



**THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF WASAGA BEACH**  
**POLICY MANUAL**

<b>SECTION NAME:</b> Council	<b>POLICY NUMBER:</b> 1-2
<b>POLICY:</b> Accountability and Transparency	<b>REVIEW DATE:</b> November 2018
<b>EFFECTIVE DATE:</b> January 22, 2008	<b>REVISIONS:</b> November 26, 2013
<b>ADOPTED BY BY-LAW:</b> By-Law No. 2008-11 By-Law No. 2013-101	<b>ADMINISTERED BY:</b> Town Clerk

**PURPOSE**

The *Municipal Act, 2001* (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 for the delivery of the municipality’s activities and services in accordance with the principles as outlined herein. This policy has been developed in accordance with the Act to comply with Section 270.

**SCOPE**

This policy applies to all employees and volunteers of the Town of Wasaga Beach.

**DEFINITIONS**

**Accountability** – The principle that the municipality will be responsible to its stakeholders for decisions made and policies implemented, as well as its actions or inactions.

**Transparency** – 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.

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

The Council of the Town of Wasaga Beach 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;
- Delivery high quality services in an accessible manner to our citizens; and
- Promoting the efficient use of public resources.
- Making records available for review other than those specifically prohibited by law

Accountability, transparency and openness are standards of good government that enhance public trust. They are achieved through the municipality adopting measures ensuring, 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 municipality will engage its stakeholders throughout its decision making process which will be open, visible and transparent to the public.

## **POLICY 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.

### **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:

- Internal/external audit
- Reporting/statements
- Long term financial planning
- Asset management
- Purchasing/procurement policy
- Sale of land
- Budget process, including service analysis
- Open and inclusive priority setting
- Development Charges
- Fees and Charges

## **2. Internal governance**

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

- Code of conduct for staff
- Performance management and evaluation
- Hiring policy/procedures
- Orientation/continuing education
- Health and Safety
- Compensation/benefit
- Responsibility for ensuring that administrative practices and procedures recognize Council's commitment to accountability and transparency (CAO)

## **3. Public Participation**

The municipality ensures that it is open and accountable to its stakeholders through implementing processes outlining how, when and under what rules meetings will take place. The municipality's meetings will 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. 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, websites, etc. Some specific examples include:

- Code of Conduct for members of Council
- Procedural By-Law
- Inclusive strategic planning
- Delegation rules
- Records retention
- Planning processes
- Joint priority and goal setting
- Provision and procedures for Notice Policy
- Closed Meeting Investigator
- Sale of Land Policy and procedures

## **4. Actions to promote accountability and transparency**

Schedule "A" attached provides a number of actions that have been established by the Town to promote accountability and transparency.

## **POLICY REVIEW AND PROCEDURE**

This Policy will be reviewed as required, but in any case no later than five (5) years from the date of the most recent review.

The Clerk will be responsible for initiating the review of this Policy.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Schedule "A" – Accountability and Transparency

## **SCHEDULE “A”**

### **ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY**

- Agendas and Minutes of the Committee of the whole, Standing Committees of Council and Council Meetings are posted on the Town’s website. Whenever possible the agendas are posted a minimum of 24 hours before the meeting.
- Advisory Committees agendas and minutes are posted on the Town’s website.
- Closed Session Committee and Council Agendas identify the title of the item wherever possible and the criteria or reason for the closed meeting.
- Council holds Public Forums to provide updates to the public and receive feedback from the public on Council’s objectives and goals for its term and as such helps them evaluate the effectiveness of its role and performance.
- Quarterly Budget Reports advise members of Council and the public as to the status of the budget expenditures and flag any areas of concern.
- The Sale of Land By-Law/Policy sets out the procedure for the sale or disposal of Town owned land.
- The Purchasing/Procurement By-Law/Policy identifies the process for the purchase of goods and services.
- The Hiring Policy provides for the hiring of Town staff and addresses such matters as the hiring of relatives and the process to be followed in recruitment of new Town staff. Employment opportunities are posted on the Town’s website and are advertised generally.
- The Notice Requirements By-Law/Policy provides for the giving of notice to the public in respect of various matters.
- The Delegation By-Law/Policy provides for the powers and duties Council has delegated.
- Council has adopted a Code of Conduct for members of Council, which provides that members of Council shall carry out their duties in an impartial and objective basis and addresses such matters as conflict of interest, release of confidential information, etc.

- Council has adopted a code of Conduct for Staff which requires staff to carry out their duties on an impartial and objective basis and addresses such matters as conflict of interest, release of confidential information, acceptance of gifts r invitations, etc.
- With respect to tax write-offs and uncollectibles, a report is prepared to Council and the public, for the purpose of considering write-offs and uncollectibles.
- Public Meetings are scheduled in accordance with the requirements of the *Planning Act*. Where Council believes that there is sufficient reason to schedule more than the one Public Meeting required by the *Act* in order to provide additional information and opportunity for the public to be heard, additional Public Meetings are held.
- The Town prepares financial statements, which are audited by the Town's external auditor and are approved by Council. Once approved, the Audited Financial Statements are posted on the Town's website.
- The Financial Information Return (FIR) is a data collection tool used by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to collect financial and statistical information on municipalities. The FIR is a standard document comprised of a number of Schedules, which are updated each year to comply with current legislation and reporting requirements. The FIR for each municipality including the Town of Wasaga Beach is posted on the Ministry of Finance website.
- The Town collects data to measure the Town's performance in 12 municipal service areas pursuant to the Municipal Performance Measurement Program (MPMP) thereby providing the public with information on service delivery.
- The Annual Drinking Water Reports for Wasaga Beach are available for public viewing at the Town Hall and Public Works Department during regular business hours or by visiting the Town's website. The reports provide a brief description for the water systems in the previous year, and the most recent water quality data.
- The Town Clerk has been appointed to oversee the administration of the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (MFIPPA) within the Town, including the Public Library, to ensure that information available to the public is properly disclosed and that in accordance with MFIPPA the privacy of an individual's personal information existing in government records is protected.

- The Fees and Charges By-Law is updated annually at a meeting open to the public.
- At the beginning of each Council Term a resolution is adopted at a public meeting setting out the staff and officers of the Corporation who are authorized to sign cheques.
- A Public Presentation is held by Committee of the Whole as Budget Committee annually, to present the Budget for public feedback. Corporate departmental goals and objectives are included in the Budget.
- The Development Charges By-Law provides for annual reporting of the actual expenditures and proposed expenditures. There is a legislated requirement to review the By-Law within a five (5) year period.
- The Town's website has a full listing of Committee and Council Agendas dating back several years as well as copies of by-laws, studies, policies and procedures governing the municipality.
- The Town's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is reviewed at least every five (5) years and posted on the Town's website outlining the Town's strategy to prevent and remove barriers. A progress report is submitted annually to Council on the progress of measures taken to implement the strategy outlined in the Accessibility Plan, and is posted on the Town's website.