



POLICY

TITLE: Accountability & Transparency Policy
NUMBER: COU-005
CATEGORY: Council
DATE: July 25th, 2018
REFERENCES: By-Law 2018-75, Section 270 (1) (5) of the Municipal Act, 2001

1.0 Purpose:

This policy applies to all operations within the Corporation of the Municipality of Centre Hastings and is prepared in accordance with The Municipal Act, 2001 c.25, s.270 (the Act), as amended. 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 on how the Corporation of the Municipality of Centre Hastings ensures municipal matters are approached in an accountable and transparent manner.

2.0 Policy Statements:

The Council of the Municipality of Centre Hastings acknowledges that it is responsible to provide good government for its stakeholders in an accountable and transparent manner, guided by the following principles:

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 of Centre Hastings adopting measures to ensure, 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 of Centre Hastings will engage its stakeholders throughout its decision making process which will be open, visible and transparent to the public.

3.0 Definitions:

In this policy, the terms "**accountability**" and "**transparency**" have the following meaning:

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.

4.0 Policy 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.

The Municipality is accountable and transparent to its stakeholders by fulfilling various legislative responsibilities and disclosure of information, and shall conduct its business within its jurisdiction in accordance

with the Provincial Statutes, Ontario Regulations and any other applicable laws including, but not limited to, the Municipal Act, 2001; Municipal Conflict of Interest Act; Planning Act, Provincial Offences Act, Ontario Building Code Act, Fire Protection and Prevention Act, Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act; and Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act.

Financial Matters

The Municipality of Centre Hastings will be open, accountable and transparent to its citizens in its financial dealings as required under the Act.

Examples of this principle are:

- External audit
- Reporting/statements
- Long-term financial planning
- Asset management
- Purchasing/procurement
- Sale of land
- Budget process

Governance

The Municipality of Centre Hastings shall provide governance in an open manner through communication, consultation and collaboration. All policies, procedures and practices shall ensure that its operations are transparent and that mechanisms are in place to make residents aware of how decisions are made and carried out. All meetings of Council and its local boards, agencies and committees shall be open to the public when and as required under the Act, and members of the public will have an opportunity to make delegations or comments in writing on specific items at these meetings as outlined in the Municipality's Procedural Policy (COU-001). Meetings are publicly posted in advance, with the rationale for discussing matters in closed session being disclosed.

Municipal information shall be readily available to the public subject to the requirements of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

The following are policies and procedures that ensure the Municipality is transparent in its operations:

- Public Posting and Distribution of Council Agenda Meeting Documentation
- Procedural Policy (COU-001)
- Public Notice Policy (ADM-003)
- Purchasing Policy (FIN-001)
- Sale of Land Policy (ADM-002)
- Public Complaints Handling Policy (ADM -001)
- Records Retention By-law (2017-64)

5.0 Monitoring/Contravention

This policy shall be reviewed at least once during each term of Council or at such time as may be deemed appropriate to ensure its effectiveness.