



Council Code of Conduct

Approved by Council: December 16, 2013

Purpose and Application:

The residents of the City of Prince George are entitled to have a fair, ethical and accountable municipal Council that has earned the public's full confidence for integrity. The purpose of this Code is to establish guidelines for the ethical and interpersonal conduct of members of Council ("Members").

The public expects a responsive local government with the highest standards of professional conduct from Members elected to it. Honesty, integrity, objectivity, due diligence and accountability are some of the core ethical values reflected in this Code. Members are expected to perform their functions of office faithfully and to the best of their knowledge and ability, in accordance with these core ethical values.

This Code applies to all Members of City Council.

1. Act in the Public Interest

Council shall act in the public interest by conducting its business with integrity, in a fair, honest and open manner.

2. Comply with the Laws

Members shall comply with all applicable federal, provincial, and municipal laws in the performance of their public duties, including but not limited to: the *Local Government Act*, the *Community Charter*, the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, the *Financial Disclosure Act*, and all applicable City bylaws and policies.



CITY OF PRINCE GEORGE POLICY

3. Conduct of Members

The conduct of members in the performance of their duties and responsibilities with the City must be fair, open and honest. Members shall refrain from abusive conduct, personal charges or verbal attacks upon the character or motives of other members of Council, committees, the City staff or the public.

4. Respect for Process

Members shall perform their duties in accordance with the policies and procedures and rules of order established by the City Council governing the deliberation of public policy issues, involvement of the public, and implementation of policy decisions of the Council by City staff.

5. Conduct of Meetings

Members shall prepare themselves for meetings, listen courteously and attentively to all discussions before the body, and focus on the business at hand. Members shall not interrupt other speakers, make personal comments not germane to the business of the body, or otherwise interfere with the orderly conduct of a meeting.

6. Decisions Based on Merit

Members shall base their decisions on the relevant merits and substance of the matter at hand, including input received from City staff and the public.



CITY OF PRINCE GEORGE POLICY

7. Sharing Substantive Information

Subject to paragraph 10, members shall share with Council substantive information that is relevant to a matter under consideration by the Council, which they may have received from sources outside of the public decision-making process. If a member has a concern regarding whether the information received should be shared, the member shall first consult with the City Manager or Director of Legislative Services.

8. Conflict of Interest

Members shall familiarize themselves and act in accordance with the provisions set out in the conflict of interest sections of the *Community Charter*.

9. Gifts

Members must not, directly or indirectly, accept a fee, gift or personal benefit that is connected with the member's performance of their duties, except in accordance with the provisions of the *Community Charter*.

10. Confidential Information

Members shall respect the confidentiality of information concerning the property, personnel, legal affairs, or other information of the City distributed for the purposes of, or considered in, a closed Council meeting. Members shall neither disclose confidential information without proper authorization, nor use such information to advance their own or anyone's personal, financial or other private interests. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, members shall not disclose Council resolutions or staff report contents from a closed meeting of Council unless and until a Council decision has been made for the information to become public, and shall not disclose detail on Council's closed meeting deliberations or how individual members voted on a question in a closed meeting.



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11. Use of Public Resources

Members shall not use City public resources such as staff time, equipment, supplies or facilities, for private gain or personal purposes. Specifically, members shall not undertake municipal election campaign related activities at City Hall or on other premises owned by the City during regular working hours, unless such activities are organized by the City (e.g. all-candidate information sessions). Members shall not use City-owned equipment, technology or other property for municipal election campaign work (e.g. photocopiers, computers, etc.).

12. Advocacy

Members shall represent the official policies or positions of the City Council to the best of their ability when designated as delegates for this purpose. When presenting their individual opinions and positions, members shall explicitly state they do not represent Council or the City, nor shall they allow the inference that they do.

13. Policy Role of Members

Members shall respect and adhere to the Council-City Manager structure of municipal government as practised in the City. In this structure, the Council determines the policies of the City with the advice, information and analysis provided by the City staff and Council committees. Members therefore shall not interfere with the administrative functions of the City or with the professional duties of City staff, nor shall they impair the ability of staff to implement Council policy decisions.

14. Positive Work Place Environment

Members shall treat other members, the public and City staff with respect and shall be supportive of the personal dignity, self-esteem and well being of those with whom they come in contact with during the course of their professional duties. Comments about City staff performance shall only be made to the City Manager through private correspondence or conversation.



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Member's requests for information from staff shall be directed to the City Manager, a Director, or the Superintendent of Operations. If the response constitutes more than a technical clarification, then the response shall be provided to all Members so that all members have access to the same information.

16. Implementation

As an expression of the standards of conduct for members expected by the City, this Code is intended to be self-enforcing. This Code therefore becomes most effective when members are thoroughly familiar with it and embrace its provisions. For this reason, this Code shall be provided as information to candidates for Council. Members elected to Council shall be requested to sign a member statement affirming they have read and understand this Code, and that they agree to conduct themselves in accordance with it.

17. Compliance and Enforcement

This Code expresses standards of ethical conduct expected for Members of Council. Members themselves have the primary responsibility to assure that these ethical standards are understood and met, and that the public can continue to have full confidence in the integrity of the governance of the City.

The City will not retaliate against Members or City staff who, in good faith, report a known or suspected violation of this Code. No reprisals or threat of reprisals shall be made against such a complainant, or against anyone for providing relevant information in connection with a suspected violation of this Code. Members shall respect the integrity of this Code and the enforcement of it.

City Council may impose sanctions on members whose conduct does not comply with this Code, including but not limited to a motion of censure.



CITY OF PRINCE GEORGE POLICY

To ensure procedural fairness, a member who is accused of violating any provision of this Code shall have a minimum of two weeks, or the time between two consecutive Council meetings, whichever is greater, to prepare his or her response to these allegations. Specifically, before considering a sanction, Council must ensure that a member is provided with:

1. a copy of a written report setting out the alleged breach of this Code, and possible sanctions that may be considered against him or her;
2. a minimum of two weeks, or the time between two consecutive meetings, whichever is greater, to prepare a response against any allegations and possible sanctions;
and
3. an opportunity to make representations and be heard by Council.

A violation of this Code shall not be considered a basis for challenging the validity of a Council decision.



STAFF REPORT TO COUNCIL CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

1100 Patricia Boulevard, Prince George, B.C., V2L 3V9

DATE: December 9 2013

TO: MAYOR AND COUNCIL

FROM: WALTER BABICZ, DIRECTOR OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

SUBJECT: Council Code of Conduct

ATTACHMENT(S): Schedule "A" - Council Code of Conduct
Schedule "B" - Member Statements

RECOMMENDATION(S):

1. That the Council Code of Conduct attached to the report as Schedule "A" be approved.

PURPOSE:

For Council decision.

POLICY / REGULATORY ANALYSIS:

Committee of the Whole may not decide on matters of the City's business, but may make recommendations to Council. City of Prince George Council Procedures Bylaw No. 8388, 2011 requires that the City Manager's Office report the recommendations of Committee of the Whole to Council for consideration.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

At its September 24, 2013 meeting, the Committee of the Whole considered a Staff Report setting out background information regarding a Code of Conduct, including the existing legal framework relating to conduct and ethical obligations of members of Council. The Committee of the Whole resolved to establish a Code of Conduct, and provided Administration with feedback in response to the first draft of the Code of Conduct presented at that meeting.

Administration then returned a revised Code of Conduct for consideration by the Committee of the Whole at its November 20, 2013 meeting. At that meeting, the Committee of the Whole provided Administration with further feedback and suggested amendments to the Code of Conduct. The Committee of the Whole resolved to recommend that Council approved the revised Code of Conduct, with the amendments suggested at that meeting.

Administration has made the amendments suggested at the November 20, 2013 Committee of the Whole meeting, and is now presenting the Code of Conduct to Council for approval.

At the November 20, 2013 Committee of the Whole meeting, it was suggested that when Council approves the Code of Conduct, each member of Council would sign a statement affirming that they have read and understand the Code of Conduct, and that they agree to conduct themselves in accordance with it. Accordingly, copies of the individualized member statements will be available for signing at the December 16 Council meeting, and are attached as Schedule "B" to this report.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

At its November 20, 2013 meeting, the Committee of the Whole recommended that Council approve the Council Code of Conduct, with certain amendments. Administration has made those amendments and is now returning the revised Code of Conduct to Council for approval.

Respectfully submitted:



Walter Babicz
Director of Legislative Services

To: Mayor and Council





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