

 City of Woodstock	City Council Policy Manual
Subject:	Accountability and Transparency
Policy Number:	GOV-008
Revision:	03
Approved by Council:	December 13, 2007
Amended:	February 21, 2019

Statement of Principle

To establish a policy relating to Accountability and Transparency to confirm that the City is accountable to the public for its actions and to outline the manner in which the municipality will work to ensure that its actions are transparent to the public.

Policy Statement

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for the delivery of the municipality's activities and services in accordance with the principles outlined herein. This policy has been developed to comply with the provisions of Section 270 (5) of the *Municipal Act, 2001*.

Definitions

- i) 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.
- ii) Transparency - The principle that the municipality actively encourages and fosters stakeholder participation and openness in its decision making process to the public.

Policy Statement

The Council of the City of Woodstock 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 high quality services to its citizens; and
- Promoting the efficient use of public resources.

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.

Administration

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

a) Financial Matters

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

- a) Internal audits are conducted on a sporadic basis throughout the year by the Treasurer and Deputy Treasurer and an external audit is conducted annually by an independent Licensed Public Accountant.
- b) Financial Operating Statements listings are part of the Council's agenda (which is posted on the City's website) on a monthly basis and provided to Council for their approval.
- c) A five year Capital Forecast is prepared for Council's consideration on an annual basis.
- d) The City maintains a list of property assets in a property register maintained by the Treasury Department.
- e) Municipal Code Chapter 376 provides for the City's procurement of goods and services procedures and policies including policies with respect to:
 - the types of procurement processes that shall be used;
 - the goals to be achieved by using each type of procurement process;
 - the circumstances under which each type of procurement process shall be used;
 - the circumstances under which a tendering process is not required;
 - the circumstances under which in-house bids will be encouraged as part of a tendering process;
 - how the integrity of each procurement process will be maintained;
 - how the interests of the municipality or local board, as the case may be, the public and persons participating in a procurement process will be protected;
 - how and when the procurement process will be reviewed to evaluate their effectiveness; and

- any other prescribed matter.
- f) Municipal Code Chapter 185 provides for procedures for the sale or disposal of real property of the City of Woodstock;
- g) Council conducts annual budget meetings which are open to the public prior to approval of the budget. Budgets and Financial Statements are available to the public on the website.

b) Internal Governance

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

- a) The Chief Administrative Officer, with the assistance of the Human Resource Department and the City's Directors, ensure that employees undertake their duties in a responsible cooperative manner;
- b) The Chief Administrative Officer, with the assistance of the Human Resource Department and the City's Directors, ensure that employee performance evaluations are conducted in accordance with City practices;
- c) Several Policies are in place to enhance the employee's work life and ensure fairness. Those policies include:
 - HR Policy 001 – Recognition of Employees;
 - HR Policy 004 - Staff Recruitment and Selection which outlines the method and procedure used to fill staff vacancies;
 - HR Policy 005 - Benefits-Administrative Staff, Retirees which provides a method for an employee to continue with extended health care until age 65;
 - HR Policy 011 - Staff Education and Training which provides encouragement and assistance to employees to enroll in courses of all types;
 - HR Policy 013 - Recognition of Administrative Staff Overtime which provides recognition of hours of work beyond the normal workday to a limit established by Council;
 - HR Policy 015 – Nepotism which establishes a policy for the employment of immediate family in order to assure reliability and appearance of fairness and to assure and maintain accountability and to avoid business related conflicts of interest.
 - HS Policy 001 - Health and Safety Policy which provides a framework for safety accountability at all levels of the Corporation
 - HS Policy 002 - Prevention of Workplace Violence and Harassment which outlines City's commitment to the principle of equal rights and opportunities for all employees and to provide and maintain a workplace

where the dignity and worth of every employee is respected without discrimination and /or harassment;

- d) HR Policy 017 – Whistleblower provides employees protection from reprisal who, in good faith, report wrongdoing with respect to the City's operation.
- e) HR Policy 018 – Code of Conduct for Staff sets out a general standard for staff in order to reinforce the City's expectations of employees to carry out their duties on an impartial and objective basis and in a fiscally responsible manner such that the public has confidence in their integrity and their dedication to the City's best interests.
- f) Municipal Code Chapter 87 - Chief Administrative Officer - outlines the duties and responsibilities of the Chief Administrative Office for ensuring that Council's commitment to accountability and transparency is achieved.
- g) GA Policy 016 - Code of Conduct for Council, Advisory Committees and local boards sets out a general standard to enhance the public confidence that Woodstock's elected and appointed representatives operate from a base of integrity, justice and courtesy. The policy outlines a process for filing complaints if it is believed that a Councillor has violated this Code of Conduct.
- h) Meeting Investigator - The City has appointed a meeting investigator to investigate complaints in regards to alleged violations of the closed meeting provisions of the *Municipal Act*. All reports from the Meeting Investigator are posted on the City's website.
- i) Municipal Code Chapter 330 - Fees and Charges lists all the fees charged by the City and is posted on the website.

b) Public Participation and Information Sharing

The City ensures that it is open and accountable to its stakeholders through implementing processes outlining how, when and under what rules meetings take place. The City's meetings are open to the public when and as required under the Act, and members of the public have an opportunity to make delegations or comments in writing on specific items at these meetings. In addition, the City 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:

- a) Municipal Code Chapter 16 – Procedure which outlines the processes of how, when and under what rules matters are presented to Council. This by-law includes rules for giving notice of meetings to the public and under what circumstances, in accordance with the *Municipal Act*, Council will consider holding closed sessions;
- b) The City has a Strategic Plan which is available to members of the public upon request or on the City's website;

- c) The City has a Records Retention By-law which outlines the period of retention for all of the City's records;
- d) Municipal Code Chapter 180 – Public Notices which prescribes the form, manner and times when public notice will be provided prior to an action of Council;
- e) Regulatory By-laws are posted on the City's website in the Municipal Code;
- f) A registry of all pecuniary interests declared by members of Council is kept in the Clerk's Office and posted on the City's website.

Revision Date	Rev #	Particulars
July 12, 2012	01	Formerly GA021
November 19, 2015	02	Updates
February 21, 2019	03	Removal of repealed policies and inclusion of Conflict of Interest Registry