

Accountability and Transparency
Office of the CAO

PURPOSE

To provide a policy for outlining the measures to be taken by the Corporation of the Town of Hawkesbury to ensure that its actions are transparent and accountable to the public.

APPLICATION

As required by Section 270 of the Municipal Act, 2001, this policy shall apply to Council and all Town staff and also applies to all the Town of Hawkesbury operations.

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 Corporation of the Town of Hawkesbury acknowledges that it is responsible to promote accountable and transparent municipal governance. The Municipal Council will make every effort to ensure this goal is achieved 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;
- Promoting the efficient use of public resources;
- Municipal information will be accessible so that it is consistent with legislative requirements; and
- Inquiries, concerns and complaints will be responded to in a timely manner.

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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.

CORPORATE VALUES

Vision statement

Given its strategic location and bilingual status, Hawkesbury will be known as the core area for industrial, commercial, cultural, tourism and recreation activities, whose emerging synergy will characterize Hawkesbury as a place to discover in eastern Ontario.

Mission statement

The Corporation of the Town of Hawkesbury has for primary mission to deliver personalized services recognized by its community as being adapted to its requirements and its overall economic situation. The Corporation of the Town of Hawkesbury also has for mission to emphasize and develop its natural, economic, cultural assets and opportunities within the community in order to promote the continuous growth of its community.

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.

Open government and legislated requirements

The Town of Hawkesbury is accountable and transparent to taxpayers by fulfilling various legislated responsibilities and disclosure of information. The following are provincial statutes that govern how the Town conducts its business in a public, accountable and transparent manner:

1. *Municipal Act, 2001*
2. *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*
3. *Provincial Offences Act*
4. *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*
5. *Health Information Protection Act*
6. *Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act*

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Financial accountability

The Town of Hawkesbury will be open, accountable and transparent to its stakeholders in its financial dealings as required under the Act. The following policies, procedures and practices demonstrate the Town of Hawkesbury's best-practice financial accountability and oversight and report mechanisms, including:

1. External Auditor and its annual report
2. Monthly internal financial statements
3. Procurement policy
4. Policy on the payment of invoices
5. Policy on municipal grants
6. By-law on the sale of municipal land

Internal governance

The Town of Hawkesbury's administrative practices ensure specific accountability on the part of its employees and Council members through the following policies and guidelines:

1. Hiring policy
2. Policy on the reimbursement of travelling expenses and others to Council members and staff
3. Policy concerning the communications between Council and staff
4. Policy on the use of the corporation credit card
5. Policy on the sale of obsolete equipment
6. Guidelines on the use of the municipality's computers, access to internet, employees' training, health and safety in the workplace

Other

Other accountability measures that the Town of Hawkesbury adheres to that contribute to ensuring accountability and transparency include:

1. Council Procedure By-law
2. Public Notice By-law
3. By-law N° 6-90 on bilingualism
4. Web site where are published information for taxpayers

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RESPONSIBILITIES

Municipal Council and staff are responsible for adhering to the parameters of this policy and for ensuring accountability for their actions and transparency of municipal operations.

MONITORING/CONTRAVENTIONS

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

- a) in the case of staff, the Department Head and Director responsible for the area;
- b) in the case of Council, the Head of Council.

LEGISLATIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITIES

Section 270 of the Municipal Act, 2001 as amended requires that the Town adopts and maintains a policy with respect to ensuring accountability and transparency.

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