

Mackenzie County

Title	Council/Administration Protocol	Policy No:	ADM050
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Legislation Reference	MGA
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PURPOSE

To establish a framework to clarify the roles of Council and Administration and set out communication standards between Council and Administration and to identify tools that may guide to the overall efficiency and effectiveness in decision making and assist in building and fostering respectful relationship between Council and Administration.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. Statement:

Mackenzie County Council recognizes that in order to create an environment for the effective management and operation of the County, Council and Administration must have a clear understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities.

Further, Mackenzie County Council wishes to establish a regime of protocol for regulating relations and communication between Council and Administration in order to promote a sound working relationship. This can be achieved through a comprehensive framework that guides their interaction.

In order to build effective partnerships and relationships, Council will use a self-evaluation tool (Schedule A) to assist Council in determining Council's strength, areas for improvement, and ultimately increase Council's efficiency and effectiveness.

GUIDELINES

2. Definitions:

- a) "Administration" means CAO and Managers for the County;
- b) "County" means Mackenzie County;
- c) "CAO" means Chief Administrative Officer for the County;
- d) "Council" means the duly elected council for the County;
- e) "Councillor" means a member of Council including the Reeve;
- f) "Managers" means the individuals who directly report to the CAO as per the Organizational Chart for the County;

- g) "Reeve" means the Chief Elected Official or in his/her absence the Deputy Reeve for the County;
- h) "Policy" means a policy, bylaw or other formal resolution of Council;

3. Municipal Governance Framework:

- a) Council is the political and policy-making arm of the County, while Administration is the administrative and operational arm of the County;
- b) The legal responsibilities, functions and powers of Council and Administration are both inter-dependent and interrelated.
- c) The statutory powers of Council and the CAO are set out in the *Municipal Government Act*.
- d) Council is lead by the Reeve who is the Chief Elected Official as defined in the *Municipal Government Act*.
- e) Administration is led by the CAO whose roles and responsibilities are defined in the *Municipal Government Act*.

4. Roles and Responsibilities:

- a) Council provides direction, makes strategic policy decisions, represents the public's interests, and performs the duties of Councillors as per the *Municipal Government Act*.
- b) Council's effectiveness depends on Councillors providing input on their areas while thinking and voting for the whole municipality.
- c) Council is responsible to hire, supervise, and terminate the CAO. Council has one employee: the CAO.
- d) The Reeve acts as Council's spokesperson, facilitates the Council/Administration interface, and performs the duties of the Chief Elected Official as per the *Municipal Government Act*.
- e) The CAO coordinates the organization's systems, manages organizational resources, facilitates the Administration/Council interface, performs the duties as outlined in the Chief Administrative Officer Bylaw, and performs the duties of chief administrative officer as per the *Municipal Government Act*.
- f) The CAO is responsible for the hiring, managing, and terminating of all the employees of the County.
- g) Administration implements Council's policies and programs, assists Council in

meeting their annual business plan priorities, provides decisions-making advice, and communicates customer needs under the direction of CAO.

- h) Council and Administration will adhere to formal channels of communication between each other as established by this policy.

5. Council/Administration General Protocol:

- a) Council and Administration will treat each other with respect and integrity.
- b) Council recognizes the complexities and volume of operational tasks and activities of Administration.
- c) Administration recognizes the value of Councillors' input through the local knowledge of their wards.
- d) The Reeve will advise Council when a Councillor's activities are affecting Administration's performance.
- e) Council will deal with Administration performance concerns by communicating them to the CAO as concerns arise.
- f) The CAO will provide information to all of Council as deemed appropriate in responding to a request from a Councillor.
- g) Managers will advise the CAO if a request for information and/or action from a Councillor may create a significant impact on performance/workload.

6. Council/Administration Communication Protocol (Internal):

- a) Council will channel formal communications to Administration with regard to a municipal matter through the CAO. Council will make information requests to Administration with the following understanding:
 - Information that is readily available to the public can be requested from the appropriate Manager directly;
 - Information on the status of ongoing programs, activities and/or projects can be requested from the appropriate Manager directly;
 - All other requests for information and/or action will be directed to the CAO.
- b) Administration will channel communication to Council through the CAO if a municipal matter is outside of existing County Policy and/or Council approved budget.

- c) The municipal matters not addressed in existing Council Policy will be brought forward to the attention of Council and/or a committee of Council as appropriate.
- d) Council will provide direction to Administration through bylaws and resolutions of Council on all matters outside of existing County Policy and/or Council approved budget.

7. Council/Administration Communication Protocol (External):

- a) Administration will forward external correspondence directed to a Councillor or Council without delay.
- b) If Council receives requests from residents for service or information, Council will refer residents to the appropriate County department or the CAO for action.
- c) Administration will maintain a log of external communications, which come as a request for service, into the County's customer service system. Each Manager will be responsible for maintaining the log for their appropriate department(s).
- d) The Reeve may coordinate and direct Council regarding action and response to be taken by Councillors to verbal or written communications received from external sources. The Reeve will also coordinate these action and responses with the CAO.
- e) The CAO will coordinate and direct Administration regarding action and response to be taken by employees of the County to verbal or written communications received from external sources. The CAO will also coordinate these actions and responses with Council when appropriate.

8. Organizational Tools:

The following organizational tools will be utilized to contribute to a successful working relationship between Council and Administration:

- a) Monthly CAO reports to Council regarding Administration's activities to be presented during regular Council meetings;
- b) Monthly progress capital project report to be presented during regular Council meetings;
- c) Requests for decisions which provide the information required for decision-making;

- d) Clear and concise direction to Administration through resolutions made at Council meetings;
- e) Updates from the Reeve and Councillors as necessary at Council meetings;
- f) An up-to-date organizational chart which shows a clear chain of command and indication of who has duties in which areas;
- g) Council Procedural Bylaw which provides the framework for parliamentary procedure, current legislation and the specific governance preferences of Council;
- h) A clear understanding of Council's and Administration's roles, activities and capacities;
- i) An annual business planning process which outlines the strategic direction set by Council.
- j) An annual council self-evaluation (Schedule A) undertaken in conjunction with mandatory CAO evaluation as per MGA.

9. Success Indicators:

The following are indicators of the success of this policy:

- a) Flexibility in organizational hierarchy to deal with urgent matters;
- b) Excellent customer service;
- c) No direct supervision of Administration by individual members of Council;
- d) A clear chain of command;
- e) Higher employee satisfaction;
- f) Achieving Council's business priorities;
- g) Timely communication, both internal and external; and
- h) An informed and involved Council.

10. Policy Implementation and Monitoring:

- a) The Reeve will be responsible for monitoring compliance with this policy by Council.
- b) The CAO will be responsible for monitoring compliance with this policy by

Administration.

11. Policy Review:

This policy shall be reviewed annually during the organizational meeting.

	Date	Resolution Number
Approved	2012-05-01	12-05-309
Amended	2013-04-24	13-04-294
Amended	2017-10-23	17-10-724
Amended	2024-10-22	24-10-751

SCHEDULE A

COUNCIL SELF-EVALUATION TOOL

PURPOSE:

Just like going to the doctor once a year for an annual checkup, governing bodies should periodically take time to do a “checkup” on their performance. Periodic reviews do the same thing as a doctor’s visit; they provide an opportunity to implement preventative measures; identify issues that need attention that are not immediately apparent; and/or just verify that all is going well. And just like an annual checkup; once all the data is collected, an action plan for optimum health (performance) for the future can be developed.

The following questionnaire has been developed to assess Council’s performance. The statements below reflect optimum performance measures for Council and this questionnaire reflects how Council views its performance in relation to these optimum performance measures.

INSTRUCTIONS:

Please rank yourself and your colleagues on a scale of 1-4. Mark the number you feel most accurately describes the current Council context:

- 1 = We “**Never**” meet this performance measure
- 2 = We “**Sometimes**” meet this performance measure
- 3 = We “**Often**” meet this performance measure
- 4 = We “**Always**” meet this performance measure

DECISION-MAKING

1. Council members use rational, objective decision-making processes that are supported by administrative recommendations, appropriate consultation with stakeholders and research of options.

1 2 3 4

2. Council members listen actively, respect diverse opinions and view constructive disagreement and discussion as positive and necessary to effective decision-making.

1 2 3 4

3. Council members stay focused on the issue being debated.

1 2 3 4

4. Council members come to meetings prepared; with their “homework” and research done.

1 2 3 4

5. Council members focus their energy on issues that have strategic, organization-wide impacts.

1 2 3 4

6. Council members recognize that decision-making authority resides with the Council “as a whole” – not with individual Council members.

1 2 3 4

7. Council members avoid placing themselves in positions where there may be a real or perceived conflict of interest and avoid any conflict of interest with respect to their pecuniary responsibility in accordance with legislation.

1 2 3 4

COMMUNICATIONS AND PROTOCOLS

8. Council members protect the confidentiality of privileged, protected, and in camera information.

1 2 3 4

9. Council members are respectful of each other and staff in their communications with the public and the media.

1 2 3 4

10. Once a decision has been made by the Council, Council members publicly support the decision. Council members are free to indicate why they may not have voted for a decision in a Council meeting; however, they should make it clear that once the decision has been made, they respect the legitimacy of the democratic process and the decision.

1 2 3 4

11. Council members represent Council's position as a whole when attending board or committee meetings.

1 2 3 4

12. Council actively seeks partnerships (with both public and private organizations) which provides enhanced and/or more efficient provision of services and/or facilities to residents.

1 2 3 4

COUNCIL MEMBER RELATIONS

13. Council members deal with conflicts in a timely and issues focused manner; i.e., significant conflicts and problems are not ignored.

1 2 3 4

14. All Council members have equal and timely access to relevant information to support decision making.

1 2 3 4

15. Council reviews its performance periodically with a view to continuously improving its effectiveness.

1 2 3 4

STAFF RELATIONS

16. Council members respect the authority of the CAO, as delegated by the CAO Bylaw and Council governance policies, to direct staff and the work of the organization. They do not attempt to direct the activities of staff or departments except through established channels of authority.

1 2 3 4

17. Where there are council/staff interaction issues and/or role clarity issues; Council members convey their concerns to the CAO. Conversely if staff has concerns with council/staff interaction issues and/or role clarity issues; the CAO conveys these concerns to Council.

1 2 3 4

18. Council members direct any criticisms of staff through the CAO and refrain from criticizing staff in public or the media (praise publicly, criticize privately).

- 1 2 3 4

FINAL QUESTIONS

19. Council should be taking take action in the following areas to improve Council's capacity and effectiveness:

20. Council should take advantage of the following educational/development opportunities to improve governance capabilities:

21. Please provide any additional comments:
