



# Staff Report

## Administration – Chief Administrative Officer

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**Report To:** COW- Admin, Corp and Finance, SI, Comm. Services  
**Meeting Date:** April 13, 2026  
**Report Number:** ADM.26.017  
**Title:** Follow Up to Proposed Updates to Council Staff Relationship Protocol Policy  
**Prepared by:** Adam Smith, Chief Administrative Officer

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### A. Recommendations

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THAT Council receive Staff Report ADM.26.017, entitled “Follow Up to Proposed Updates to Council Staff Relationship Protocol Policy”;

AND THAT Council repeals the “Council Staff Relationship Policy POL.COR.19.02”, and enacts a new “Council Staff Relationship Protocol Policy, POL.COR.26.xx” as attached to this report.

### B. Overview

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This report serves as follow up to Council direction provided on November 10, 2025 as a result of [staff report ADM.25.067 "Follow Up to Public Meeting - Council Staff Relationship Protocol Policy, POL.COR.19.02"](#)

### C. Background

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On September 30, 2025 the Town held a public meeting regarding proposed changes to the [Council Staff Relationship Protocol Policy, POL.COR.19.02](#) .

Based on the feedback received at the Public Meeting, staff presented follow up [staff report ADM.25.067 "Follow Up to Public Meeting - Council Staff Relationship Protocol Policy, POL.COR.19.02"](#) and Council provided the following resolution on November 10, 2025:

*THAT Council receive Staff Report ADM.25.067, entitled “Follow Up to Public Meeting – Council Staff Relationship Protocol Policy, POL.COR.19.02”;*

*AND THAT Council directs staff to review the proposed Council Staff Relationship Protocol policy in light of discussion regarding the overall purpose, policy statement, guiding principles, clarifying roles and Council input language within the Peterborough policy referenced in the Public Meeting presentation of September 30, 2025.*

In updating the protocol policy, the intent is to ensure it is reflective of current realities of governance in the municipality and addresses any gaps that may be affecting the working relationship between Council and staff. The changes are situated in the context of emerging threats to principles underpinning Council-Staff relations. In particular, the increasing trend of incivility in the municipal space has impacted organizations across the province including the Town of The Blue Mountains.

In a [recent survey](#) conducted in November 2025 by the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO), 264 responses were collected from municipal staff across the province with 77% regardless of tenure or frequency of interaction, reported experiencing incivility from members of council. This percentage rose to 94% when it came to members of the public.

The deterioration in civic discourse and growing toxicity, has also impacted elected officials, to the point where the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) has stated that these issues are systemic barriers to effective governance and service delivery. Through its [Healthy Democracy Research](#), AMO has identified the mental health toll of discrimination, bullying and harassment as a barrier to entry into municipal politics particularly for equity-deserving groups.

Alongside the above reference material, additional resources that are complementary to this protocol and provide helpful tactics to address pressures on the relationship include AMO's [Leading with Respect Handguides](#). Collectively, these resources in conjunction with the Council-Staff Relations Protocol and corporate policies referencing applicable codes of conduct and respectful interactions serve to support a relationship that is resilient in the face of both current and future challenges.

## **D. Analysis**

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Further to the Council resolution respecting [staff report ADM.25.067 "Follow Up to Public Meeting - Council Staff Relationship Protocol Policy, POL.COR.19.02"](#), the draft Council Staff Relationship Protocol Policy has been subsequently reviewed and modified based on a similar policy maintained by the City of Peterborough. Most significantly, is the addition of the 'Guiding Principles' section that mirrors the City of Peterborough policy but is also reflective of the Town of The Blue Mountains context. In doing so, language within the 'Procedures' section particularly related to roles was added under the 'Guiding Principles' section.

In terms of effect, the City of Peterborough's policy was very similar to the Town with respect to understanding the statutory obligations between Council and Staff alongside processes important for the relationship such as communications. Staff maintained the 'Procedures' section as it is intended on being the means in which the 'Guiding Principles' are operationalized and practiced.

The above modifications serve to focus on trends affecting the relationship and emphasize the shared purpose of both administration and Council particularly as it relates to working together and "promoting an environment of mutual respect" with an expectation that both staff and

Council refrain from public criticism that may “lead to public embarrassment or reputational damage.”

Another component of Council’s direction on this matter, was modifications to the chart within the ‘Input and Directions’ sub-section. To fulfill the direction, staff have added another column to the chart described as ‘Acknowledgment’. In doing so, there is now further guidance on an appropriate response to a member of Council versus Council as a whole.

Finally, with the recent approval of the Town’s Corporate Strategic Plan, the Council Staff Relationship Protocol Policy has been updated in alignment with the values anchoring the Plan and this is reflected in the ‘Trust and Respect’ subsection. Adherence of these values is critical to ensure that both Council and staff can “serve the best interests of the municipality”.

## **E. Strategic Priorities**

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### **1. Communication and Engagement**

We will enhance communications and engagement between Town Staff, Town residents and stakeholders

### **2. Organizational Excellence**

We will continually seek out ways to improve the internal organization of Town Staff and the management of Town assets.

## **F. Environmental Impacts**

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N/A

## **G. Financial Impacts**

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N/A

## **H. In Consultation With**

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Corrina Giles, Town Clerk

## **I. Public Engagement**

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The topic of this Staff Report has been the subject of a Public Meeting and/or Public Information Centre which took place on **September 30, 2025**. Those who provided comments at the Public Meeting and/or Public Information Centre, including anyone who has asked to receive notice regarding this matter, have been provided notice of this Staff Report. Any comments regarding this report should be submitted to Adam Smith, Chief Administrative Officer, [cao@thebluemountains.ca](mailto:cao@thebluemountains.ca).

**J. Attached**

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1. Council-Staff Relationship Protocol Policy – PROPOSED

Respectfully submitted,

Adam Smith  
Chief Administrative Officer

For more information, please contact:  
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**Report Approval Details**

Document Title:	ADM.26.017 Follow Up to Proposed Updates to Council Staff Relationship Protocol Policy.docx
Attachments:	- Attachment 1 - Draft Council-Staff Relationship Protocol Policy - PROPOSED.docx
Final Approval Date:	Apr 7, 2026

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

**Adam Smith - Apr 7, 2026 - 2:01 PM**