



TOWNSHIP OF SOUTH STORMONT

Title: Council-Staff Relations Policy
Schedule "A" to By-law No. 2019-028

Department: Council

Date: March 27, 2019

1. Policy Statement

Positive relationships between Council and Staff are essential to the provision of public service excellence and effective governance in the Township of South Stormont. Successful relationships involve mutual understanding of roles and responsibilities, two-way communications, clarity in reporting relationships and direction from Council to Staff through the Chief Administrative Officer. These principles can be achieved when high standards of conduct form the basis of all Council and Staff interaction. The Corporation of the Township of South Stormont will promote a respectful, tolerant and harassment-free relationship and workplace between and amongst members of Council and Staff.

2. Purpose

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 respective roles, responsibilities and expectations.

3. Application

This Policy shall apply to all Municipal Staff, Officers and Members of Council of the Corporation of the Township of South Stormont.

4. Definitions

"Chief Administrative Officer" means the head of Township staff, as the only employee of Council, manages the day-to-day work of Township staff as directed by Township Council.

"Mayor" means the head of Council and the Chief Executive Officer of the Township.

"Member(s) of Council" means a member or members of the municipal council of the Township of South Stormont;

"Municipality" means the Corporation of the Township of South Stormont;

“Officer(s)” means a person who holds a position of responsibility with rights and duties prescribed by statute or by-law;

“Staff” includes anyone employed by the Municipality, including full-time, part-time, temporary, casual or seasonal Staff, contract Staff, students and volunteers. In accordance with the *Municipal Act*, Council Members are not considered employees of the Municipality.

5. Guiding Principles

(a) Empowerment

- Staff should be able to complete tasks as assigned to them while feeling empowered to do so.
- Members of Council shall set policy and give direction in a way that empowers Officers and Staff. This enhances the ability of the Township to support the growth and success of its Officers, Staff and Members of Council.
- In order for Officers and Staff to feel empowered in their roles, Council must entrust them with the power they need to make decisions and behave according to their understanding of the direction given and the work to be accomplished. This requires that Officers and Staff have the resources and the time required to accomplish tasks.
- Officers and Staff shall be dedicated to ensuring that Members of Council 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 Officers and Staff can be addressed through education and the opportunity for Officers and Staff to create ideas to improve their work where necessary.

(c) Collaboration and Partnership

- Members of Council 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 both parties.
- Members of Council, Officers and Staff must also create a collaborative relationship in order to accomplish tasks and set policy for the betterment of the Municipality.

- A partnership between Members of Council and the CAO, as well between Members of Council and Officers and Staff should be fostered through effective communication and respecting each other's roles.

(d) Respect

- The relationship between Officers, Staff, Mayor and Members of Council and their defined roles must be respected to ensure that all Officers and Staff and Mayor and Members of Council are treated fairly.
- Members of Council, Mayor, Officers and Staff shall foster a climate of mutual respect, recognizing the role that each person plays in serving the Municipality.
- In order to promote respect in the workplace, Officers, Staff, Mayor and Members of Council shall listen to the ideas of others 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 of Council, Mayor, Officers and Staff shall set reasonable expectations of each other, including providing reasonable time to accomplish tasks, and having respect for "off hours" communications between Members of Council, Mayor and Officers and Staff.
- Providing clear goals and direction are necessary in order to hold each other accountable for the accomplishment of tasks.

6. Clarifying the Role of Council, Mayor and the Role of Officers and Staff

1. Role of Council, (Including Mayor)

- (a) The role of Members of Council is to represent the Municipality, provide direction to Officers and Staff through the CAO, and create policy.
- (b) Members of Council shall seek to advance the common good of the Municipality.
- (c) Members of Council shall act in a way that enhances public confidence in local government.
- (d) Members of Council 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 of Council shall not direct Officers or Staff or intimidate Officers or 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 Officers and Staff.
- (g) Members of Council should respect the time of Officers and Staff by providing advance notice, where possible, of any questions to be raised at a Council meeting so that they may have the required time to provide an adequate response or report.
- (h) Questions from Council Members to an Officer or Staff are not considered Direction to Staff, and will be responded to in as timely a manner as possible.
- (i) Members of Council should not expect immediate response time from Officers and Staff by e-mail unless the circumstances necessitate such an immediate response.
- (j) Emails sent to Officers and Staff during off-hours, unless emergent in nature, will be answered the next business day.
- (k) Emails sent to Officers and Staff should be copied to the CAO.
- (l) Members of Council shall respect the role of the Municipality as an employer and provide direction and support for Officers and Staff that adheres to all legal obligations of an employer.
- (m) Members of Council shall be respectful of Staff and Officers in the workplace and shall not denigrate Staff in public or on social media.
- (n) Members of Council shall refrain from behaviour that could constitute an act of disorder or misbehaviour, 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.

2. Role of Mayor

- (a) Mayor acts as chief executive officer of the municipality.
- (b) Presides over council meetings so that its business can be carried out efficiently and effectively.
- (c) Provides leadership to council.
- (d) Represents the municipality at official functions.
- (e) Carries out the duties of the head of council under the Municipal Act, or any other Act.

3. Role of Chief Administrative Officer

- (a) The CAO shall report directly to Council, and act as a liaison between Council and Officers and Staff to direct the implementation of Council's policies through Senior Management and Officers and Staff.
- (b) The primary focus of the CAO should be to foster collaborative working relationships with Members of Council, Mayor and Officers and Staff, while maintaining a separate and distinct role.

- (c) The CAO shall remind Officers and Staff and Mayor and Members of Council, 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 refrain from behaviour that could constitute an act of disorder or misbehaviour, 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.

4. Role of Officers and Staff

- (a) Officers and 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) Officers and Staff will generally communicate with individual Members of Council and Mayor including the CAO in such communications.
- (c) Officers and Staff shall be respectful of Members of Council and Mayor in the workplace and shall not denigrate Members of Council and Mayor in public or on social media.
- (d) Officers and Staff shall refrain from behaviour that could constitute an act of disorder or misbehaviour, 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.
- (e) Officers and Staff shall respect that Council 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.

7. Other Applicable Policies

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

- (a) Procedural By-law 2019-027 to Govern the Proceedings of Council;
- (b) Council Code of Conduct;
- (c) Workplace Violence and Harassment Policy.
- (d) Human Resources Policy;
- (e) Delegation of Powers and Duties Policy;
- (f) Accountability and Transparency Policy;
- (g) Social Media Policy.

8. Complaints

- (a) The CAO/Human Resources department shall be responsible for receiving complaints and/or concerns related to this Policy.
- (b) Upon receipt of a complaint and/or concern, Human Resources shall notify:
 - i. In the case of Staff and Officers other than the CAO, the CAO;
 - ii. In the case of the CAO, Members of Council; or
 - iii. In the case of a Member of Council, the Integrity Commissioner.
- (c) The CAO or Council, as the case may be, shall investigate all complaints and take such action as is deemed appropriate in the circumstances, in accordance with all other applicable policies.
- (d) The Integrity Commissioner shall receive all complaints and investigate in accordance with the process as set out in the Council Code of Conduct. Where there is a discrepancy between this Policy and the Council Code of Conduct, the Council Code of Conduct shall prevail.