



Policy Type: Council Policy

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Approved by Council on: April 23, 2019

Council-Staff Relations Policy

Policy Statement

The Corporation of the Town of Prescott will promote a respectful, tolerant, harassment-free relationship and workplace between members of Council and the officers and employees of the corporation.

Purpose

This policy provides requirements on how the Town of Prescott will ensure a respectful, tolerant, and harassment-free relationship and workplace between Members and Staff.

Definitions

In this policy, the following terms have the meanings set out below:

“Member” includes the elected Head of Council and elected members of Council.

“Municipality” means the corporation of the Town of Prescott.

“Staff” includes anyone employed by the Municipality, including officers, full-time, part-time, temporary, casual or seasonal staff, contract staff, students, and volunteers.

Policy Requirements

1. Guiding Principles

The relationship between Members and Staff is set out as follows:

(a) Empowerment

- Staff should be able to complete tasks assigned to them while feeling empowered to do so;
- Members shall set policy and give direction in a way that empowers Staff. This enhances the ability of the Municipality to support the growth and success of its Staff and Members;

- In order for Staff to feel empowered in their roles, Members must entrust them with the authority they need to make decisions and allow them to act according to their understanding of the direction given and the work to be accomplished. This requires that Staff have the resources and the time required to accomplish tasks;
- Staff must be dedicated to ensuring that Members have the information they need to make decisions.

(b) Professional Growth

- By empowering Staff to take on challenges and complete tasks, opportunities for professional growth are also supported;
- Any gaps in the skillsets of Staff can be addressed through education and the opportunity for Staff to create ideas to improve their work where necessary.

(c) Collaboration and Partnership

- Members and the Chief Administrative Officer ("CAO") shall create a collaborative relationship in order to accomplish tasks and set policy for the betterment of the Municipality;
- The independent role of both the CAO and of Council must be respected by all parties;
- Members and Staff shall create a collaborative relationship in order to accomplish tasks and set policy for the betterment of the Municipality;
- A partnership between Members and the CAO, as well between Members and Staff should be fostered through effective communication and respecting each other's roles.

(d) Respect

- The relationship between Staff and Members and their defined roles must be respected to ensure that both Staff and Members are treated fairly;
- Members and Staff shall foster a climate of mutual respect, recognizing the role that they play in serving the Municipality;
- In order to promote respect in the workplace, Staff and Members shall listen to the ideas of each other without judgment, seek to understand the unique challenges to each other's roles in serving the Municipality, provide constructive feedback when necessary, and encourage a collaborative relationship based on trust, kindness, and respect for individual skillsets.

(e) Realistic Expectations

- Members and Staff shall set reasonable expectations of each other, including providing reasonable timelines to accomplish tasks, and having respect for off-hours communications between Members and Staff;
- Providing clear goals and direction are necessary in order to hold each other accountable for the accomplishment of tasks.

2. Clarifying the Role of Council, Head of Council, and the Role of Staff

2.1 Role of Council & Head of Council

The roles of Council and Head of Council are defined in sections 224 and 225 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, as the following:

It is the role of council,

(a) to represent the public and to consider the well-being and interests of the municipality;

(b) to develop and evaluate the policies and programs of the municipality;

(c) to determine which services the municipality provides;

(d) to ensure that administrative policies, practices and procedures and controllership policies, practices and procedures are in place to implement the decisions of council;

(d.1) to ensure the accountability and transparency of the operations of the municipality, including the activities of the senior management of the municipality;

(e) to maintain the financial integrity of the municipality; and

(f) to carry out the duties of council under this or any other Act.

It is the role of the head of council,

(a) to act as chief executive officer of the municipality;

(b) to preside over council meetings so that its business can be carried out efficiently and effectively;

(c) to provide leadership to the council;

(c.1) without limiting clause (c), to provide information and recommendations to the council with respect to the role of council described in clauses 224 (d) and (d.1);

(d) to represent the municipality at official functions; and

(e) to carry out the duties of the head of council under this or any other Act.

2.2 The following points further clarify the roles of Members:

- (a) The role of Members is to represent the Municipality, provide direction to Staff through the CAO, and create policy;
- (b) Members shall seek to advance the common good of the Municipality;
- (c) Members shall act in a way that enhances public confidence in local government;
- (d) Members shall work with the CAO and Senior Management in a collaborative and supportive manner and not seek to usurp the administrative function of the CAO and Senior Management;
- (e) Individual Members shall not direct Staff or intimidate Staff in the performance of their duties;
- (f) Direction to Staff from Council as a whole by way of resolution may only be done through the CAO, as the CAO is responsible for Staff;
- (g) Members should respect the time of Staff by providing advance notice of any substantial questions to be raised at Council or Committee meetings so that they may have the required time to provide an adequate response or report;
- (h) Members should not expect immediate response time from Staff by email or phone unless the circumstances require such an immediate response;
- (i) Emails sent to Staff during off-hours that require an immediate response, as necessary during an emergency, should be marked as "High Importance". Members should otherwise not expect a response from Staff during off-hours.
- (j) Members shall respect the role of the Municipality as an employer and provide direction and support for Staff that adheres to all legal obligations of an employer;
- (k) Members shall not use offensive words toward each other or toward Staff and abide by other rules of conduct with respect to Staff during Council or Committee meetings, in accordance with the Municipality's Procedural By-law;
- (l) Members shall not put into question the integrity of Staff during Council or Committee meetings;
- (m) Members shall be respectful of Staff in the workplace and shall not denigrate Staff in public or on social media;
- (n) Members shall not subject any member of Staff to workplace harassment or allow or create any conditions that may promote inappropriate behaviours from occurring, in accordance with the Municipality's Workplace Violence and Workplace Harassment Policy.

2.3 Role of Chief Administrative Officer

The role of the Chief Administrative Officer is defined in section 229 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, as the following:

A municipality may appoint a chief administrative officer who shall be responsible for,

- (a) exercising general control and management of the affairs of the municipality for the purpose of ensuring the efficient and effective operation of the municipality; and*
- (b) performing such other duties as are assigned by the municipality.*

2.4 The following points further clarify the role of the Chief Administrative Officer:

- (a) The CAO shall report directly to Council, and act as a liaison between Council and Staff to direct the implementation of Council's policies through Senior Management and Staff;
- (b) The primary focus of the CAO should be to foster collaborative working relationships with Members and Staff, while maintaining a separate and distinct role;
- (c) The CAO shall remind Staff and Members, where necessary, of their roles and their duty to respect the personal and professional time and roles of one another;
- (d) The CAO shall undertake such research as is necessary to make recommendations to Council to maintain and improve the efficient administration of the Municipality and to advance the goals of the Municipality;
- (e) The CAO shall be respectful of Members in the workplace and not denigrate Members in public or on social media;
- (f) The CAO shall not subject any Member to workplace harassment or allow or create any conditions that may promote inappropriate behaviours from occurring, in accordance with the Municipality's Workplace Violence and Workplace Harassment Policy.

2.5 Role of Staff

The role of municipal staff is defined in section 227 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, as the following:

It is the role of the officers and employees of the municipality,

- (a) to implement council's decisions and establish administrative practices and procedures to carry out council's decisions;*

- (b) to undertake research and provide advice to council on the policies and programs of the municipality; and*
- (c) to carry out other duties required under this or any Act and other duties assigned by the municipality.*

2.6 The following points further clarify the role of staff:

- (a) Staff shall complete tasks that may include researching policy or programs, providing professional advice, implementing decisions of Council, fulfilling statutory duties, and following direction of the CAO in a professional manner, and seeking assistance where necessary;
- (b) Staff will generally communicate with individual Members through the CAO;
- (c) Staff shall respect that Member's time is valuable. Reports and presentations to Council should be concise to the extent possible, while still ensuring all necessary information is communicated to Council;
- (d) Staff shall be professional and courteous to Members, in accordance with the Municipality's Employee Code of Conduct;
- (e) Staff shall be respectful of Members in the workplace and not denigrate Members in public or on social media;
- (f) Staff shall not subject any Member to workplace harassment or allow or create any conditions that may promote inappropriate behaviours from occurring, in accordance with the Municipality's Workplace Violence and Workplace Harassment Policy.

3. Adherence to other Codes and Policies

Members and Staff shall adhere to the Municipality's existing applicable policies and procedures, including:

- (a) Code of Conduct for Members of Council and Local Boards;
- (b) Procedural By-Law;
- (c) Human Resources Policies;
- (d) Municipality's Workplace Violence and Workplace Harassment Policy.

4. Responsibilities

Members and Staff are required to adhere to this policy and its governing provisions, including all other existing applicable policies and procedures adopted by the Municipality.

Monitoring

Complaint Protocol

1. If a Member of Council or an employee has a concern that is not subject to a grievance he/she shall report it as per the following:
 - (a) In the case of Staff other than the CAO, the Department Head;
 - (b) In the case of the CAO, the Mayor or two Members of Council;
 - (c) In the case of a Member of Council, the Integrity Commissioner.
2. The CAO and/or Department Head shall investigate all complaints under this policy related to Staff and take such action as is deemed appropriate in the circumstances and in accordance with all other applicable policies;
3. Council shall investigate all complaints under this policy related to the CAO and take such action as is deemed appropriate in the circumstances and in accordance with all other applicable policies;
4. The Integrity Commissioner shall receive all complaints under this policy related to Members of Council and investigate in accordance with the process as set out in the Code of Conduct for Members of Council and Local Boards. Where there is a discrepancy between this Policy and the Code of Conduct, the Code of Conduct shall prevail.

Authority

The Municipal Act, 2001, requires Council to adopt and maintain a policy with respect to the relationship between Members and Staff. The Council-Staff Relations Policy identifies the legislation, policies, and procedures that the Municipality complies with in order to promote a respectful relationship between Members and Staff.

Contact

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