

**The Corporation of The Municipality of Hastings Highlands**

**Bylaw 2023-089**

**To Adopt and Maintain a Council-Staff Relations Policy**

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**Whereas**, Section 9 of the *Municipal Act*, 2001, S.O. 2001, c. 25, as amended, provides that a municipality has the capacity, rights, powers and privileges of a natural person for the purpose of exercising its authority under the *Municipal Act* or any other Act;

**And Whereas**, Section 5 (3) of the *Municipal Act*, 2001, S.O. 2001, c. 25, as amended, provides that a municipal power, including a municipality's capacity, rights, powers and privileges under Section 9, shall be exercised by bylaw unless the municipality is specifically authorized to do otherwise;

**And Whereas**, Section 270 (1) 2.1 of the *Municipal Act*, 2001, S.O. 2001, c. 25, as amended, provides that a municipality shall adopt and maintain a policy with respect to the relationship between members of council and the officers and employees of the municipality;

**And Whereas**, Section 11(2) of the *Municipal Act*, 2001, S.O. 2001, c. 25, as amended, provides that a municipality may pass bylaws for the governance structure of the municipality and its local boards and may pass bylaws dealing with the accountability and transparency of the municipality and its local boards;

**Now Therefore The Council of The Corporation of Hastings Highlands Hereby Enacts As Follows:**

1. **That** the Council-Staff Relations Policy, attached hereto as Schedule 'A' is hereby adopted.
2. **That** Bylaw 2019-020 pertaining to this matter is hereby repealed.
3. **That** the Mayor and Municipal Clerk be and are hereby authorized to sign this Bylaw and affix the corporate seal thereto;
4. **That** this Bylaw shall come into effect on the day it is passed.

**Enacted and Passed** in Council this 20<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2023.

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Tony Fitzgerald, Mayor

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Suzanne Huschilt, Municipal Clerk



*Hastings Highlands*

*Beautiful By Nature*

Schedule 'A' to Bylaw 2023-089

Municipality of Hastings Highlands - Corporate Policies and Procedures			
<b>DEPARTMENT:</b> Administration and Council			<b>POLICY #:</b>
<b>POLICY:</b> Council-Staff Relations			
<b>DATE:</b> Sept 20, 2023	<b>REV. DATE:</b>	<b>COVERAGE:</b> Members of Council, Members of Boards and Committees, Officers, Municipal Staff	<b>PAGE #:</b> 1-6

**1. Policy Statement**

The Corporation of the Municipality of Hastings Highlands will promote a respectful, tolerant, harassment-free relationship and workplace between members of Council, members of Boards and Committees who are not also members of Council, and the officers and employees of the corporation.

**2. Purpose**

This policy provides requirements on how the Municipality of Hastings Highlands will ensure a respectful, tolerant and harassment-free relationship and workplace between Members/Board Members and Staff.

**3. Definitions**

“Board Member” includes any member of a municipal Board or Committee of the Municipality who is not also a Member of Council.

“Council” means the elected Head of Council and elected members of Council.

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

“Municipality” means the Corporation of the Municipality of Hastings Highlands.

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

**4. Guiding Principles**

The relationship between Members/Board 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 and Board 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 and Board 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/Board 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/Board Members and the CAO, as well between Members/Board Members and Staff should be fostered through effective communication and respecting each other’s roles.

(d) Respect

- The relationship between Staff and Members/Board Members and their defined roles must be respected to ensure that all members of Staff and Members/Board Members are treated fairly;
- Members/Board 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/Board 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/Board 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/Board Members and Staff;
- Providing clear goals and direction are necessary in order to hold each other accountable for the accomplishment of tasks.

**5. Clarifying The Role of Council, Board Members and The Role of Staff**

1. Role of Council

- (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 a Council meeting 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 e-mail or phone unless the circumstances necessitate such an immediate response;
- (i) Emails sent to Staff during off-hours should be sent only as necessary during emergencies, while respecting the private lives of Staff;
- (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 speak disrespectfully or use offensive words toward other Members or toward Staff during Council or Board/Committee meetings, in accordance with the Municipality's Procedure Bylaw;
- (l) Members shall not put into question the integrity of Staff during Council or Board/Committee meetings, in accordance with the Municipality's Code of Conduct and Procedure Bylaw;
- (m) Members shall be respectful of Staff in the workplace and shall not denigrate Staff in public or on social media;
- (n) Members shall refrain from any behaviour that the Member knows, or should reasonably know, is offensive and/or unwelcome.

## 2. Role of Board Members

- (a) The role of Board Members is to represent the Municipality and serve the Board or Committee on which they are appointed;
- (b) Board Members shall seek to advance the common good of the Municipality;
- (c) Board Members shall act in a way that enhances public confidence in local government;
- (d) Board Members shall work with the CAO, Members and Senior Management in a collaborative and supportive manner and not seek to usurp the administrative or legislative function of Staff or Council;
- (e) Board Members shall not direct Staff or intimidate Staff in the performance of their duties;
- (f) Board Members should respect the time of Staff by providing advance notice of any substantial questions to be raised at a meeting so that they may have the required time to provide an adequate response;
- (g) Board Members should only seek to direct Staff through a resolution of the Board or Committee passed at a duly constituted meeting;
- (h) Board Members shall not speak disrespectfully or use offensive words toward other Board Members, Members or Staff during Board or Committee meetings, in accordance with the Municipality's Code of Conduct and Procedure Bylaw;
- (i) Board Members shall not put into question the integrity of Staff during meetings, in accordance with the Municipality's Code of Conduct and Procedure Bylaw;
- (j) Board Members shall be respectful of Staff in the workplace and shall not denigrate Staff in public or on social media;
- (k) Board Members shall refrain from any behaviour that they know, or should reasonably know, is offensive and/or unwelcome.

## 3. Role of 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/Board Members and Staff, while maintaining a separate and distinct role;
- (c) The CAO shall remind Staff and Members/Board 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/Board Members in the workplace and not denigrate Members in public or on social media;

- (f) The CAO shall be courteous to Members/Board Members and respect the rules of decorum during Council and Board/Committee meetings, in accordance with the Staff Code of Conduct and Ethics;
- (g) The CAO shall refrain from any behaviour that the CAO knows, or should reasonably know, is offensive and/or unwelcome.

#### 4. Role of Staff

- (a) Staff shall seek to advance the common good of the Municipality;
- (b) Staff shall act in a way that enhances public confidence in local government;
- (c) 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;
- (d) Staff will generally communicate with individual Members/Board Members through the CAO;
- (e) Staff shall be respectful of Members/Board Members in the workplace and not denigrate Members/Board Members in public or on social media;
- (f) Staff shall be courteous to Members/Board Members and respect the rules of decorum during Council and Board/Committee meetings, in accordance with the Staff Code of Conduct and Ethics;
- (g) 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;
- (h) Staff shall refrain from any behaviour that the Staff member knows, or should reasonably know, is offensive and/or unwelcome;
- (i) Staff shall not speak disrespectfully or use offensive words toward other Staff or toward Members/Board Members during Council or Committee meetings, in accordance with the Municipality's Procedure Bylaw;
- (j) Staff shall not put into question the integrity of Members/Board Members during Council or Board/Committee meetings, in accordance with the Municipality's Procedure Bylaw.

#### **6. Adherence To Other Codes And Policies**

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

- (a) Procedure Bylaw;
- (b) Council Code of Conduct;
- (c) Staff Code of Conduct and Ethics;
- (d) Workplace Violence and Harassment Policy.

#### **7. Responsibilities**

Members, Board 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.

## **8. Monitoring/Contraventions**

(a) The CAO and Department Heads shall be responsible for receiving complaints and/or concerns related to this Policy.

(b) Upon receipt of a complaint and/or concern, the CAO and Department Heads shall notify:

- i) In the case of Staff other than the CAO, the Supervisor;
- ii) In the case of the CAO, Members of Council; or
- iii) In the case of a Member of Council or Board Member the Integrity Commissioner.

(c) The CAO 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;

(d) Members of 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;

(e) The Integrity Commissioner shall receive all complaints under this policy related to Members/Board Members 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.

## **9. Legislative And Administrative Authorities**

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.

The Municipality includes in its Council-Staff Relations Policy members of Boards and Committees to ensure a tolerant and respectful workplace for its Staff that includes the important work done for the Municipality by its Boards and Committees.

## **10. Enquiries**

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