



**The Corporation of the Municipality of
Grey Highlands**

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Grey Highlands Policy

Policy Name: Council Staff Relations Policy Policy

Number: A09-A-11

Department: Administration

Authority: Council

Effective Date: June 2, 2021 resolution 2021-384

Supersedes: n/a

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1. Purpose

The Municipality of Grey Highlands is committed to a respectful and productive relationship between and amongst Council, Members of Council, and the officers and employees of the municipality, in furtherance of their respective roles established by statute, municipal by-laws and policies, corporate administrative direction, and operating conventions.

2. Scope

This Policy is legislated under the Municipal Act s. 270(1) (2.1). The purpose of this Policy is to guide the nature of business interactions between Members of Council and Municipal Staff.

This Policy applies to all elected officials and staff of the Municipality of Grey Highlands.

Interpretation of this Policy is to be guided by the statutory and policy framework within which the Municipality is governed. This framework includes:

i) Role of Council

It is the role of council, (s224, the Act)

- (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.

ii) Role of Head of Council,

It is the role of the head of council to (s225, the Act)

- (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 [(d) and (d.1) above];
- (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.

iii) Head of Council as Chief Executive Officer

As chief executive officer of a municipality, the head of council shall: (s226.1, the Act)

- (a) uphold and promote the purposes of the municipality;
- (b) promote public involvement in the municipality's activities;

- (c) act as the representative of the municipality both within and outside the municipality, and promote the municipality locally, nationally and internationally; and
- (d) participate in and foster activities that enhance the economic, social and environmental well-being of the municipality and its residents.

iv) The role of Chief Administrative Officer (s229, the Act)

- (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.

Additional responsibilities as outlined in Chief Administrative Officer Job Description:

The Chief Administrative Officer is accountable for the management of the affairs of the Municipality in accordance with the policies and direction/decisions of Council.

As chief policy advisor to Council, the CAO provides effective advice and support to Council, provides recommendations to resolve issues and develops and implements policies, programs and initiatives as directed by Council.

The CAO oversees the Municipality's financial management by ensuring that effective accounting and financial systems and controls are in place.

The CAO is directly responsible for the supervision of all department heads and indirectly for the supervision of all municipal employees excluding employees within the Grey Highlands Library System.

The CAO, in conjunction with Council, is responsible for implementing the strategic vision, mission and values of Council.

v) Role of Municipal Administration (s227, the Act)

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.

3. Definitions

The Act: means the Municipal Act, 2001

Member(s) of Council: all individuals elected or appointed to the Council for the Municipality of Grey Highlands who have taken the declaration of office for the current term.

Staff: officers, directors, full and part-time employees, temporary employees, contract employees, students, and volunteers of the Municipality of Grey Highlands or of a local board of the Municipality, as the case may be.

CAO: Chief Administrative Officer.

Member of the public: any person or entity residing and/or having a business, ceremonial or policy interest in the Municipality of Grey Highlands.

Senior Management Team (SMT): Leadership Management Team of the Municipality of Grey Highlands, consisting of the CAO, Municipality's Directors and additional staff members appointed by the CAO.

Municipality: The Corporation of the Municipality of Grey Highlands.

4. Policy

a) General Relationship between Staff and Members of Council:

Council is the policy and decision-making authority for the Municipality, and only Council, as a whole can, direct Staff.

Individual Members of Council have a responsibility to support Council's role to represent the public and to consider the well-being and interests of the Municipality, and in that regard have a representative relationship with the citizens and businesses they serve.

Members of Council require advice and information from staff in order to fulfill their constituent, decision-making and oversight responsibilities.

Communications between staff and members of Council, and between members of Council and staff, must be courteous and professional. All communications should take into account:

- The author's and the recipient's responsibilities under the respective provision, policy, procedure or code of conduct applicable to the person
- The impact upon any member of the public involved
- The legitimate corporate or departmental priority of the matter
- The anticipated length of time it would take to properly comply with a request

Communications, especially communications shared with members of the public, should not be disparaging of any person. Legitimately held criticisms shall be stated directly and professionally, clearly identified as the author's own opinion. This Policy does not condone the making of defamatory statements or statements based on conjecture.

Communications made in the course of a matter before a committee or local board, or before Municipal Council, shall be done in compliance with the applicable procedural by-law.

b) Members of the Public

Members of Council Communications with Staff on Behalf of a Member of the Public:

When a Member of Council desires to bring a matter to the attention of staff on behalf of a member of the public, such as to ask a question or to act in a representative capacity for a constituent, the Member of Council shall communicate only with Members of SMT.

When a Member of Council is uncertain or requires assistance to determine which member of SMT would be most appropriate to address the matter, the Member of Council should contact the CAO or the Municipal Clerk for advice.

Members of Council shall respect the role of staff and shall refrain from engaging in administrative matters. When a matter has been forwarded to staff, the Member of Council shall refrain from interfering with staff's carriage of the matter.

This Policy is not intended to inhibit any Member of Council from carrying out their duties. It does require however that prior to communicating directly with a staff member on behalf of a member of the public, the Member of Council consider the following preferred courses of action:

- It is preferred that the member of the public be referred directly to the appropriate department by providing contact information or reference to established corporate or departmental procedure.
- For routine matters, where it is necessary to do so in order to provide an appropriate level of customer service to a member of the public, the Member of

Council may attend at a public counter or provide a personal introduction to a department or a member of staff normally accessible to members of the public. In so doing, The Member of Council should not interfere with staff nor attempt to influence an outcome.

- For matters that have been referred to an appropriate department or member of staff, the Member of Council may request, having obtained the consent of the member of the public involved, to receive status updates for tracking purposes and for communicating with the member of the public.
- For matters that involve the administration of justice, such as by-law enforcement, Members of Council shall refrain from making requests or statements or taking actions which may be construed as an attempt to influence the independent administration of justice.

c) Communications between Members of Council and Staff:

All urgent matters should be brought to the attention of the CAO.

To maintain tracking and public records, whenever possible, Council members should communicate with Staff through email and copy the CAO.

Staff will endeavour to acknowledge non-urgent email communications within one business day.

Matters referred to staff by a Member of Council will be responded to in accordance with the department's standard practice and or corporate Complaints Policy.

For matters which have been referred to staff by a Member of Council, staff may, where the consent of the member of the public involved has been obtained, provide status updates to the Member of Council for tracking purposes and for communicating with the member of the public. This Policy however does not override confidentiality or privacy requirements that may otherwise apply.

Unless the matter is urgent, Members of Council and staff shall refrain from texting or contacting each other by telephone outside of regular business hours.

d) Meetings:

Requests for staff attendance at meetings organized by a Member of Council shall be made to the CAO. Notice of at least 24 hours should be provided except in urgent circumstances.

Members of Council, unless invited shall not attend a staff meetings, or a meetings involving staff and members of the public, without first seeking permission to attend from the CAO.

e) Policy Management

Staff are authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect to this policy.

This Policy forms part of the ethical framework for Members of Council and the Integrity Commissioner may at any time be consulted by a Member of Council with regard to interpretation or compliance.

The Municipal Clerk is delegated the authority to make administrative changes to this Policy that may be required from time to time due to legislative changes or if, in the opinion of the Municipal Clerk, the amendments do not change the intent of the policy.

Additional related resources:

A09-C-10 – Council Liaison Policy

A09-H-08 – Workplace Violence and Harassment Policy

A09-A-06 – Communication Policy

A09-H-07 – Employee Conduct Policy

By-law 2016-61 – Council Code of Conduct

Job Description – Chief Administrative Officer