

ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION – ITS FUTURE

Submission to the Agenda of the A&T Committee for its April 16, 2026 Agenda

PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

Members of the Accountability & Transparency Committee (A&TC) were asked to address their views on the future of this Committee as an agenda item within its April 16, 2026.

This report provides this member's recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION

That going forward Council does not reconstitute the A&TC as an appointed Committee of Council per its currently approved Terms of Reference (TOR). see **Attachment 1**. Instead, Accountability and Transparency have increased citizen membership input through a newly constituted Accountability & Transparency Working Group similar in structure to the Family Physicians Recruitment Working Group TORs. See **Attachment 2**.

BACKGROUND

A&TC had its first meeting in March 2024. Since then, it has had nineteen meetings, including its final meeting to be held on April 2026. In its March 2026 meeting it was noted that a review of this Committee's future was to be placed on the April meeting agenda.

The A&TC is a Committee of Council has oversight by the Town Clerk who follows governance using Robert's Rules of Order and the Town's Procedural Bylaw. Its membership includes three members of Council and two Citizen members. As identified by the Clerk, this Committee cannot direct Staff with its outputs ("as only Council has the authority to direct Staff"). Actions identified by Committee come in the form of "motions" to Council through its minutes. With three Councillors and two citizen members, any motions voted "nay" by the former two can be overruled by the latter three. Although only occurring once, per my request to add an item to our March 26th agenda that was ruled to be "outside of the purview of the A&TC), this has weighed heavily on this recommendation today.

While Robert's Rules of Order state that any motion put on the table (through first and seconder) must have discussion before a vote it taken – Committee procedure has ruled that there be no minuting of any of the discussion that led to the vote taken. Secondly, no action can be taken until the A&TC minutes are brought before the next COW meeting and then approved at its next Council meeting which means a delay of minimally 5 weeks. Thirdly, the citizens within the Committee depend upon its Councillor members "pulling" the Committee minutes from the consent agenda in order for Committee discussion points (including citizen discussion points) to be heard by Council).

Since A&TC minutes cannot have documents that were attached to our agenda be re-attached to our minutes, these documents, including the discussion points that surround them, are dependent on the notes taken by the Councillors attending the A&TC meeting in question. Then, even if an A&TC unanimously approved motion requests a document to be brought before the CAO or Council (as was the case with the Staff Template back in our September 2025 meeting) Committee's citizen members must depend upon the Committee's Councillor members to bring that document forward to gain support from minimally one other Council member in order for the A&TC motion's action item to go forward.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Since this report is being submitted ahead of the request for April's A&TC agenda items – and if attached to the agenda - there is the opportunity for public engagement. However, it should be noted that within our nineteen A&TC meetings, public attendance has had minimal attendance (i.e. less than 5 times).

This report has been reviewed by A&TC citizen member Craddock who is prepared to speak to this report at the April A&TC meeting.

IN DEPTH ANALYSIS (including Strategic Priorities, Public Input Alignment, Financial Impact, Environmental Impacts)

Accountability and Transparency is identified as one of our Town's Key Strategic Priorities within the new, yet not announced, Strategic Plan. Public alignment with A&T is a priority since it emerged as one of the four Key Strategic Priorities stemming from public comment obtained through consultant Strategy Corp. This suggests that some form A&T oversight by community members in the form of some Council approved structure should continue.

There are no environmental impacts within this recommendation. There are however strategic priority impacts as the two citizen members have had to come before Council due to the urgency of a matter not being able to wait a minimum five weeks for it to come before COW and then before Council through procedural bylaw. (e.g. Whistle-blower policy, comments on our Procedural Bylaw and recently the need for an independent audit re \$19.7MM overrun).

There are financial impacts to the current Committee structure as beyond its citizen members, its Terms of Reference include three Councillors and three Staff resources, including the Town Clerk and the Chief Administrative Officer.

As such, going forward within the next term of Council, this report provides three options for consideration:

- (1) Do nothing, which would mean continuing with the A&TC as currently structured as a Council Committee and appointed using the same Terms of Reference.
- (2) Continue with a Council Committee but address the Terms of Reference (TOR) to change its purpose, mandate and membership. This option includes an overhaul of the current procedural bylaw to ensure that the way the Committee functions better supports its new TOR.
- (3) Restructure Accountability and Transparency to become a Working Group NOT a Committee of Council. The model in mind is similar to the current Family Physicians Recruitment Working Group currently Chaired by Councillor Porter with two Staff support (the Director of Strategic Initiatives and his Administrative Assistant).

Discussion

This report is being provided by a citizen that is currently a member of the Town's Family Physicians Recruitment Working Group and as such it can compare the outputs from Council Committees vs Working Groups.

- (1) Doing nothing is not seen as a viable option. As discussed in the background of this document, its Committee governance structure impedes Accountability and Transparency as follows:
 - a. The impact of Procedural Bylaw including:
 - i. Inability of citizen members to ensure items can be added to A&TC meeting agendas, especially when its citizen members argue that the item in question lies within Committee TORs.
 - ii. That actions on approved A&TC agenda items are not minuted to show the discussion that occurred ahead of voting, including the documents reviewed within discussion.
 - iii. The length of time for **approved minutes** to come before Council and then the dependence for these minutes to be pulled from the consent agenda for Council discussion and action.
 - b. The financial cost of staff time versus the benefits obtained also does not support this option.
- (2) Continuing as a Council Committee even with altered TORs, is not seen as a viable option for the same reasons as outlined in (a.) within Option (1), in that the Procedural Bylaw cannot be altered to the extent necessary to improve this Committee's functionality as Council must be governed by the same (albeit new) Procedural Bylaw.

This option also continues to require the citizen members of the Committee to come before Council through deputation or public comment in order to make their points known if time is of the essence or if that they feel that their points have not been made by A&TC Council members. This can also result in the alienation of Committee A&T members towards Citizen A&T if the latter chooses to take this route.

- (3) Moving from a Council Committee structure to a Working Group (WG) structure is seen as the most viable option. Although the WG option does not allow public comment, it should be noted that the public has been restricted from coming through the procedures embraced by the current Council Committee structure. See **Attachment 3**
YET

This option has the following benefits:

- a. It continues to address Accountability & Transparency as a Key Strategic Priority as outlined in the new Strategic Plan.
- b. Working Group Terms of reference and meeting process are not governed by procedural bylaw.
As such:
 - i. Are not dependent on the next iteration of the revised Procedural Bylaw.
 - ii. Agenda items are at the call of its membership through its Chair with documents shared.
 - iii. Minutes include discussion and documents that outline key action items can be shared so that each Committee member can take before the next Working Group meeting.
 - iv. The Chair of the Working Group is free to bring outputs from the meeting to the next COW and Council meeting if required – as such action items can be addressed expeditiously (incl funding).
- c. It reduces administrative expense as it requires less Staff resources including the Town Clerk and the CAO.
- d. It frees up time of two Councillors to devote time to other Key Strategic Priorities within the Strategic Plan

If the outputs of the Family Physicians Recruitment Working Group can be used as an example it can be shown that timely results do not require its membership to come before Council with deputations UNLESS it is at the call of the Working Group (as has been the case). As such, since the content of its deputation can be reviewed by the Chair, therefore the relationship with the Chair and the rest of the Committee is impactful and synergistic.

NEXT STEPS UPON APPROVAL OF OPTION (3) BY THIS COMMITTEE

- (1) The following Motion would emanate from A&TC's April meeting:
That Committee recommends the discontinuation of the Accountability and Transparency Committee as a Council approved structure within the Town's next term of Council – recommending that it be replaced by an Accountability and Transparency Working Group per the structure of Council's current Family Physicians Recruitment Working Group.
- (2) That if passed (requiring one other A&TC Council member to support this recommendations) the minutes from this meeting be pulled by the supporting Council member(s) for discussion at Council's next COW for discussion and then being placed on subsequent Council meeting for approval with such Motion to come before next elected Council.
- (3) That Member Turner come before the next elected Council with a deputation outlining reasons for the creation of an Accountability & Transparency Working Group, outlining a proposal for the Working Group's Terms of Reference before the next structure of A&T is communicated for citizen membership application.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Most up to date Terms of Reference for the current Accountability and Transparency Committee (including most recent changes outlined in red) chaired by Councillor Porter

Attachment 2 – Current Terms of Reference for the Family Physicians Recruitment Working Group chaired by Councillor Porter.

Attachment 3 – The current procedure that restricts the public from coming before the A&T Committee

ATTACHMENT 1

Accountability and Transparency Committee

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. PURPOSE

The Accountability and Transparency Committee is endorsed by Council for the purposes of growing trust in all aspects of the decision making of the Town in order to enhance the well-being of all residents and those who visit.

2. MANDATE

The Mandate of the Accountability and Transparency Committee is to create and implement a plan to grow trust between the community and the Town, by reviewing, modernizing, and designing the corporate strategic plan to create a responsive and democratic governance structure within the Town. This outcome will be achieved by recommending to Council to support the following actions:

- Recommending strategies that will ensure staff, Council, residents, stakeholders and visitors continue to be educated on all Town directions and activities, including a shared understanding and meaning about the Town's corporate strategic plan, while also building a culture of learning and providing evidence for change.
- Updating the “Accountability and Transparency of Town Actions to the Public Policy, POL.COR.07.01”
- Reviewing of the Staff Report template to ensure that corporate strategic objectives are aligned with the established policies of the Town, Grey County, the Province, and the Federal Government
- Decision making of staff and Council is supportive of the corporate strategic objectives
- Collaborating with Communications staff to ensure all elements of accountability and transparency are engrained into every Town communication vehicle including surveys.

- Reviewing and providing recommendations regarding the Code of Conduct
- Providing recommendations on the establishment of the Lobbyist Registry and its ongoing effectiveness
- Reviewing and, where appropriate making recommendations on any other matter that comes forward during Committee discussions through the lens of accountability and transparency or as requested by Council
- The mandate will be supported by measurable action items and timing
- Ongoing and continuous monitoring of accountability and transparency of trends and issues

3. MEMBERSHIP/VOTING

The Accountability and Transparency Committee will be comprised of three (3) representatives of Council along with up to two (2) members of the public, each with a 15-month term.

Composition is noted below:

Members:

- Three (3) Members of Council with one (1) member of Council being the Chair and one (1) the Vice Chair
- Two (2) Public voting Members appointed by Council

Non-Voting Staff Resource(s):

- One (1) Lead Town Staff Resource (Town Clerk)
- One (1) additional Town Staff (Chief Administrative Officer)
- One (1) additional Staff Resource (Executive Assistant to Committees of Council) for Administrative duties, notetaking, and the scheduling of meetings.

Members will:

Members of the Committee are expected to know and abide by relevant conduct policies of the Town listed in these Terms of Reference. In addition, the following guidelines shall be understood by members of the Accountability and Transparency Committee:

- a) members shall not direct or release any messaging without the approval of the Committee;

- b) All members play an important and equal role in ensuring that a functional relationship with high integrity exists within the Accountability and Transparency Committee;
- c) Constructive and informative debate and opinion sharing can be a constructive part of the group decision-making process. However, when the debate becomes ongoing, inappropriate, unconstructive, or offensive, and before becoming a conflict, each member shares an equal responsibility and may need to intervene with an appropriate dispute resolution mechanism.

It is the responsibility of the member to declare any affiliations and/or inclusion on the Town's Lobbyist Registry to the Town Clerk as soon as possible in writing.

4. QUORUM

A Committee is required to follow the Town's Procedural By law, therefore there are requirements relating to Quorum as per the standards of the *Municipal Act, 2001*. A meeting of the Committee shall have at least three (3) of the Committee members and shall include at least one (1) member of Council that is the Chair or Vice Chair, one (1) member of the public, one (1) member of Town staff and one (1) staff resource for notetaking for the Committee present.

5. REMUNERATION

No compensation shall be provided to non-Town staff members of the Committee for their participation.

6. MEETINGS

The Committee will meet up to nine (9) times in a calendar year. The Term of the Committee will end six (6) months prior to the Election. Meetings shall have a duration of no longer than two (2) hours in length.

Formal minutes will be taken through the staff resources provided by the Town. Notes taken will be in the form of action items that highlight agreed upon next steps and identify those individuals who are responsible for the completion of specific tasks.

If the Committee believes that the continuation of the Committee is necessary, Town staff may provide a recommendation, via a formal staff report to Council, to request an extension. Rationale and justification for the continuation shall be provided for Council consideration that clearly demonstrates that the original scope and focus have been maintained by the Committee and that it can be demonstrated that additional time is needed to complete the work.

7. AGENDA, MINUTES & PROCEDURE

Agenda items will be set through the Chair of the Accountability and Transparency Committee.

8. RELATED POLICIES & TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

POL.COR.07.07 Code of Conduct for Members of Council

POL.COR.17.04 Accessibility Standards for Customer Service

POL.COR.18.04 Protocol Policy for Complaints Related to Council Members and Local

Boards POL.COR.18.08 Workplace Violence & Harassment Policy

POL.COR.18.10 Social Media Policy

POL.COR.19.02 Council Staff Relationship

Protocol

[Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005,](#)

[c.11 Municipal Conflict of Interest Act, R.S.O. 1990](#)

[Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990](#)

NOTE: This Committee requires an application form that would incorporate an interview process, with the Committee.

ATTACHMENT 2

Family Physician Recruitment Working Group

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1.PURPOSE

The Town of The Blue Mountains Family Physician Recruitment Working Group, endorsed by Council, is dedicated to developing strategic information, identifying key challenges related to family physician recruitment through a solutions-oriented approach, and presenting recommendations for Council's consideration and action. The primary objective is to facilitate the recruitment of new physicians to support the local community by leveraging municipal authority to address this critical need.

2.MANDATE

The Mandate of the Family Physician Recruitment Working Group (FPRWG) is to enable adynamic collaboration between dedicated residents, municipal staff, and designated Councilmembers to:

- Identify and Address Knowledge and Service Gaps: Develop a detailed mapping process to locate knowledge and service deficits and identify relevant provincial government bodies, their programs, funding opportunities, qualifications, and all other factors likely to influence the community's physician recruitment and retention efforts, including best practices from other regions.
- Strategic Planning and Program Development: Engage in strategic planning, program creation, implementation, and evaluation of initiatives aimed at recruiting and retaining new and existing physicians, medical student locums, and resident physicians within the working group's catchment area and beyond. This includes identifying and ranking essential criteria that might influence physicians' decisions to relocate to our community.
- Partnership Development: Foster strategic partnerships with neighbouring municipalities, regional health networks, and healthcare organizations to leverage resources and share best practices in physician recruitment and retention efforts. Also, collaborate with community partners to deliver essential services outside municipal control.
- Intergovernmental Collaboration: Engage with upper-tier levels of government and provincial ministries to align local initiatives with broader healthcare strategies, policies, and funding opportunities to support physician recruitment.

- **Funding Strategy Exploration:** Identify and pursue diverse funding opportunities, including grants from provincial bodies, federal programs, and private-sector partnerships, to support recruitment and retention initiatives.
- **Advocacy and Policy Influence:** Advocate for policy changes and improvements at the provincial level, ensuring local healthcare needs are addressed, and recruitment strategies align with regional health priorities.
- **Knowledge Sharing and Networking:** Establish a network of healthcare professionals and recruiters to share insights, recruitment trends, and successful practices, enhancing the effectiveness of local efforts. This also involves reviewing and documenting "Best in Class" strategies that can be adapted locally.
- **Community Engagement and Support:** Develop community-based initiatives to facilitate integration and support of new healthcare providers, creating a welcoming environment that enhances retention while reaching out to potential partners who can support the Working Group's objectives.

3. MEMBERSHIP/VOTING

The Family Physician Recruitment Working Group will be comprised of up to four (4) residents from the Town of The Blue Mountains with demonstrated relevant experience and/or interest in contributing to the Working Group, up to two (2) members of Town Staff and one (1) designated Council member representative as selected by Council.

The composition is noted below:

Members:

- Up to four (4) Town of The Blue Mountains Resident Members;
- Up to two (2) Directors from the Northeast Grey Health Clinics;
- One (1) Designated Council Member Representative;
- One (1) Lead Town Staff Resource;
- One (1) additional Staff Resource for Administrative duties, note-taking, and logistical scheduling.

Members will:

Members of the Family Physician Recruitment Working Group are expected to know and abide by relevant conduct policies of the Town listed in this Terms of Reference. In addition, the following guidelines shall be understood by members of the Working Group:

- Members shall not direct or release any messaging without the approval of the Family Physician Recruitment Working Group;
- Discussions, information and material shared at the Working Group meetings are confidential and shall not be shared, distributed or discussed without the approval of the Family Physician Recruitment Working Group;
- All members play an important and equal role in ensuring that a functional relationship with high integrity exists within the Family Physician Recruitment Working Group;
- Constructive and informative debate and opinion sharing can be a constructive part of the group decision-making process. However, when the debate becomes ongoing, inappropriate, unconstructive, or offensive, and before becoming a conflict, each member shares equal responsibility and may need to intervene with an appropriate dispute resolution mechanism; and
- It is the responsibility of the member to declare any affiliations and/or inclusion on the Town's Lobbyist Registry to the Town Clerk as soon as possible in writing.

4. QUORUM

A Working Group is not required to follow the Town's Procedural By-law. Therefore, there are no requirements relating to Quorum as per the standards of the *Municipal Act, 2001*. However, an actual meeting of the Family Physician Recruitment Working Group shall have at least two (2) resident members, one (1) Director from the Northeast Grey Health Clinic, the appointed Council Member Representative and at least one (1) member of Town Staff present.

5. REMUNERATION

No compensation shall be provided to non-Town Staff members of the Family Physician Recruitment Working Group for their participation.

6. MEETINGS

- The appointed Council member will assume the role of Chair for the term of the Family Physician Recruitment Working Group;
- The resident members will be selected following the Town's standard Committee selection procedure administered by the Town Clerk;
- The Family Physician Recruitment Working Group will meet once per month or more frequently as called by the Chair, up to a maximum of fifteen (15) times in each calendar year;

- The Term of the Family Physician Recruitment Working Group shall end no later than December 31, 2025. Meetings shall have a duration of no longer than two (2) hours in length;
- Formal minutes will not be taken through the staff resources provided by the Town. Notes taken will be in the form of action items highlighting agreed-upon next steps and identifying those individuals responsible for the completion of specific tasks;
- The Working Group will have the flexibility to establish sub-committees to fulfil a specific and defined mandate;
- Before formal action is taken by Town Staff, the Working Group shall provide recommendation reports and/or budget requests to Council for consideration;
- The Working Group shall provide a minimum of two (2) annual progress reports to Council regarding the status, activities, and advancement of the Working Group’s activities; and
- If an extension of time is required, Town Staff may provide a recommendation via a formal staff report to Council to determine if the continuation of the Working Group is supported by Council. Rationale and justification for the continuation shall be provided for Council consideration that clearly demonstrates that the original scope and focus have been maintained by the Family Physician Recruitment Working Group and demonstrate that additional time is required to complete the work.

7. AGENDA, MINUTES AND PROCEDURE

- **Agenda items will be established through the mutual consent of the Family Physician Recruitment Working Group Chairperson and the Lead Town Staff Member.**

8. RELATED POLICIES AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

POL.COR.18.08 Workplace Violence & Harassment Policy

POL.COR.18.10 Social Media Policy

POL.COR.19.02 Council Staff Relationship Protocol

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c.11

Municipal Conflict of Interest Act, R.S.O. 1990

Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990

ATTACHMENT 3

C. Public Comment Period

In accordance with the Town Procedural By-law 2023-62, ten minutes is allotted at the Meeting **to receive public comments regarding Accountability and Transparency Committee matters included on the Agenda**. The speaker shall provide their name and address and shall address their comments to the Chair. Comments shall not refer to personal, litigation, or potential litigation matters, or regarding matters that are a follow-up to a Public Meeting.

Comments received by the public that have not been included on the Agenda will be read at the meeting by the Legislative Coordinator.