



## **Accountability and Transparency Policy**

### **1. Purpose**

The Municipal Act, 2001 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 for the delivery of the municipality's activities and services in accordance with the principles as outlined herein. This policy has been developed in accordance with the Municipal Act, to comply with Section 270(1) 5.

### **2. Definitions**

**Accountability:** The principle that the municipality will be responsible to the public for decisions made and policies implemented, as well as its actions or inactions.

**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.

### **3. Policy Statement**

The Corporation of the City of Elliot Lake is vitally interested and committed to ensuring an accountable and transparent Corporation. The Council of the City of Elliot Lake acknowledges that it is responsible to provide good government for the public in an accountable and transparent manner by:

- Openness and fairness when transacting municipal business;
- Efficient and effective financial management;
- An open, responsive meeting process that ensures that citizens have access to and awareness of the Council / Committee business being discussed by conducting its Council /Committee meetings and associated business in open session;
- Providing notice of closed meetings in accordance with the Municipal Act, as amended;
- Following any legislative mandates approved by the Provincial or Federal Government;
- Providing access to credible information that can be obtained through routine disclosure and in accordance with Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act(MFIPPA);
- Encouraging public access and participation to ensure that decision making is responsive to the needs of its constituents and receptive to their opinions; and
- Delivery of high quality services to our citizens.

Accountability, transparency and openness are standards of good government and enhance public trust. They are achieved through the municipality adopting measures ensuring, 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 will engage its stakeholders throughout its decision making process which will be open, visible and transparent to the public.

#### 4. Themes

The guiding themes are:

- Municipal Powers – how decisions are taken and implemented and services are provided;
- Transparency – how able are outside parties to observe how these decisions are taken and implemented;
- Accountability – how Council, Councillors and staff are to account for their actions and how those actions are explained and justified.

#### 5. Structure

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| <b>Accountability and Transparency Policy</b> |
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|                   |                              |                                   |                                |                     |                                 |                                 |
|-------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Council Procedure | Sale and Disposition of Land | Procurement Policy and Procedures | Recruitment Selection & Hiring | Provision of Notice | Other existing Council policies | Delegation of Powers and Duties |
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#### 6. Policy Requirements

The principle of accountability and transparency shall apply equally to the political process and decision making and to the administrative management of the municipality.

##### 1) Financial Matters

The municipality will be open, accountable and transparent to its stakeholders in its financial dealings as required under the Act. The following processes are in place to ensure the municipality accountable and transparent:

- External audit by independent 3<sup>rd</sup> party
- Reporting / Financial statements
- Asset management and long term capital plans
- Budget process (Operating and Capital budgets)
- Procurement of goods and services / purchasing policy
- Land Sale Procedure By-law
- Tax policies

##### 2) Internal Governance

The municipality's administrative practices ensure specific accountability on the part of its employees through the following initiatives:

- Policy regarding employment of relatives (Recruitment selection and Hiring Policy)
- Performance Management / evaluations
- Continuing education
- Health & Safety Committee
- Compensation/benefits
- Policies for Corporate Credit Card; mobile devices; vehicle usage; Information Technology Operational; expense reimbursements
- Standard Operating Procedures in place for departments

##### 3) Public Participation and Information Sharing

The municipality ensures that it is open and accountable to its stakeholders through implementing processes outlining how, when and under what rules meetings will take place. The municipality's meetings will be open to the public when or as required under the Act. The municipality has policies which ensure that participation by the public can be meaningful and effective, through timely disclosure of information by various means including notice, print, media, municipal website, etc.

Some specific examples include:

- Council Procedural By-law
- Open meetings
- Access to agenda / minutes
- Public Presentation rules
- Notice provisions by-law
- Records Retention by-law
- Planning processes – Notice requirements under the Planning act including notice beyond the minimum required
- Public Sector Salary Disclosure

#### 4) Additional Accountability Measures

Other accountable measures that the Corporation must follow also contribute to ensuring an accountable and transparent Council include:

- Accountability and Transparency policy (this policy)
- Ombudsman / investigator
- Municipal conflict of interest declarations
- Annual Statement of Council Remuneration and Expenses (Municipal Act)
- MFIPPA (Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act)
- Ontario Municipal Board inquiries and other performance or outcome measurements
- Building Code Act
- Cemeteries Act
- Planning Act
- Fire Prevention and Protection Act
- Municipal Elections Act
- Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act
- Safe Drinking Water Act
- Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act
- Annual Financial Information Return provided to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
- Publication of Audited Financial Statements on Municipal Website
- Publication of Municipal Performance Measures on Website

This list represents some of the highlites but should not be deemed to be complete.