

Category: Corporate By-Law No.: 2019-117 Revisions: N/A		Pages: 5 Effective Date: November 27, 2019 Report No.:C-20-2019
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Council and Staff Relationship Policy

1.0 Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this Policy is to set out a general standard to ensure that Council and Staff share a common understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities as well as a common basis of their relationship, and to set out acceptable standards to govern their relationship and to which all Members and Staff are expected to adhere to and comply with.

1.2 The purpose of this Policy is to establish a policy to govern the relationship between Members of Council and Staff of the Municipality in accordance with paragraph 2.1 of subsection 270(1) of the *Municipal Act, 2001*.

2.0 Scope:

2.1 This Council and Staff Relationship Policy applies to all Members of the Council of the Municipality of Middlesex Centre, including the Mayor, and all members of Staff of the Municipality of Middlesex Centre, including the CAO.

3.0 Objectives and Statement of Principles

3.1 This Policy is intended to set a high standard for relations between Council and Staff in order to provide good governance and instill a high level of public confidence in the administration of the Municipality by its Members as duly elected public representatives and its Staff as public administrators.

3.2 The following key statements of principle are intended to guide Council and Staff and to assist with the interpretation of the Policy:

- Council and Staff shall recognize that positive internal relations are central to the collective ability of Members and Staff to provide good governance and instill a high level of public confidence in the administration of the Municipality;
- Members and Staff shall relate to one another in a respectful, professional and courteous manner;
- Members and Staff shall understand and respect each other's respective roles and responsibilities; and
- Members and Staff shall work together towards the common goal of serving the public good.

The above statements are key principles that are intended to facilitate an understanding, application and interpretation of the Policy – these principles are not operative provisions of the Policy.

4.0 Definitions

- 4.1 The following terms shall have the following meanings in this Policy:
- a) "CAO" means the Chief Administrative Officer of the Municipality;
 - b) "Clerk" means the Clerk of the Municipality;
 - c) "Council" means the council for the Municipality;
 - d) "Mayor" means the head of Council;
 - e) "Member" means a Member of Council;
 - f) "Municipality" means The Corporation of the Municipality of Middlesex Centre;
 - g) "Policy" means this Council and Staff Relationship Policy; and
 - h) "Staff" means the CAO and all officers, directors, managers, supervisors and all non-union and union employees, whether full-time, part-time, contract, seasonal or volunteer employees, as well as agents and consultants acting in furtherance of the Municipality's business and interests.

5.0 Procedure and General Obligations

- 5.1 In all respects, Members and Staff shall:
- a) relate to one another in a courteous, respectful and professional manner;
 - b) maintain formal working relationships in order to promote equality and discourage favouritism, including usage of proper titles for staff and members in a formal setting.
 - c) understand their respective roles and responsibilities, and appreciate and respect the roles and responsibilities of the other;
 - d) work together to produce the best results and outcomes for the Municipality and always for the collective public interest of the Municipality; and
 - e) act in a manner that enhances public confidence in local government.

6.0 Roles and Responsibilities of Members

- 6.1 Members acknowledge and agree that:
- a) Council as a whole is the governing body of the Municipality and that it comprises a collective decision-making body;
 - b) they are representatives of the entire Municipality;
 - c) Staff serve the whole of Council rather than any individual Member;
 - d) they govern, provide political direction and make decisions for the Municipality but do not interfere in the implementation of the decisions which is the responsibility of the administration;
 - e) they will respect the administrative and managerial chain of command by:
 - i. directing any questions or concerns in relation to the administration or management of the Municipality to the Mayor or the CAO for their attention/response;
 - ii. giving direction to Staff only as Council and through the CAO or senior management; and
 - iii. refrain from becoming involved in the management of Staff.
 - f) they shall use Staff time effectively, which includes but is not limited to only referring essential matters to Staff for reports;
 - g) they ensure any requests for information to Staff, not received at a meeting of Council, is put forward at the next meeting where the request affects the organization. This does not refer to questions of clarification regarding items included on the agenda at an upcoming Council meeting.
 - h) they understand that Staff will undertake significant projects only if they have been directed to do so by Council through the CAO;
 - i) whenever possible, they shall notify Staff if an action or position of Staff is to be questioned or criticized at a public meeting to ensure Staff has sufficient time to formulate an intelligent, informed and helpful response for the consideration of Council and that any such questioning or criticism shall be undertaken with courtesy, respect and professionalism, and in no event shall there be any attempt to humiliate, berate, disparage or denigrate Staff and that they shall refrain from publicly criticizing members of Staff;
 - j) they shall request advice from the Clerk about the appropriate wording of motions, amendments, and formal directions of Staff;

- k) they shall request information regarding meeting agendas or minutes from the CAO, Clerk or senior management;
- l) as individual Members, they have no greater access to records or information held by the Municipality than any member of the public excluding that discussed in a closed session meeting and that they cannot access records or information otherwise protected from disclosure by the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* or in accordance with the process set out in that statute;
- m) they shall recognize Staff are not expected to provide information or take action outside of regular administrative business hours, except in extenuating circumstances;
- n) certain members of Staff are statutory officers and have specific statutory authorities, duties, powers and responsibilities that cannot be interfered with or derogated from;
- o) they shall at all times comply with the Municipality's Code of Conduct for Members of Council; and
- p) they shall at all times comply with any policies relating to Council that the Council may implement from time to time.

7.0 Roles and Responsibilities of Staff

- 7.1 Staff acknowledge and agree that:
 - a) Council is the collective decision-making and governing body of the Municipality and is ultimately responsible to the electorate for the good governance of the Municipality;
 - b) they shall implement Council's decisions and establish administrative practices and procedures to carry out Council's decisions and any duties specifically assigned to them by Council;
 - c) they shall assist Council in their decision-making process with respect to its decision, policies and programs by providing Council with information based on professional expertise, research and good judgment in a professional and timely manner;
 - d) they shall serve the whole of Council rather than any individual Member;
 - e) that all Members are equal and shall be treated as such and always with courtesy, respect and professionalism;
 - f) they shall respond to inquiries from Council and provide appropriate and timely follow-up to such inquiries as necessary;

- g) they shall ensure any responses to requests for information by a Member not received at a meeting of Council is circulated to all Members, where the response affects the organization. This does not refer to questions of clarification regarding items included on the agenda at an upcoming Council meeting.
- h) they shall refrain from becoming involved in the policy and decision-making process of Council, outside of ensuring that Council is provided with the information necessary in order to make their decisions and that Council is aware of any issues that may impact such decisions;
- i) they shall diligently and impartially implement Council policy decisions;
- j) they shall notify management or the CAO, as appropriate, of any issues that may impact the Municipality and of ongoing activities in each department;
- k) they shall not speak publicly on any matter respecting any Council decisions or policies without authorization to do so, and without limiting the generality of the foregoing, shall not publicly criticize any decision or policy of Council;
- l) they shall refrain from publicly criticizing decisions of Council or Members; and
- m) they shall at all times comply with any policies relating to Staff that the Council may implement from time to time.

8.0 Policy Review

8.1 This policy shall be reviewed at least once per Council term to ensure relevancy and applicability.