

## Council Code of Conduct

Effective Date: December 4, 2018  
Last Revised: March 3, 2026

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### 1. Policy Statement

The quality of the City's public administration and governance, as well as its reputation and integrity, depend on the highest standards of conduct from its Council Members.

### 2. Purpose

The purpose and intent of this policy is to set minimum expectations for the behaviour and conduct of Council Members relating to their roles and obligations as a Member of Pitt Meadows City Council.

### 3. Scope

This policy applies to all members of Pitt Meadows City Council when they are acting in their capacity as Council Members, including their involvement on various agencies, boards and committees as appointed by Council or the Mayor.

### 4. Authority to Act

This policy is supplemental to the existing statutes governing the responsibilities and conduct of Council Members including, but not limited to, the *Community Charter* and Council's *Procedure Bylaw*.

### 5. Key Principles

This Code of Conduct is based on the following principles, which are inclusive of principles prescribed by regulation pursuant to section 113.1 of the *Community Charter* [*requirement to consider code of conduct*]:



- a) **Integrity.** Council Members are keepers of the public trust and must uphold the highest standards of ethical behaviour. They are expected to:
  - (1) make decisions that benefit the community;
  - (2) act lawfully and within the authorities of the Local Government Act, Community Charter, and other legislation as applicable; and
  - (3) be free from undue influence and not act, or appear to act, in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, family, friends, or business interests.
- b) **Accountability.** Council Members are responsible for the decisions they make. This responsibility includes acts of commission and acts of omission. Decision-making processes must be transparent and subject to public scrutiny, proper records must be kept, and audit trails must be in place.
- c) **Responsibility.** Council Members must act responsibly. This includes:
  - (1) disclosing actual or potential conflicts of interest relating to their public duties and taking steps to resolve the conflict for the protection of the public interest;
  - (2) following the letter and spirit of policies and procedures; and
  - (3) exercising all conferred powers strictly for the purpose for which the powers have been conferred.
- d) **Leadership.** Council Members must demonstrate and promote the key principles of the Code of Conduct through their decisions, actions, and behaviour. Their behaviour must build and inspire the public's trust and confidence in local government.
- e) **Respect.** Council Members must conduct public business efficiently and with decorum. They must treat each other, Staff, the public, and others with respect at all times. This means: being aware of body language; not using derogatory language towards others; respecting the rights of other people; treating people with courtesy; and recognizing the different roles others play in local government decision making.
- f) **Openness.** Council Members have a duty to be as open as possible about their decisions and actions. This means: communicating appropriate information openly to the public about decision-making processes and issues being considered; encouraging appropriate public participation; communicating clearly; and providing appropriate means for recourse and feedback.

- g) **Collaboration.** Council Members will work together collaboratively to create and achieve the best possible results for the municipality.

## 6. Policy

Attaining an elected position within one's community is a privilege which carries significant responsibilities and obligations. Council Members are held to a high standard as leaders of the community and will conduct themselves with a high degree of decorum in accordance with the terms of this Policy.

### 6.2 Definitions

In this policy,

- a) **CAO** means the Chief Administrative Officer of the City, or their designate;
- b) **City** means the City of Pitt Meadows;
- c) **Complainant** means a person who has submitted a complaint under this Policy and may include a Council Member, Staff Member, or Volunteer;
- d) **Council** means the duly elected Council Members of the City of Pitt Meadows;
- e) **Investigator** means the person appointed to resolve a formal complaint under part 7 of this Policy;
- f) **Member** or **Council Member** means any member of Council, including the Mayor;
- g) **Respondent** means a Council Member whose conduct is the subject of a complaint under this Policy;
- h) **Staff** means an employee of the City;
- i) **Volunteer** means a person serving the City in a volunteer capacity.

### 6.3 General Conduct

- a) Council Members will comply with this Policy, as amended from time to time.
- b) Council Members will act lawfully and exercise a reasonable degree of care and diligence in carrying out their functions.



- c) Council Members must not:
  - (1) contravene any federal or provincial law, including the *Community Charter, Human Rights Code, or the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*; or
  - (2) contravene any City bylaw or policy.
- d) Council Members must not defame other Members, Staff or Volunteers.
- e) Council Members must not engage in conduct which constitutes discrimination, intimidation, bullying, harassment, or incivility toward other Members, Staff, Volunteers, or members of the public.
- f) Council Members must not breach their oath of office sworn upon taking office as a Council Member or abuse their office.
- g) If a Council Member is uncertain about whether their conduct or their participation in a matter may breach the law or this policy, the elected official should consult with the CAO.

#### **6.4 Respect for Each Other in Council Meetings**

- a) Council Members will treat each other with respect in Council meetings, including by not interrupting another Member who is speaking.
- b) If a Council Member speaks in an unbecoming manner or is derogatory to another Council Member, Staff or the public, the Mayor will (similarly, if the Mayor speaks in an unbecoming manner, the Acting Mayor will):
  - (1) advise the Member (or Mayor) that such language is not tolerated; and
  - (2) remind the Council Member (or Mayor) of Council's commitment to perform at the highest ethical standard in behaviour both publicly as well as in private conversations.

#### **6.5 Respect for the Decision-Making Process & Obligation to Inform**

- a) Council Members will respect the fact that they represent the citizens as a whole and not small groups or sectors of citizens.
- b) Council Members must not communicate on behalf of the City unless lawfully authorized to do so, such as pursuant to a Council resolution or by virtue of a position or role the Member has been authorized to undertake by Council.



- c) If a Member communicates to the public in their individual capacity about a decision of Council, whether through social media or otherwise, they must do so accurately and in a manner that shows respect for the decision-making processes of Council, whether the Member agrees with a decision or not. Members must make clear that they are expressing their own views and that they are not communicating on behalf of the City.

## 6.6 Handling of Information

Council Members will:

- a) keep in confidence any record or information held in confidence by the City, until the record or information is released to the public as lawfully authorized or required;
- b) keep in confidence any information considered in any part of a Council meeting or Council committee meeting that was lawfully closed to the public, until Council or the committee discusses the information at a meeting that is open to the public or otherwise lawfully releases the information to the public. For the purposes of this section, “information” is defined broadly and includes contents of staff reports, deliberations, resolutions, and voting records.
- c) refrain from discussing/disclosing confidential records or information with or to persons outside the organization unless authorized by Council resolution to do so;
- d) take reasonable care to prevent examination of confidential records by individuals who are not authorized to access them;
- e) only access information held by the City for City business and not for personal purposes;
- f) only release records or information in accordance with City established policies and procedures and in compliance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

## 6.7 Conflict of Interest

- a) Council Members must not participate in any discussion of a matter or vote on a question in respect of a matter if the Member has a conflict of interest in relation to that matter. A conflict of interest may be a direct or indirect pecuniary interest or a distinct personal interest in a matter, as governed by the *Community Charter* and the common law.



- b) In respect of each matter before Council, a Council Member should assess whether they have a conflict of interest. If the Council Member is uncertain, they may seek the advice of the CAO. The CAO may exercise their discretion to seek legal advice on the matter should they deem it warranted.
- c) Where, in the opinion of Council, a Council Member is in a conflict of interest and has not so declared, Council may ask for a review of the matter by the CAO or the Corporate Officer. The matter, if unresolved, may then be referred to legal counsel.
- d) If a Member has a conflict of interest, they will comply with the provisions of the *Community Charter*, including by declaring the conflict and leaving any meeting if the matter is discussed and not returning until the discussion has ended or voting on the matter has been concluded.

#### **6.8 Interactions with Staff**

- a) Council Members will direct questions and inquiries regarding departmental issues in accordance with Council Policy C064 [Council-Staff Protocol].
- b) Council Members will not interfere with, hinder, or obstruct Staff in the exercise or performance of their roles, responsibilities, powers, duties, or functions, nor will they impair the ability of municipal officers or Staff to implement Council policy decisions in accordance with section 153 of the Community Charter.
- c) Council Members will not request or require that Staff undertake personal or private work for or on behalf of a Council Member.
- d) Council Members will not request or require that Staff engage in political activities, or subject them to reprisal of any kind for refusing to engage in such activities.
- e) Council Members must not make public statements attacking or reflecting negatively on Staff.
- f) Council Members must direct inquiries about personnel matters or Staff to the CAO.



### 6.9 Improper Use of Influence

- a) Council Members must not attempt to influence a decision of Council, a Council Committee, or Staff if the Member has a pecuniary conflict of interest in relation to that decision.
- b) Council Members must not use the influence of their office for any purpose other than for the exercise of the Member's official duties, including supporting the well-being and interests of the municipality.
- c) Council Members must not act as a paid agent to advocate on behalf of any individual, organization, or corporate entity before Council or a committee of Council or any other body established by Council.
- d) Council Members must not use their office to provide preferential treatment to any person or organization, except as warranted by the ordinary lawful discharge of their duties. As an example, Members will refrain from using their office to obtain employment with the City for family members or close associates.
- e) Council Members are ineligible to apply or be considered for any position with the Municipality while they hold their elected position and for one year after leaving office.
- f) Council Members are not to contact or issue instructions to any of the City's contractors, consultants, or other service providers unless expressly authorized to do so.

### 6.10 Gifts and Hospitality

- a) Council Members must not accept a gift or personal benefit, unless accepted in accordance with section 105 of the *Community Charter*.
- b) If a Council Member has lawfully received gifts or benefits in accordance with section 105 of the *Community Charter*, and if the total of such gifts and benefits in any 12 month period exceeds \$250, the Member must file a disclosure statement with the City's Corporate Officer in accordance with section 106 of the *Community Charter*.

Gifts received by a Council Member on behalf of the City as a matter of official protocol which have significance or historical value for the City will be left with the Municipality when the elected official ceases to hold office.

## 7. Complaint Resolution Processes

### 7.1 Informal Complaint Process

- a) A Council Member who has identified or witnessed conduct by another Member that the Council Member reasonably believes, in good faith, is in contravention of this Policy, may address the prohibited conduct by:
  - (1) advising the Member that their conduct violates this Policy and encouraging that person to stop; or
  - (2) requesting the Mayor to assist with an informal discussion of the alleged complaint with the Council Member in an attempt to resolve the issue. In the event that the Mayor is the subject of, or is implicated in a complaint, the person may request the assistance of the Acting Mayor.
- b) Council Members are encouraged to pursue this informal complaint procedure as the first means of remedying conduct that they believe violates this Policy. However, an individual is not required to complete this informal complaint procedure prior to pursuing the formal complaint procedure outlined below.

### 7.1 Formal Complaint Process

#### 7.2.1 Complaint Submission

Any person who has identified or witnessed conduct by a Council Member that the person reasonably believes, in good faith, is in contravention of this Policy, may file a formal complaint in accordance with the following procedures:

- a) All complaints will be made in writing and will be dated and signed by an identifiable individual.
- b) All complaints will be addressed to the CAO. If the complainant is the CAO or the complaint involves the CAO, the complaint will be addressed to the Corporate Officer.
- c) All complaints must be made within ninety (90) days of the alleged misconduct by a Council Member, or within ninety (90) days of the most recent incident of the alleged misconduct if it is a continuing contravention. The CAO or Corporate Officer, as applicable, may exercise their discretion to extend this time limit if there is a reasonable excuse for



the delay, including if the alleged misconduct was only discovered by the complainant more than ninety (90) days after it occurred.

- d) The complaint must set out reasonable and probable grounds supporting the allegation that a Council Member has contravened this Policy, including a detailed description of the facts, as they are known, giving rise to the allegation, the date of the alleged conduct, the provisions of this Policy that are alleged to have been breached, and the basis of the Complainant's knowledge of the conduct.
- e) Upon receipt of a complaint submitted in accordance with this Policy, the CAO (or Corporate Officer, as the case may be) will retain an Investigator.

### 7.2.2 Preliminary Assessment

- a) Upon appointment by the CAO or Corporate Officer, as applicable, the Investigator will undertake a preliminary assessment to determine whether to proceed with the complaint. During the preliminary assessment, the Investigator will provide the Respondent with a summary of the complaint. After a preliminary assessment, the Investigator may choose not to proceed with a complaint in the following circumstances:
  - (1) If the Investigator is of the opinion that a complaint is frivolous, vexatious, or is not made in good faith;
  - (2) If the Investigator is of the opinion that there are no grounds or insufficient grounds to conclude there has been a violation of this Policy;
  - (3) If the Complainant wishes to withdraw the complaint and it would be appropriate in the circumstances to allow the withdrawal;
  - (4) If the investigation is or might be hampered, or the Respondent might be prejudiced, by the Complainant's failure to cooperate in the investigation; or
  - (5) If the complaint would be more appropriately addressed through another process or if the complaint is already being addressed through another process, such as a court proceeding or human rights complaint.
- b) If the Investigator decides not to proceed with a complaint, the Investigator must notify the Complainant and the Respondent in writing that the Investigator is closing the complaint and set out the reasons why.
- c) If the Investigator decides to accept and proceed with a complaint, the Investigator will determine whether the complaint requires a full



investigation or whether the complaint may be suitable for informal resolution.

### 7.2.3 Informal Resolution

- a) Informal resolution processes are intended to be flexible and may include referring the complaint back to the CAO for direct resolution with the Complainant and Respondent or engaging a third party to assist in mediation or settlement of the complaint.
- b) If the complaint cannot be resolved informally, or the Complainant or Respondent decline to participate in informal resolution processes, the Investigator must proceed with a formal investigation.

### 7.2.4 Formal Resolution

- a) If the Investigator proceeds with a formal investigation, the Investigator will ensure that the investigation is fulsome and complies with the rules of procedural fairness and natural justice. The Investigator will interview the Respondent, the Complainant, and any other individual who is relevant to the complaint. The Investigator may also request disclosure of records relevant to the complaint, including records held by the Complainant, Respondent, third parties, or the City.
- b) The Investigator must make all reasonable efforts to investigate complaints in confidence. The Respondent, Complainant, and other witnesses must agree to keep information discussed as part of the investigation confidential. An investigation report must only disclose such matters that the Investigator reasonably considers necessary for the purposes of the report.
- c) If the Investigator has commenced a formal investigation but reasonably determines during the investigation that any of the grounds set out in subsection 7.2.2(a) above are applicable, the Investigator may terminate the investigation. In such circumstances, the Investigator must notify the Complainant and the Respondent in writing that the Investigator is closing the complaint and set out the reasons why.
- d) In the 90 days prior to general voting day, the Investigator may suspend any investigation that is underway.
- e) If the Investigator, at any stage in the complaint procedure, determines that there are reasonable grounds to believe that there has been a contravention of the Criminal Code, then the Investigator must immediately refer the matter to the appropriate authorities and suspend



the investigation until any resulting police investigation and charge have been finally disposed of, and will report the suspension to Council.

#### 7.2.5 Adjudication and Reporting

- a) The Investigator will, upon conclusion of the investigation, prepare a report setting out their findings as to whether the Respondent breached the Policy and provide reasons for their determination.
- b) If the Investigator concludes the Respondent breached the Policy, and that such breach was neither trivial, inadvertent or because of an error of judgment made in good faith, the Investigator may make recommendations as to potential sanction(s) for the breach.
- c) The Investigator must deliver a copy of the report to the Complainant, Respondent, and the CAO.
- d) The CAO will place the report on an in-camera agenda for receipt by Council,

#### 7.2.6 Final Determination of Council

- a) Council must, within 30 days of receipt of the investigation report, or a longer period if approved by a 2/3 vote of Council, decide on the appropriate measures, if any, that are warranted by the breach of this Bylaw, and will take such actions as Council considers appropriate in the circumstances.
- b) Prior to Council making any decision on the findings and recommendations set out in the report, such as by imposing a motion of censure and/or sanctions on the Respondent, the Respondent must be given notice and an opportunity to be heard by Council.
- c) The notice to the Respondent must be given a minimum of one week prior to the scheduled meeting or the time between two consecutive regular Council meetings (or a longer time limit set by Council), whichever is greater.
- d) Sanctions that Council may choose to impose on a Respondent upon a finding that the Respondent has breached this Policy, and after hearing from the Respondent if they have exercised that right, may include:
  - (1) action under s. 117 (2) of the *Community Charter* to recover damages from the Respondent for loss or damage suffered by the City as a result of a breach of confidentiality;
  - (2) a letter of reprimand addressed to the Respondent;



- (3) a request that the Respondent issue a letter of apology;
  - (4) disclosure to the public of the findings relating to the Respondent's breach of this Policy;
  - (5) publication of a letter of reprimand or request for apology and the Respondent's response;
  - (6) requirement to attend training;
  - (7) suspension or removal of the appointment of the Respondent as the Acting Mayor;
  - (8) suspension or removal from some or all internal and external council committees and bodies to which Council or the Mayor has the right to appoint Members;
  - (9) restricting the Respondent from attending events as a representative of Council;
  - (10) imposing further limits on Council-related travel or expenses beyond those set out in corporate policies;
  - (11) requiring the return of municipal property provided for convenience;
  - (12) limiting access to certain municipal facilities;
  - (13) restricting how documents are provided to the Respondent; and
  - (14) any other sanction recommended by the Investigator or that Council deems reasonable and appropriate in the circumstances, so long as the sanction is within the authority of Council.
- e) While an investigation report provided to Council may be considered in a closed meeting for the purpose of receiving legal advice, or for any other valid reason pursuant to the *Community Charter*, Council may choose to deliberate and vote on the investigation report in a public meeting.
- f) If Council chooses to deliberate and vote on an investigation report in a public meeting:
- i. the investigation report, or a summary of the report, will be made available to the public;
  - ii. Any report or summary released to the public will comply with the City's obligations pertaining to the disclosure of personal information as set out in the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.



#### 7.2.7 Remuneration

- a) A Council Member who is the subject of a complaint is entitled to be represented by legal counsel throughout the investigation process, including at the Council meeting where Council will decide on findings and potential sanctions.
- b) The City will cover legal expenses for a Council Member once and up to a maximum amount of \$10,000.00, which must be substantiated by provision of a legal invoice.
- c) For any subsequent investigations involving the same Council Member, that Member may retain legal counsel at their sole expense, unless Council has, in advance, agreed to be responsible for such legal costs.

### 7.2 Responsibilities, Compliance and Enforcement

- a) Council Members have a responsibility to ensure that the standards and requirements of this Policy are understood and met, and that the public can continue to have public trust and full confidence in the integrity of the governance of the City of Pitt Meadows.
- b) Council Members will annually sign the Statement attached as Appendix "A" affirming the Member has read and understood the Council Code of Conduct Policy.
- c) Council Members will uphold the letter, spirit and intent of this Policy.
- d) Council Members are expected to cooperate in every way possible in securing compliance with the application and enforcement of this Policy, including by cooperating in any investigation undertaken pursuant to this Policy.
- e) Council Members must not undertake any act of reprisal or threaten reprisal against a Complainant or any other person for providing relevant information to Council or to any other person.
- f) Council Members must not obstruct Council, an Investigator, or any other person, in carrying out the objectives or requirements of this Policy.

## **8. Review**

This Policy will be brought forward for review at the beginning of each term of Council and at any other time that Council considers appropriate to ensure that it remains

current and continues to accurately reflect the standards of ethical conduct expected of Council Members.

## 9. Related Policies

Other related policies include:

- a) C064 – Council-Staff Protocol Policy

APPENDIX A

MEMBER STATEMENT  
City of Pitt Meadows Council

As a Member of Pitt Meadows City Council, I agree to uphold the Council Code of Conduct adopted by the City and to conduct myself accordingly.

I will:

- (1) recognize the diversity of backgrounds, interests and views in our community;
- (2) help create an atmosphere of open and responsive government;
- (3) conduct public affairs with integrity, in a fair, honest and open manner;
- (4) respect colleagues on Council and the unique role and contribution each of us has in making the City a better place to work and live;
- (5) strive to keep the decision-making process open, accessible, participatory, understandable, timely, just and fair;
- (6) avoid and discourage conduct which is not in the best interest of the City;
- (7) avoid any real or perceived conflict of interest and declare at the earliest opportunity, any interest that is or may be in conflict with the business of the City in which I am participating;
- (8) respect and uphold confidentiality requirements; and
- (9) treat all people with whom I come in contact with respect and in the same manner I wish to be treated.

*I affirm that I have read and understand the terms of this policy.*

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (printed): \_\_\_\_\_