

Town of Whitewood Statement of POLICY and PROCEDURE			
Department:	General Government	Policy No.	9
Section		Issued:	
Subject:	Councillor	Effective:	
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Approved By:		Dated:	

1. POLICY

- 1.01 The Town of Whitewood shall establish a policy for Councillor based on recommendations from *Cuff's Guide for Municipal Leaders: The Case for Effective Governance Volume 2, Handbook for Urban Municipal Leaders by SUMA* and the *SUMA Elected Officials Handbook 2012-2013*.

2. PURPOSE

- 2.01 The Council of the Town of Whitewood has a broad mandate to provide good government, develop and maintain a safe and viable community and to supply desirable and or necessary services to the community. The proper operation of democratic local government requires that elected officials are independent, impartial and duly responsible to the people. Accordingly, the purpose of this policy is outlining their duties and ethical principles for all members.

3. SCOPE

- 3.01 This Statement of Policy and Procedure applies to the General Government department.

4. RESPONSIBILITY

- 4.01 Council maintains the highest standards of conduct in public office and faithfully discharges duties of their office without fear or favour.

5. PROCEDURE

- 5.01 Members of Council shall govern their conduct in accordance with the requirements and obligations set out in the municipal legislation of the Province of Saskatchewan.
- 5.02 Members of Council shall not use confidential information for personal profit of themselves or any other person.

- 5.03 Members of Council shall abstain from communicating confidential information to those who are not entitled to receive it.
- 5.04 Members of Council shall not use their position to secure special privileges, favours or advantages for themselves, or any other person.
- 5.05 Members of Council shall avoid any situation that could cause anyone to believe that they may have brought bias or partiality to a question before Council.
- 5.06 For a period of twelve (12) months after leaving office, abide by the ethical standards of conduct listed above, except those related to confidential information which shall apply in perpetuity.
- 5.07 Members of Council shall refrain from all unethical activities, whether or not specifically identified by these ethical guidelines of conduct or by legislation.
- 5.08 Council shall set the strategic direction for the urban government, establish rules about how to move in that direction, ensure the government is on track and adjust the direction when necessary.
- 5.09 Council's roles as the decision making body of the urban government includes:
- 5.09.1 Setting the strategic direction;
 - 5.09.2 Passing bylaws;
 - 5.09.3 Establishing taxation levels;
 - 5.09.4 Setting the budget;
 - 5.09.5 Determining appropriate levels of service for municipal services;
 - 5.09.6 Establishing policies; and
 - 5.09.7 Reviewing the outcomes of the work of the administration.
- 5.10 Council as a local government body is a corporation. They are incorporated through provincial legislation. In this respect, the council is equivalent to the Board of Directors. The mayor is like the chair of the board and each councillor like a member of the board. As with most corporate boards, council members do not get involved in the day-to-day operations of their urban government. It is not only a conflict of interest; it would cloud their judgment and objectivity. That is why councils hire a CAO.¹
- 5.11 Council sets the direction for the CAO and all urban staff should report, directly or indirectly, to the CAO. Only the CAO should report to council. Other staff can deliver presentations to council and engage with council as directed by the CAO or in the course of their duties, but only the CAO should be involved in the management or direction of staff. Council directs the activities of its administration by providing direction to the CAO.

- 5.12 Council has some flexibility in regards to section 5.11, given the number of communication tools available today and the role that councillors play in relaying feedback from the public. Consider these two rules when engaging with municipal staff:
 - 5.12.1 Always keep the CAO in the loop; and
 - 5.12.2 When in doubt, go through the CAO.

- 5.13 Councillors shall take into effect that if you, your family members, your employer, agent or partner might benefit from a council decision, you should reconsider being involved in making the decision. In general, it is better to err on the side of caution when it comes to conflict of interest.

- 5.14 Council is responsible for managing the big picture of finances. This may include:
 - 5.14.1 Identifying priorities;
 - 5.14.2 Adopting a budget to ensure there is money to meet local needs and priorities;
 - 5.14.3 Setting goals, objectives and standards for service delivery; and
 - 5.14.4 Setting fees for services like garbage collection, access to water or using recreation facilities.

- 5.15 Council members deal with the public every day. Most times, they want to share a complaint. Whether it's a run-in on coffee row, an upset taxpayer, a concerned citizen or even your spouse, complaints are inevitable. Here's what you can:
 - 5.15.1 Be patient and tactful – even when someone is complaining;
 - 5.15.2 Listen. Really listen;
 - 5.15.3 Note the specifics of the complaint, and get contact information for the person making the complaint;
 - 5.15.4 Do not immediately offer solutions; offer to look into the problem and get back to them;
 - 5.15.5 Pass this information on to your administration. Have them explore the issue and report on it;
 - 5.15.6 After administration reports back, discuss what they found with your CAO and perhaps council;
 - 5.15.7 Have council consider any actions that need to be taken (developing a new policy, or reviewing procedures);
 - 5.15.8 Stay in contact with the person who complained to you. Keep them informed through the whole process and provide them with any final information or outcomes;
 - 5.15.9 Make sure councillors and staff all follow similar procedures for fielding complaints;
 - 5.15.10 Have the CAO regularly bring a summary citizen feedback and responses to council.

- 5.16 That the *Handbook for Urban Municipal Leaders* published by SUMA in the month of November 2003 be hereby shown as Schedule “A” of this policy.
- 5.17 That the *Elected Officials Handbook* published by SUMA for the 2012-2013 year be hereby shown as Schedule “B” of this policy.