



Policy: Accountability and Transparency Policy

Policy Number: CP-A-5.1

Effective Date: May 9, 2016

Revised Date:

ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY POLICY

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for the delivery of the municipality's activities and services in accordance with the principles as outlined herein. The Municipality will try to ensure 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.

Application:

This policy has been developed in accordance with Section 270 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*.

Policy:

1. Definitions

- a) 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.
- b) 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.

2. Policy Statement

The Municipality of Thames Centre will promote accountable and transparent municipal governance guided by the following principles:

- a) Decision-making will be open and transparent;
- b) Municipal operations will be conducted in an ethical and accountable manner;
- c) Financial resources and physical infrastructure will be managed in an efficient and effective manner;

- d) Municipal information will be accessible so that it is consistent with legislative requirements;
- e) Inquiries, concerns and complaints will be responded to in a timely manner; and
- f) Financial oversight, service standards and performance reporting and all other accountability documents will be made available and accessible by the public in an easily understood format, to increase the opportunity for public scrutiny and involvement in municipal operation.

3. 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 of Thames Centre demonstrates its commitment to accountability and transparency by providing a sound governance framework, comprised of a system of policies, procedures and practices. These policies, procedures and practices can be categorized as follows:

a) Legislated Requirements

The Municipality of Thames Centre and its operations/governance are accountable and transparent to stakeholders by fulfilling various legislative responsibilities. The following are some of the provincial statutes that govern how the Municipality conducts its business:

- Municipal Act
- Municipal Conflict of Interest Act
- Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
- Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act
- Planning Act
- Provincial Offences Act
- Safe Drinking Water Act

b) Financial Matters

The Municipality of Thames Centre and its operating/governance are accountable and transparent to stakeholders by identifying the source of funding for municipal operations. The following are examples of some of the policies, procedures and practices in place to ensure fiscal accountability:

- Internal/External Audit Process;
- Long Term Financial Planning
- Procurement of Goods and Services Policy

- Annual Budget Process
- Financial Reporting/Statements
- Sale and Disposition of Land Policy
- Tariff of Fees By-law
- Development Charges By-law

c) Performance Measurement and Reporting

The Municipality of Thames Centre and its operations/governance are accountable and transparent to its stakeholders by using various results-oriented tools to measure performance and the achievement of corporate service standards and goals. The Municipality of Thames Centre is committed to producing performance information that measures how the Municipality is doing in all areas over which it has responsibility.

d) Open Government

The Municipality of Thames Centre is open and accountable to stakeholders by providing governance in an open manner through communication, consultation and collaboration. The following are policies, procedures and practices that ensure the Municipality is transparent in its operations and residents are aware of how decisions are made and carried out and are able to participate in the decision making process:

- Council Procedural By-law
- Public Distribution of Council Agendas and Reports (including the posting of these documents on the Municipality's website)
- Public Notice Policy
- Planning Notice Requirements
- Records Retention By-law
- Appointment By-law
- Closed Meeting Investigation Process

e) Internal Accountability and Ethical Standards

The Municipality of Thames Centre has established policies, procedures and practices that govern internal accountability and ethical standards for the Municipality, including:

- Council Code of Conduct Policy
- Employee Code of Conduct Policy
- Staff Performance Management and Evaluation
- Confidentiality Agreement
- Hiring Policy
- Employee Orientation and Continuing Education

- Professional Development and Training
- Health and Safety Policies
- Compensation and Benefit Program
- Use of Information Technology Policy
- Harassment in the Workplace Policy

POLICY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Municipality Council and Staff are responsible for adhering to this policy and for ensuring accountability for their actions and the transparency of municipal operations.

MONITORING/CONTRAVENTIONS OF POLICY

The Municipal clerk shall be responsible for receiving complaints and/or concerns related to this policy. Upon receipt of a complaint/concern, the Municipal Clerk shall notify:

1. In the case of staff, the Department Head or Director responsible for the area;
2. In the case of a closed meeting, the Closed Meeting Investigator; and
3. In the case of Council, the Head of Council.