

CITY OF ORILLIA POLICY MANUAL

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|-------------|----|---------------------------------|------------------|
| Part | 1 | General Government | 1.13.1.1. |
| Section | 13 | Municipal Act | |
| Sub-Section | 1 | Accountability and Transparency | |
| Policy | 1 | Policy | |

PURPOSE:

The *Municipal Act, 2001 c. 25, s. 270* (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.

This policy shall provide guidance for the delivery of the municipality's activities and services in accordance with the principles of accountability and transparency outlined herein.

POLICY STATEMENT:

The City of Orillia is an accountable and transparent organization and is committed to:

- Openness and fairness when transacting City business
- Efficient and effective financial management
- An open, responsive meeting process that ensures citizens have access to and awareness of the Council/Committee business being discussed
- Providing access to public information consistent with legislative requirements
- Ensuring staff conduct themselves in accordance with corporate values as outlined in the Corporate Plan
- Responding in a timely manner to enquiries, concerns and complaints
- Ensuring delegated responsibilities are documented and include appropriate oversight
- Knowing, understanding and following any legislative mandate approved by the Provincial or the Federal government

Accountability, transparency and openness are standards of good government that enhance public trust. These standards are achieved through the adoption of municipal policies and procedures that ensure all activities and services are conducted utilizing a process that is open and accessible to citizens. Wherever possible, the City will engage its citizens and stakeholders throughout its decision making process, which will be open, visible and transparent to the public.

DEFINITIONS:

Accountability: The concept or principle that a municipality is responsible to its citizens for its actions, decisions and policies and may be required to explain them and answer for resulting consequences.

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Transparency: The concept or principle that the municipality is open, clear and visible to those it serves and actively encourages stakeholder participation and openness in its decision making process. Citizens must be able to "see through" a municipality's inner workings to know exactly what goes on when public officials transact public business.

OPERATING PRINCIPLES:

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

A. Financial Matters:

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

Examples of this operating principle are:

- internal/external audit
- reporting/statements
- long term financial planning
- asset management
- purchasing/procurement
- sale of land
- budget process
- signing authority by-law

B. Governance

Members of Council

The City's commitment to transparent and accountable governance is demonstrated in Chapter 27 of the City of Orillia Municipal Code - Code of Conduct for Members of Council, Committees and Local Boards.

The Code of Conduct sets a minimum standard for the ethical behavior of Members of Council, committees and local boards while they fulfill their mandate and establishes guidelines for appropriate behavior to ensure that:

- (a) The decision-making process of Council is open, accountable and transparent;
- (b) Decisions are made through appropriate channels of government structure;

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- (c) Differences are respected and the duty to work together for the common good is recognized;
- (d) The conduct of all members is of the highest standard.

Employees

The City's administrative policies and procedures serve to ensure the accountability of municipal employees. The Code of Conduct for employees establishes guidelines that are designed to ensure that employees carry out their duties in such a way as to avoid conflict of interest and to avoid the perception that their actions are motivated by anything other than fairness and objectivity.

The City's employee Code of Conduct is supplemented by policies and procedures that ensure the accountability of employees through the following initiatives:

- performance management and evaluation
- hiring policy
- orientation/continuing education
- health and safety
- compensation/benefit
- responsibility for ensuring that administrative practices and procedures recognize Council's commitment to accountability and transparency

C. Public Participation and Information Sharing

The City will ensure that it is open and accountable to its citizens and stakeholders through the implementation of processes that outline how, when and under what rules meetings will take place. The municipality's meetings will be open to the public as required under the *Act*. The City has adopted processes that will ensure that participation by the public is meaningful and effective through timely disclosure of information by various means including:

- procedure by-laws
- corporate plan
- deputation rules
- records retention by-law
- planning processes
- notice policy
- news releases
- media advisories
- freedom of access process pursuant to legislation

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Council's Information Package (CIP) is distributed weekly and contains items that are for information purposes only. Examples of CIP items include correspondence from the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, memos from staff regarding upcoming by-laws, public notices, tenders, notices to residents, news releases, resolutions from other municipalities as well as other miscellaneous items as directed by the Clerk. This package is available for public viewing on the City's website, along with all Council agendas and minutes. Regular City Council and Committee meetings air on Rogers Cable TV Channel 10 and are streamed live on the Rogers TV Orillia City Council website.

The Bulletin Board and Municipal Monthly are published in the Packet and Times and are also available to the public on the City's website. The Bulletin Board provides the public with notices pertaining to Council meetings, public meetings as well as other City business. The Municipal Monthly provides information related to City initiatives, programs and services.

The City's social media platforms have become an important tool in engaging and facilitating a well-informed public. Information regarding City Council meetings, public meetings, programs and services are regularly shared on the City's social media sites.

D. ADMINISTRATIVE

The City has developed a Corporate Complaints Procedure and Customer Service Guidelines in order to ensure that a consistent and transparent process is followed in response to inquiries, concerns and complaints received from members of the public regarding City programs, facilities, services, staff and operational procedures.

Complaints that have been escalated to an employee's supervisor or manager, Director or the Chief Administrative Officer are logged in the City's Corporate Complaints database in order to track:

- The number of complaints being escalated;
- The nature of the complaints;
- The name and contact information of the complainant;
- The resolution or outcome of the complaint.

REVIEW PERIOD:

This policy shall be reviewed every five years. Notice of the review of this policy shall be given in accordance with City of Orillia Policy 1.2.7.1. - General - Public Notice Requirements.

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COMPLAINT PROCESS:

The Chief Administrative Officer/City Clerk shall be responsible for collecting concerns or complaints related to this policy. Upon notification of a concern/complaint, the Clerk shall notify:

- a) in the case of staff, the department head responsible for the area or the Chief Administrative Officer
- b) in the case of closed meetings, the meeting investigator
- c) in the case of Council, the Mayor or the Integrity Commissioner

(R. 2007-378 07.12.10)

(R. 2010-230 10.09.20)

(R. 2012-287D 12.10.22)

(R. 2017-216 17.11.06)