

Policy: Accountability & Transparency Policy

Main Contact: Clerk

Last Revision: April 2017

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Purpose/Application

This policy applies to all operations within the Corporation of the Town of Renfrew and is prepared in accordance with The Municipal Act, 2001 c.25, s.270 (the Act), as amended. The Act requires that all municipalities adopt and maintain a policy with respect to “the manner in which the municipality will try to ensure that it is accountable to the public for its actions and the manner in which the municipality will try to ensure that its actions are transparent to the public”.

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on how the Corporation of the Town of Renfrew ensures municipal matters are approached in an accountable and transparent manner.

DEFINITIONS

In this policy, the terms “accountability” and “transparency” have the following meaning:

Accountability: The principle that the municipality is obligated to demonstrate and take responsibility for its actions, decisions and policies and that it is answerable to the public at large.

Transparency: The principle that the municipality will conduct its business in an accessible, clear and visible manner and that its activities are open to examination by its stakeholders.

Statement

Council of the Town of Renfrew acknowledges that it is responsible to provide good government for its stakeholders in an accountable and transparent manner, guided by the following principles:

1. Encouraging public access and participation to ensure that decision making is responsive to the needs of its constituents and receptive to their opinions;
2. Delivering high quality services to our citizens; and
3. Promoting the efficient use of public resources.

Accountability, transparency and openness are standards of good government that enhance public trust. They are achieved through the Town of Renfrew adopting measures to ensure, to the best of its ability, that all activities and services are undertaken utilizing a process that is open and accessible to its stakeholders. In addition, wherever possible, the Town of Renfrew will engage its stakeholders throughout its decision making process which will be open, visible and transparent to the public.

Requirements

The principles of accountability and transparency shall apply equally to the political process and decision making and to the administrative management of the municipality.

The Town is accountable and transparent to its stakeholders by fulfilling various legislative responsibilities and disclosure of information, and shall conduct its business within its jurisdiction in accordance with the Provincial Statutes, Ontario Regulations and any other applicable laws including, but not limited to, the *Municipal Act, 2001*; *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*; *Planning Act*, *Provincial Offences Act*, *Ontario Building Code Act*, *Fire Protection and Prevention Act*, *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*; and *Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act*.

Financial Matters

The Town of Renfrew will be open, accountable and transparent to its citizens in its financial dealings as required under the Act.

Examples of this principle are:

- External audit
- Reporting/statements
- Long-term financial planning
- Asset management

- Purchasing/procurement
- Sale of land
- Budget process

Governance

The Town of Renfrew shall provide governance in an open manner through communication, consultation and collaboration. All policies, procedures and practices shall ensure that its operations are transparent and that mechanisms are in place to make residents aware of how decisions are made and carried out.

All meetings of Council and its local boards, agencies and committees shall be open to the public when and as required under the Act, and members of the public will have an opportunity to make delegations or comments in writing on specific items at these meetings as outlined in the Town's Procedural By-Law. Meetings are publicly posted in advance, with the rationale for discussing matters *in camera* being disclosed.

Town information shall be readily available to the public subject to the requirements of the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

The following are policies, procedures that ensure the Town is transparent in its operations:

- Procedural By-Law
- Public Posting and Distribution of Council Agenda Meeting Documentation
- Public Notice By-Law
- Purchasing/Tendering By-Law
- Land Sale By-Law
- Records Retention By-Law
- Social Media Policy
- Accessibility Plan

Internal Accountability and Ethical Standards

The municipality's administrative practices ensure specific accountability on the part of its employees through the following initiatives:

- Human Resources Policies and Procedures
 - i. Violence and Harassment in the Workplace
 - ii. Code of Conduct for Employees
 - iii. Hiring
- Code of Conduct for Council
- Municipal Election Process

- Accessibility Training

Monitoring/Contravention

This policy shall be reviewed every five years or at such time as may be deemed appropriate to ensure its effectiveness.

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

- In the case of staff, the Department Head responsible for the areas;
- In the case of a closed meeting, the Ombudsman Office or Closed Meeting Investigator as appointed; and
- In the case of Council, Mayor or the appointed Integrity Commissioner.

Contact

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Clerk

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Change History

Policy Name	Effective Date	Significant Changes	By-law No.
Accountability & Transparency Policy	April 25, 2017		N/A