

COUNCIL POLICY		Effective:	Mar. 3, 2020
		Approved:	Mar. 3, 2020
Policy:	Accountability and Transparency	By-law:	n/a
Section:	Governance / Administration	Resolution:	12/2020
Application:	Members of Council and Staff of the Municipality of Port Hope	Supercedes:	None

1.0 Application and Purpose

Accountability, transparency, and openness are standards of good government that enhance public trust. They are achieved by the Municipality adopting measures ensuring, to the best of its ability, that activities and services are undertaken utilizing a process that is open and accessible to its stakeholders. In addition, the Municipality will have a process to engage its stakeholders throughout its decision-making process, which will be open, visible, and transparent to the public.

The Municipality of Port Hope acknowledges that it is responsible to provide good government for its stakeholders in an accountable and transparent manner by:

- Encouraging public access and participation to ensure that decision-making is responsive to the needs of its constituents and receptive to their opinions;
- Delivering quality services and information to its citizens; and,
- Promoting the efficient use of public resources.

This Policy has been developed in accordance with Section 270 of the Municipal Act, 2001 (the “Act”). 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 guides the delivery of the Municipality’s activities and services in accordance with the Act and the principles described herein.

The Policy shall apply to both the political decision-making processes, and the administrative management of the Municipality. This policy does not supersede or replace the previously adopted Accountability Framework, Council and Committee Code of Conduct, or Staff and Council Relations Policy but instead looks to further enhance the Municipality’s commitments to accountability and transparency.

2.0 Definitions

The following terms shall have the following meanings in this Policy:

“Accountability” shall mean the principle that the Municipality will be responsible to its stakeholders for decision made and policies implemented, as well as its actions or inactions.

“Stakeholder” shall mean any individual person, organization or entity that has an interest or stake in the Municipality’s business, actions, or inactions.

“Transparency” shall mean the principle that the Municipality actively encourages and fosters stakeholder participation and openness in its decision-making processes. Additionally, transparency means that the Municipality’s decision-making process is open and clear to the public.

3.0 General Policy Principles

1. Financial Matters

The Municipality will be open, accountable, and transparent to its stakeholders in its financial dealings as required under the Act. Some examples of how the Municipality provides such accountability and transparency are as follows:

- a) Annual external audit
- b) Annual reporting/financial statements
- c) Purchasing and procurement policies
- d) Disposition and sale of land policies
- e) Annual open budget processes
- f) Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act
- g) Fees and Charges by-law
- h) Council remuneration policy
- i) Municipal Conflict of Interest Act

2. Internal Governance

The Municipality’s administrative practices ensure specific accountability on the part of its employees and members of Council through the following initiatives:

- a) Council and committee code of conduct
- b) Employee code of conduct
- c) Staff and council relations policy
- d) Human resource policies and practices including performance management
- e) Orientation efforts
- f) Professional development opportunities
- g) Workplace health and safety policies
- h) Workplace violence, harassment, and discrimination policies
- i) Appointment of Integrity Commissioner and Closed Meeting Investigator

3. Public Participation and Information Sharing

The Municipality ensures that it is open and accountable to its stakeholders through implementing processes outlining how, when, and under what rules Council meetings will take place. The calling, place, and proceeding of Council's meetings are governed by the Municipality's current Procedural By-law. Such meetings will be open to the public when and as required by the Act, and members of the public will have an opportunity to make delegations or submit questions or comments in person or in writing on specific items at these meetings. Further, Council is governed by the Accountability Framework including a Code of Conduct for Council and Committees and associated complaint protocol.

In addition, the Municipality has adopted policies which ensure that participation by the public can be meaningful and effective, through timely disclosure of information by various means including print media, social media, website, etc.

Some specific examples include:

- a) Procedural By-law including delegation rules and requirements
- b) The publication of Council/Committee minutes and agendas
- c) By-laws establishing Advisory Committee compositions and mandates
- d) Restrictions and processes relative to Agenda item additions
- e) Strategic Plan
- f) Records retention by-law
- g) Routine disclosure by-law
- h) Public meetings and associated notices for planning applications, development charges, and budget.

4.0 REVIEW AND MONITORING/CONTRAVENTION

This policy shall be reviewed within the first year of a new Council term or at such other time as may be deemed appropriate to ensure its effectiveness. The Clerk will be responsible for initiating the review of this Policy.

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

- a) In the case of staff, the Department Head responsible for the area;
- b) In the case of a closed meeting, the Closed Meeting Investigator; and
- c) In the case of Council, the Head of Council.