



Policy Name:

**ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY POLICY**

**AD - 09**

DEPARTMENT: **Administration**

ADOPTED BY: **Council**

RESOLUTION NUMBER: **R2007-736, R2017-81**

DATE

**January 1, 2008**

REVISION

**February 21, 2017**

DATE(S):

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## PURPOSE

The Municipal Act, 2001 (the Act) requires that all municipalities 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 outlined herein. This policy has been developed in accordance with the Act to comply with section 270.

## 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.

## APPLICATION

The Council of the Municipality of Trent Lakes acknowledges that it is responsible to provide good government for its stakeholders in an accountable and transparent manner by:

1. Encouraging public access and participation to ensure that decision making is responsive to the needs of its constituents and receptive to their opinions;
2. Delivering high quality services to our citizens; and
3. Promoting the efficient use of public resources.

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.

## 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.

### Financial Matters

The municipality will be open, accountable and transparent to its stakeholders in its financial dealings as required under the Act. Some examples of how the municipality provides such accountability and transparency are as follows:

1. Internal/external Audit – Annual audit by appointed professional accounting firm with the results presented to Council annually and the financial statements are posted on our website. A monthly review of the accounts is completed by the Finance department. In addition, Policy AD-48 – Municipal Budget Administration, provides guidelines relating to internal and external audit controls.
2. Reporting/statements – Accounts payable are provided to Council at each regular Council meeting for their information. A Budget to Actual report is provided to Council three times a year. In accordance with requirements an annual Municipal Performance Measurement Program report is completed and posted on the municipal website. An annual Financial Information Return is also completed in accordance with provincial requirements. Policy AD-48 – Municipal Budget Administration provides guidelines relating to expenditure control, risk management and reporting procedures for budget variances.
3. Long Term Financial Planning – Council establishes and adjusts municipal reserves as part of the annual budget process. Policy AD-41 – Long Term Financial Plan, sets the framework for long term capital financial planning for the Municipality based on financial capacity to meet the strategic and capital works plan.
4. Asset Management – Trent Lakes is fully in support of the PSAB requirements and will have a continuously updated asset management system. Use of Municipally owned vehicles is outlined in policy AD-2- Use of Municipal Vehicles.
5. Purchasing/procurement – Is as outlined in policy AD-52 – Purchasing Policy. The Municipality of Trent Lakes has various agreements with the County of Peterborough, Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, and the City of Kawartha Lakes to provide products and services in a cost-effective manner. The Municipality is also a party to a variety of bulk purchasing tenders.
6. Sale of Land – Is carried out as outlined in policy AD-8 – Disposal of Real Property. The municipality has a listing of all municipally owned properties available for review.
7. Budget Process – The entire budget process is completed in an open public forum. Copies of the budget are available to the public upon request.

## **Internal Governance**

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

1. Code of Conduct – Is outlined in policy AD-22 – Conduct and Behaviour. Every staff member must acknowledge and sign the Code of Conduct when hired. Council Members sign a Code of Conduct as part of their inauguration.
2. Recruitment and Selection – Is conducted as outlined in policy AD-3 – Recruitment and Selection.
3. Orientation/Continuing Education – A staff orientation package is provide to each new employee and on the job training is provided as required for the position. Continuing Education is encouraged and is carried out in accordance with policy AD-11 – Education Courses.
4. Health and Safety – Is outlined in policy AD-13 – Health and Safety and includes a Health and Safety Program. An annual Health and Safety statement is signed by the Mayor and CAO and posted in each workplace. Policy AD-14 – Return to Work outlines the return to work program for employees who have been injured on the job or are recuperating from a personal injury or illness.
5. Compensation and Benefits – Each term of Council a review is completed of the Council remuneration. Policy AD-18 – Council Conferences and Expense Claims establish the requirements for expenses, conference attendance and mileage. Annual pay increases for unionized employees are outlined in the C.U.P.E. contracts, and compensation for non-unionized employees is established by Policy AD-51 – Non-Union Benefits. Annual salary disclosure for all salaries above \$100,000.00 is completed in accordance with provincial requirements.
6. Signing Authority – The authority to sign cheques for the corporation was adopted by By-law B2016-112, as amended. The By-law requires two signatures on all cheques. The Mayor and Clerk or their designates are required to sign all by-laws and agreements.

## **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 are open to the public when and as required under the *Municipal Act* and any other relevant legislation. Members of the public have an opportunity to make delegations or comments in writing on specific items at these meetings in accordance with the Procedural By-law. In addition, the municipality has adopted policies which ensure that participation by the public can be meaningful and effective, through timely disclosure of information by various means including print media, websites, etc.

1. Procedure By-law - By-law B2015-011, as amended, establishes the procedures for Council meeting and Committees of Council meetings.

2. Strategic Plan – A Strategic Planning session is held at the start of each new term of Council to set the priorities for the current Council and is open to the public. The Strategic Plan is a public document and is available on request and on the website.
3. Emergency Plan – The Emergency Management Program and Emergency Response Plan for the Municipality of Trent Lakes is as outlined in By-law B2016-138, as amended. Copies of the By-law are available on request and on the website.
4. Delegation Rules – The delegation of power is established by policy AD-7 – Delegation of Powers.
5. Records Retention – The retention of records and the schedule of records retention is outlined in By-law B2012-061, as amended.
6. Public Notice Policy – The provision of public notice standard requirements are outlined in Policy AD-32 – Provision of Public Notice. In addition, a by-law is passed at the end of each year to establish meeting dates for the upcoming year.
7. Information – All Municipal information is available on the Municipal website and stakeholders can sign up through the website to automatically receive all notices issued by the Municipality. Newsletters and information is distributed at the four (4) Transfer Station sites and the Municipal Libraries on a regular basis. Information is also provided in tax bills which are mailed twice a year.
8. Fees and Charges – The Fees and Charges By-law B2016-143, as amended, outlines the various fees and charges for a variety of services available to stakeholders.
9. Integrity Commissioner/Closed Meeting Investigator/Ombudsman – By-law B2016-104 appointed John Ewart of Ewart O'Dwyer, as the Integrity Commissioner, Closed Meeting Investigator and Ombudsman for the Municipality. The Integrity Commissioner will address the application of the Council Code of Conduct which is signed by each Council member as part of their inauguration. The Closed Meeting Investigator will investigate whether the Municipality complied with Section 239 of the Municipal Act respecting the holding of a closed meeting. The role of the Ombudsman is to investigate any decisions or recommendations made, or act done/omitted in the course of the administration of the Municipality.