

POLICY:

This Code of Conduct is a public declaration of the principles of good conduct and ethics that Members of the Council of the Village of Ryley have decided its stakeholders can reasonably expect the Members to demonstrate in their performance and responsibilities as elected representatives.

Attaining an elected position within the community is a privilege which carries significant responsibilities and obligations. Members of Council are held to a high standard as leaders of the community and they are expected to become well informed on all aspects of municipal governance, administration, planning, and operations.

DEFINITIONS:

Confidential Information means any information that is of a personal nature to Village employees or clients, or information that is not available to the public and that, if disclosed, could result in loss or damage to the Village or others (see Section 197 of the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA) and Division 2 of Part 1 of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIP)) or could give the person to whom it is disclosed an advantage.

Confidential Information includes, but is not limited to the following information:

- a) information disclosed or discussed at a Closed Session meeting of Council,
- b) information that is circulated to Members of Council and marked "Confidential",
- c) information that is given verbally in confidence in preparation of or following a meeting that is closed to the public and includes, but is not limited to, the following types of information as further specified in Division 2 of Part 1 of FOIP:
 - i) personal matters about an identifiable individual(s),
 - ii) information about suppliers provided for evaluation which might be useful to other suppliers,
 - iii) matters relating to legal affairs of the Village,
 - iv) sources of complaint where the identity of the complainant is given in confidence,
 - v) items under negotiation,
 - vi) schedules of prices in contract tenders,
 - vii) personal information as defined in the FOIP.

Emergency is defined as a situation in which there is imminent danger to public safety or of serious harm to property.

Business Casual is defined as khaki or chino pants, slacks and skirts as well as short sleeved and long sleeved shirts or blouses with a collar. It excludes blue jeans, T-shirts and sweatshirts. Clean, appropriate blue jeans are acceptable with a dress shirt and jacket. It does not require a tie.

GUIDELINES:

This Code of Conduct identifies the Village's expectations of Council Members and establishes guidelines for appropriate conduct to ensure that:

- a) the decision-making process of the council is transparent, accessible, and equitable,
- b) decisions are made through appropriate channels of government structure,
- c) public office is not used for personal gain,
- d) the conduct of Members of Council is of the highest standard, and
- e) there is fairness and respect for the differences among members and a duty to work together for good will and the common good.

Principles of the Code of Conduct

Although areas of ethical exposure are generally consistent and understood in municipal governance, the following areas and guidelines have been specifically identified as being paramount to the municipal political process:

- a) Roles and Obligations
- b) Confidentiality
- c) Communications and Media Relations
- d) Relations with Staff
- e) Gifts, Hospitality, and Benefits
- f) Conflict of Interest - Pecuniary Interest
- g) Use of Village Property
- h) Transparency and Openness in Decision-Making
- i) Professional Development
- j) Conduct at Meetings
- k) Harassment
- l) Alcohol and Drug Use
- m) Dress Code
- n) Compliance with the Code - Complaint Protocol
- o) Implementation

Roles and Obligations

Council Members recognize their mandate incorporates tasks to:

- a) fairly represent the diversity of community views in developing an overall strategy for the future of the Village,
- b) set objectives and determine strategies to achieve the goals of the Village's Strategic Vision and Plan(s),
- c) achieve sound financial management, planning, and accountability,
- d) be aware of and understand statutory obligations imposed on Council as a whole, as well as each individual Member of Council, by the MGA, other Provincial legislation, and by Village bylaws and policies.

Confidentiality

In their decision-making process, Members of Council will have access to information that may be confidential or controversial such as, but not limited to, "Closed Session" meetings.

Members of Council shall not disclose or release by any means to any member of the public, either in verbal or written form, any Confidential Information acquired by virtue of their office, except when required by law to do so.

All information, documentation, email or other correspondence relating to, or deliberations received, reviewed, or taken in Closed Session of Council and its committees is Confidential Information until the matter ceases to be confidential, as determined by Council.

Members shall not permit any person other than those who are entitled thereto to have access to Confidential Information. Release of confidential information by members without the prior consent from council as outlined above could result in penalties, including loss of Village laptop or other measures, at the discretion of council.

Confidential Information that is provided to Members by the Village does not belong to them. It is property that belongs to the Village.

The obligation to keep information confidential is a continuing obligation even if the Member ceases to be a Member of Council.

Members have the same access rights to municipal information as any other resident of the Village, unless the

information relates specifically to a matter before Council. Requests for information should be referred to the appropriate staff to be addressed either as an informal request for access to municipal records, or as a formal request under FOIP.

Communications and Media Relations

Members of Council will accurately and adequately communicate the attitudes and decisions of Council, even if they disagree with the majority decision of Council.

Members shall show respect for the decision-making process of Council and should publicly support the decisions of Council despite their individual opinion at the time that the decision was made.

Information concerning adopted policies, procedures, and decisions of the Council shall be conveyed openly and accurately.

Confidential Information will be communicated only when and after determined by Council that it is appropriate to do so.

Relations with Staff

Members of Council shall acknowledge and respect that staff work for the Village as a corporate body and are responsible for making recommendations that reflect their professional expertise and the Village's corporate objectives, without undue influence from any individual Member.

In addition, Members shall acknowledge and respect that staff carry out directions of Council as a whole and administer the policies of the Village. A Member of Council shall refrain from using his/her position to improperly influence members of staff in their duties or functions or to gain an advantage for him/herself or others.

Members of Council are free to relay any operational concerns, suggestions, or service requests of their own or of others, to the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) or department heads, but are not permitted to direct the operations of the Village or the actions of any staff member. Members of Council shall not contact any staff directly to discuss official Village business, except for the CAO and department heads, except during an emergency. Members of Council may contact any staff member at any time to discuss matters not directly related to that staff member's primary work responsibilities as well as matters of general interest, so long as it does not appear to be placing pressure on that staff member to take direction or action based on the influence of the Member of Council.

Members of Council shall refrain from publicly criticizing individual members of staff in a way that casts aspersions on their professional competence and credibility.

Gifts, Hospitality, and Benefits

Members may only receive gifts, hospitality, or entertainment that are received as an incident of protocol or social obligation that normally accompanies the responsibilities of elected office. Any gifts, benefits, or hospitality that exceed these guidelines shall be returned with an explanation of this Code of Conduct. Gifts, souvenirs, or mementos with a value greater than \$ 100, if accepted, shall be the property of the Village.

Members may accept hospitality or entertainment if the offer is infrequent and appropriate to the occasion. (Rule of thumb: If you can consume it, it's probably ok).

Nothing in this section prevents the receipt of personal gifts, benefits, rewards, commissions or compensation from any person or organization not connected directly or indirectly with the performance or duties of office (i.e. full-time employment with another organization).

Members may also accept the following:

- a) political contributions that are otherwise offered, accepted, and reported in accordance with applicable Provincial law (i.e. *Local Authorities Election Act and MGA*),
- b) food and beverages at banquets, receptions, ceremonies or similar events,
- c) services provided by a person volunteering their time,
- d) food, lodging, transportation, and entertainment provided by other levels of government, boards, or commissions,
- e) reimbursement of reasonable expenses incurred and honorariums received in the performance of activities connected with municipal associations or agencies.

Conflict of Interest - Pecuniary Interest

Members of Council will recognize their obligations to follow and respect the provisions of the MGA.

Use of Village Property

Members may only use Village property or services for activities connected with the discharge of official duties or associated community activities having the sanction of Council or permitted by Village policies.

Transparency and Openness in Decision-Making

Members of Council will endeavour to conduct and convey Council business in an open and public manner, other than for those issues that may be discussed in Closed Session permitted by the MGA and FOIP, so that stakeholders can understand the process, logic, and rationale used to reach conclusions or decisions.

Professional Development

Members have the opportunity to promote, support, pursue, and partake in opportunities for professional development, including but not limited to Federal, Provincial, and Municipal conferences, seminars, and workshops. Council Members are encouraged to stay updated on issues and trends so that they can be as efficient and effective as possible in the discharge of their duties and responsibilities.

Conduct at Meetings

During Council meetings, Committee of the Whole meetings, other advisory committee meetings, or any working group meetings, Members shall conduct themselves with decorum. Respect for delegations and for fellow Council Members and staff requires that all Members show courtesy and not distract from the business of Council during presentations and when other Members have the floor.

Harassment

Harassment of another Council Member, staff, or any member of the public is prohibited by Provincial law and by the Village's *Respectful Workplace* Policy.

Alcohol and Drug Use (*refer to Health and Safety Manual for detailed guidelines*)

Members of Council shall abide by applicable laws and regulations governing the possession or use of alcohol and drugs. The illegal use, sale, purchase, transfer, or possession of any restricted or controlled drug, narcotic or any other substance while on Village premises is prohibited.

Dress Code

- a) Business casual dress is the **minimum** standard that must be observed when representing the municipality or officially interacting with residents or the public.
- b) Personal body cleanliness is required at all meetings and committee meetings, as well as when a councillor is officially interacting with the public.
- d) Councillors are free to dress to a higher standard whenever appropriate.
- e) The use of scented products is discouraged in the Ryley Municipal Office.

Compliance with the Code - Complaint Protocol

Where an alleged contravention of any provision of this Code of Conduct occurs, the following procedures will be adhered to:

Complaint Procedure

Individuals (i.e. Village employees, members of the public, or Members of Council) or organizations who have identified or witnessed behavior or an activity by a Member of Council that they believe is in contravention of the Council Code of Conduct, may wish to address the prohibited behavior or activity themselves, as follows:


- a) ~~advise that Member of Council, or the CAO or another Member of Council, that the behavior or activity of that~~ Member contravenes the Code of Conduct,
- b) encourage that Member of Council to stop the prohibited behavior or activity,
- c) keep a written record of the incidents including dates, times, locations, other persons present, and any other relevant information,
- d) advise someone else (for example, another Member of Council or the Chief Administrative Officer of the Village) about your concern, your comments to that Member of Council, and the response of that Member of Council,
- e) confirm to that Member of Council your satisfaction with the response of that Member of Council or advise that Member of Council of your dissatisfaction with the response.

The CAO shall submit a report to the next meeting of Council outlining the findings of the inquiry.

Implementation

Upon adoption of this Code of Conduct and thereafter at the beginning of each term, Council Members will be required to sign two copies of the Code of Conduct (one for the member and one for the CAO's office) to convey to each other and all stakeholders that they have read, understand, and accept it.

A copy of the Code of Conduct will be included as part of the orientation workshop for all Council Members. Members are expected to formally and informally review their adherence to the provisions of this Code on a regular basis or when so requested by Council.

	DATE	RESOLUTION NUMBER
Approved 	10/12/17	2016-04-19
Amended		
Amended		