights and duties prescribed by statute or by-law.

"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.

4. Clarifying Roles

Role of Council:

- **Policy Focus:**
  - Represent the Municipality, provide direction and create policy.

Role of Senior Management:

- **Direction Focus:**
  - Liaison between Council and Staff, direct implementation of Council's policies, hire and develop a team of competent Staff.

Role of Staff and other Officers:

- **Implementation Focus:**
  - Research policy and programs, give best professional advice, implement decisions of Council, fulfill statutory duties, follow direction of Clerk/Treasurer/Chief Administrative Officer generally see to the operation of the municipal organization.

5. Guiding Principles

1. **Members of Council are Public Figures, not Staff and Officers.**
   Once a matter is proposed or decided, Staff should only comment on matters of fact or history in discussing issues with the public and the media. Dealing with the media is generally part of an elected representative's job.

2. **All Members of Council are Equal**
   Regardless of how they interrelate with Members, Staff and Officers must avoid favouritism and the appearance of favouritism. Differences in experience and abilities amongst Members of Council are irrelevant – they all must be treated equally.

3. **Respect the Chain of Command**
   Members of Council must understand they have no individual capacity to direct Staff to perform, or not perform functions or duties. The Clerk/Treasurer/CAO is responsible for Staff and Officers - Members of Council who need to engage with Staff and Officers must do so through the Clerk/Treasurer/CAO. This would include both in person, verbal, written and electronic messages.

4. **Make Good Use of Staff's Time**
   Members of Council should use the resources of Staff and Officers judiciously. Reports cost taxpayer money and take Staff and Officers time away from other issues or problems that

may need attention. Members should be discouraged from asking for reports as a means of getting past an unhappy public delegation. The public respects political courage and decisiveness.

5. **Council Time is Valuable**
   Members should not allow presentations by Staff or Officers to consume all of the time they have to debate various issues. Such presentations should, to the extent possible, be concise. Members of Council should understand they can take any one or more of the following actions where appropriate:

   - Pass on an audio-visual presentation;
   - Urge Staff or Officers to be more concise;
   - Require multiple public delegations with essentially the same point to select a spokesperson, or to impose a limited speaking time, or to provide information in advance or in written form; and/or
   - Enact 'curfew' procedures for Council deliberations.

6. **Represent the Whole Community**
   Members, together with the Municipality's Staff and Officers, work for the public good. Decision making by Members should be based on complete information and unbiased recommendations from Staff and Officers. Members should, in addition to such information and recommendations, rely on their own judgment and show leadership in their decision making.

7. **Control Anger**
   Members of Council should avoid the temptation to play up divisions or conflicts. Staff and Officers shall not be targets of derisive/vexatious comments/behaviour/conduct. The public expects Members to do the job that they have been elected to do. The public expects Staff and Officers to do the job that they have been hired to do. Comments on Staff and Officer performance shall be directed through the appropriate confidential performance reviews.

8. **Politics or Management – Not Both**
   Council provides direction, Staff and Officers give professional advice and implement Council's directives. Members of Council are not elected to be technical experts nor to act in their professional capacities. Likewise, Staff and Officers are not politicians. Advice comes from Staff, policy and service delivery decisions are made by Council.

9. **A Formal Relationship**

   Staff and Officers shall treat Council as a collective decision-making body. Staff and Officers shall not communicate directly with individual Members on municipal business, rather they must communicate on such matters through the Clerk/Treasurer/CAO. Information from the Clerk/Treasurer/CAO shall be communicated to all Members. Staff and Officers shall stay out of political lobbying.

10. **Professionalism**

    Members of Council, Staff and Officers must treat each other with professionalism. When Council requests that Staff and Officers appear before Council, they must comply and be prepared for any questions Council has. Advance notice of questions to Staff provides an opportunity for Staff to provide quality reports and advice.

11. **Respect**

    Members, Staff and Officers shall work hard at fostering a climate of mutual respect. Each must be respectful of others' intelligence and professional duties. Members, Staff and Officers must understand that they all face different, often unique, challenges and recognize their overarching goal is to serve the best interests of the Municipality.

6. Complaints

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

a. In the case of Staff and Officers other than the Clerk/Treasurer/CAO, the Clerk/Treasurer/CAO;
b. In the case of the Clerk/Treasurer/CAO, Council; or
c. In the case of a Member, the Integrity Commissioner.

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

Where there is a discrepancy between this Policy and the applicable Code of Conduct of Conduct, the applicable Code of Conduct prevails.