



BY-LAW NO 2023-13

BEING A BY-LAW TO ADOPT A COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

WHEREAS the Municipal Act S.O. 2001, c 25, Section 5(1), as amended, provides that the powers of a municipal corporation are to be exercised by its Council;

AND WHEREAS the Municipal Act S.O. 2001, c 25, Section 5(3), as amended, provides that a municipal power, including a municipality's capacity rights, powers and privileges under Section 9; shall be exercised by By-law;


AND WHEREAS the Township of Billings deems it expedient to establish policies;

NOW THEREFORE THE COUNCIL OF THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BILLINGS ENACTS AS FOLLOWS:


- 1.0 THAT the Corporation of the Township of Billings hereby adopts a Communications Policy as attached as Schedule 'A' and forming part of this By-Law.
- 2.0 THIS By-Law shall come into full force and effect upon final passage.
- 5.0 THIS By-Law may be cited as "Adopt Communications Policy By-Law"

READ a FIRST and SECOND TIME this 21st day of February, 2023

READ a THIRD TIME and FINALLY PASSED this 21st day of February, 2023



Bryan Barker, Mayor



Emily Dance, CAO/Clerk

Policy – Communications

By-Law No: 2023-13

Revision

Date: February 7, 2023

Policy Statement:

The Township of Billings is committed to communication that is transparent, accessible, clear, open, accurate and timely. Communication, both incoming and outgoing, is vital for the successful management of the Township of Billings.

Purpose:

The Township of Billings recognizes the importance of providing public service and promotes the dissemination and receiving of communications related to municipal government. Guidelines for processing communications provide staff with the tools necessary to achieve levels of efficiency, having regard to available resources and a clear direction for the public to provide input.

Coverage:

This policy applies to internal and external communications for all Township Representatives when communications activities relate to the business or operations of the Township.

Associated Legislation and Policies

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, (AODA), Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA), Social Media Policy, Notice By-Law, Accountability and Transparency Policy, Council Code of Conduct.

Contents:

“Communication” shall mean any, electronic communication, facsimile, hard copy communication, addressed to a Member of Council, any staff member of the Corporation, or the Corporation generally, whether specifically addressed to Council, an individual person(s) or department(s), or intended to be specifically addressed.

Processing of Communications

1. All communications received by the Township shall be reviewed, and where applicable, processed in a timely manner, having regard to all of the circumstances of the communication.
2. Communications addressed to Council, shall be included on the next agenda of Council as information.
3. Following Council receipt of public communications, staff will provide a written response to the sender noting the communication was received and indicate (if applicable) any decision, direction or comment given.

4. Council and staff shall have regard to the provisions of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act when considering any communications.
5. Communications deemed to be discriminatory, espousing hatred or harassment, violence or racism, or containing aggressive, abusive or derogatory comments directed at a member of Council or staff will not be responded to.
6. Communications that are unsigned will not be responded to.
7. Communications that provide insufficient information for staff to respond will be referred back to the author for clarification and will not be processed until such or sufficient clarification is provided.
8. Communications for information that has already been provided to the requester directly or to any third party having made a request on behalf of the requester may be deemed to be frivolous and/or vexatious and may be treated accordingly.
9. Communications shall be referred by the CAO/Clerk to the appropriate staff member on the basis of subject matter for response.
10. Communications which contain personal information and/or containing aggressive, abusive or derogatory comments directed at a member of Council, staff or any other party will not be referred to Council and will be returned to the sender and/or reported to relevant authorities and/or legal counsel for further action if deemed appropriate.
11. Council and/or staff will not provide responses to requests for information or comment on the interpretation of issues outside of the authority provided to municipalities including but not limited to federal and provincial government legislation and policies.
12. Council and/or staff will not provide legal advice and/or legal opinions or information which may be considered to be legal advice and/or a legal opinion.
13. Complaints shall be processed in accordance with the Complaint Handling Policy
14. Requests for Support from other municipalities or government organizations shall be included as information and at the request of Council brought forward for consideration.
15. Council and/or staff will be proactive in how it communicates, employing a variety of ways and means to communicate and provide information to accommodate diverse needs.
16. Staff will be knowledgeable on the variety of communications methods available and will utilize suitable methods depending upon the situation or circumstances.

Review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.