

Council Administration Protocol

Section 100 NO. 175 | Effective August 2, 2018 | Approved By County Council

PREAMBLE

In order to achieve effective management and operation of the County, Council and Administration must have a clear understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities as well as a comprehensive framework that guides their interaction with one another.

POLICY

1. This policy will:
 - a) Establish a framework to clarify the roles of Council and Administration.
 - b) Set out communication standards between Council and Administration.
 - c) Establish a regime of protocol for regulating relations and communication between Council and Administration.
 - d) Promote sound working relations between Council and Administration.
 - e) Guide both administrative and operational interaction between Council and Administration.

2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 "Administration" means the employees of Lethbridge County.
- 2.2 "Council member" means any member of Council.
- 2.3 "County" means Lethbridge County.
- 2.4 "CAO" means the individual appointed by Council to the position of Chief Administrative Officer as per the CAO Bylaw, or designate of the CAO. The CAO is the head of Administration.

- 2.5 “Communications” under Section 6 and 7 means correspondence or communication from both written and unwritten sources, including but not limited to letters, emails, voicemail messages and phone calls.
- 2.6 “Council” means the duly elected officials for Lethbridge County also known as the Reeve and Council.
- 2.7 “Reeve” means the Chief Elected Official of Lethbridge County.
- 2.8 “Protocol” means both written and unwritten conventions, ethics, and/or rules of interaction and communication between Council and Administration.
- 2.9 “When Appropriate” when referenced in Section 6 and 7 includes but is not limited to situations that are politically sensitive or situations when Council requests to be copied on correspondence.

3. MUNICIPAL GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

- 3.1 The Reeve and Council members constitute the political component of the County called “the Council”, whilst the Administration constitutes “the administrative and operational arm of the County”.
- 3.2 The legal responsibilities, functions and powers of the Council and Administration are both inter-dependent and interrelated. The statutory powers of Council and Administration are set out in the *Municipal Government Act, R.S.A., Chapter M-26*.
- 3.3 Council is led by the Reeve who is the “Chief Elected Official” as defined in the *Municipal Government Act, R.S.A., Chapter M-26*.
- 3.4 Administration is led by the CAO who is the “Chief Administrative Officer” defined in the *Municipal Government Act, R.S.A., Chapter M-26*.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.1 The Reeve coordinates Council decisions, acts as Council spokesperson, facilitates the Council / Administrative interface, and performs the duties of the Chief Elected Official as per the *Municipal Government Act, R.S.A., Chapter M-26*.

- 4.2 Council provides direction, makes strategic policy decisions, represents the public interest, and performs the duties of the Councillor as per the *Municipal Government Act, R.S.A., Chapter M-26*.
- 4.3 Council is responsible to hire, supervise, and terminate the CAO. Council has only one employee: the CAO.
- 4.4 The CAO coordinates the organization's system, manages organizational resources, facilitates the Administrative / Council interface, performs the duties as outlined in the CAO's Bylaw, and performs the duties of Chief Administrative Officer as per the *Municipal Government Act, R.S.A., Chapter M-26*.
- 4.5 The CAO is responsible for the hiring, managing, and terminating of all the employees of the County.
- 4.6 Administration implements Council's directions and the corporate business plan, provides decision-making advice, and communicates customer needs under the direction of the CAO.
- 4.7 Council and Administration will adhere to formal channels of communications between each other as established by policy, bylaw, and legislation.

5. GENERAL PROTOCOL

- 5.1 Council and Administration will treat each other with respect and integrity.
 - a) The Reeve will advise the Council member and/or Council when a Council member's activities are affecting Administration's performance.
 - b) Council will deal with Administration performance concerns by communicating them through the Reeve to the CAO.
 - c) The CAO will provide information to all of Council when deemed appropriate in responding to a request from one member of Council. *This may take the form of, or be part of, a Report to Council during a regular Council meeting.*
 - d) Administration will advise the CAO if a request for information from a member of Council will create a significant impact on performance / workload.

- e) *Discussions amongst Councillors of items that direct the business of the County will occur during Council or Committee meetings only.*

6. COMMUNICATION

- 6.1 Administration will forward correspondence directed to Council without delay.
 - a) The CAO will coordinate and direct Administration regarding the action and response to be taken to written or verbal communications. The CAO will also coordinate these actions and responses with Council when appropriate.
 - b) Notwithstanding Section 7, the Reeve will coordinate and advise the members of Council regarding the action and response taken to verbal or written communications received.
 - c) Council will provide direction to Administration through resolutions, policies and bylaws.
 - d) Council has responsibility to make information requests of Administration with the following understanding:
 - i) Information that is readily available to the public can be requested from the appropriate member of Administration directly.
 - ii) All other information requests will be directed to the CAO.
 - e) When approached by a Lethbridge County employee with an operational issue or concern, Council shall encourage the employee to use appropriate channels within the organization. Depending on the nature of the request, these channels may include the employee talking with their supervisor or human resources.

7. RESIDENT COMMUNICATION

- 7.1 Council will direct requests from residents for services or information to the CAO's office for action.
 - a) The CAO will coordinate actions and responses and will inform Council of the outcome of the requests when appropriate.

- b) A member of Council may choose to respond to requests for information from a resident that are routine in nature where the information is readily available to the public. Such responses shall be shared with the Reeve and CAO.

8. ORGANIZATIONAL TOOLS

8.1 The following organizational tools contribute to a successful working relationship between Council and Administration.

- a) Reports of Council regarding Administration's activities (usually provided by the CAO at Council meetings).
- b) Requests for Decision which provides the information required for decision-making.
- c) Clear and concise direction to Administration through resolutions made at Council meetings.
- d) Updates from the Reeve and Council will occur at Regular or Special Meetings of Council.
- e) A clear understanding of Administration's role, activities, and capacity.
- f) An up-to-date organizational chart which shows a clear chain of command and indication of who has duties in which area.
- g) A Council Procedural Bylaw which provides the framework for parliamentary procedure, current legislation, and the specific governance preferences of Council.
- h) A corporate business planning process which implements the strategic direction set by Council.

9. SUCCESS INDICATORS

9.1 The following are indicators of the success of this policy:

- a) Excellent customer services.
- b) Flexibility in organizational hierarchy to deal with urgent matters.
- c) No direct supervision of Administration by individual members of Council.

- d) A clear chain of command.
- e) Higher employee satisfaction.
- f) Achieving corporate priorities.
- g) Timely communication, both internal and external.
- h) An informed and involved Council.

POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed as required but, in any case, no later than three years following the date of the last review.

The Chief Administrative Officer will be responsible for initiating the review of this policy.