



MUNICIPALITY OF HURON SHORES POLICY MANUAL

SECTION: COUNCIL

POLICY TITLE: ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

POLICY NO: C-07

POLICY STATEMENT

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.

PURPOSE

Section 270 (1) 5 of the *Municipal Act, 2001* provides that all municipalities shall 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.

PRINCIPLES

The principles of accountability and transparency shall apply equally to the political process and decision-making and to the administrative management of the municipality.

The Council and staff of the Municipality of Huron Shores acknowledge that it is responsible to provide good government for its stakeholders in an accountable and transparent manner. The Municipality will undertake the following:

- Open and fairness when transacting municipal business
- Declaring immediately when a Conflict of Interest is determined
- Encouraging public access and participation to ensure that decision making is responsive to the needs of its constituents and receptive to their opinions;
- Delivery of high-quality services in an accessible manner to our citizens;
- Promoting the efficient use of public resources;
- Ensuring inclusivity by offering accessible services and information, including compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). The municipality will provide accommodations such as materials in accessible formats, and captioning for public meetings to meet diverse stakeholder needs, when requested; and

- Making records available for review, other than those specifically prohibited by law, when requested.

DEFINITIONS

Accountability: The principle that the municipality is obligated to demonstrate and take responsibility for its actions, decisions and policies and that it is answerable to the public at large.

Transparency: The principle that the municipality will conduct its business in an accessible, clear, and visible manner and that its activities are open to examination by its stakeholders.

PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES

Policies, procedures and practices have been divided in the following categories:

1. Legislative Requirements
2. Financial Matters
3. Internal Governance
4. Public Participation and information sharing

1. Legislative Requirements

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

- Municipal Act, S.O., 2001, c.25
- Municipal Conflict of Interest Act
- Provincial Offences Act
- Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
- Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act

2. Financial Matters

The Municipality will be open, accountable, and transparent to its stakeholders in its financial dealings as required under the *Municipal Act, 2001*.

Some examples of how the municipality provides such accountability and transparency are as follows:

- Internal/external audit
- Reporting
- Long-term financial planning
- Asset forecasting
- Procurement policy

- Sale and Disposal of Land By-law
- Budget process
- Priority setting
- Fees and Charges By-law

3. Internal Governance

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

- Orientation/continuing education
- Health and Safety
- Pay Equity Employee wellness initiatives, such as mental health support programs, to enhance productivity and morale
- Equity, diversity, and inclusion training for all employees to promote a respectful and inclusive workplace
- Introduction of remote and flexible work practices, acknowledging the shift in workplace dynamics post-pandemic and the municipality's commitment to employee well-being;
- Responsibility for ensuring that administrative practices and procedures recognize Council's commitment to accountability and transparency
- Human Resources Policy and Procedures Manual (including workplace violence and harassment policies).

4. Public Participation and information sharing

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 *Municipal 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 that ensure that participation by the public can be meaningful and effective, through timely disclosure of information by various means, including print media, website, and digital tools such as social media platforms, e-newsletters, etc.

To further improve accessibility, the municipality is committed to enhancing public participation by utilizing modern communication tools and technologies. This includes offering hybrid and virtual meeting options via platforms such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams. Public meetings will also be recorded and made available upon review for those who wish to review them later.

Some specific examples include but are not limited to:

- Procedural By-Law
- Delegation rules
- Records Retention By-law

- Planning processes
- Notice By-law
- Closed Meeting Investigator
- Appointment of an Integrity Commissioner
- Code of Conduct for the Council Members
- Sale and Disposal of Land By-law
- Public Meetings, as deemed necessary
- Metrics such as citizen satisfaction surveys, participation rates in public meetings, and feedback forms post-engagement to measure the effectiveness of public participation efforts.

MONITORING/CONTRAVENTIONS

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

1. In the case of staff, the Department Head responsible for the area;
2. In the case of Council, the Head of Council.

POLICY REVIEW AND PROCEDURE

The CAO/Clerk shall review this Policy at the beginning of each term of Council and provide any recommendations or information to Council for approval, where such action is considered necessary and is in the best interest of the Corporation.

Approval Date:	January 23, 2008	Approved by:	By-law 08-06
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2.Amendment Date:		Approved by:	
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