

CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF EAST ZORRA-TAVISTOCK

Accountability and Transparency Policy As required under Section 270(1) of the Municipal Act, 2001

Excerpt from the Municipal Act

- 270. (1)** A municipality shall adopt and maintain policies with respect to the following matters:
5. 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.

Date Approved: 2007-12-19

Statement of Principle

1. To establish a policy relating to Accountability and Transparency to confirm that the Township 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.

Purpose

2. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for the delivery of the municipality's activities and services in accordance with the principles outlined herein. This policy has been developed to comply with the provisions of Section 270 of the Act.

Definitions: Accountability; Transparency

3. Accountability - The principle that the municipality will be responsible to its stakeholders for decisions made and policies implemented, as well as its actions or inactions.
4. Transparency - The principle that the municipality actively encourages and fosters stakeholder participation and openness in its decision making process is open and clear to the public.

Policy Statement

5. The Council of the Township of East Zorra-Tavistock acknowledges that it is responsible to provide good government for its stakeholders in an accountable and transparent manner by:

- a. Encouraging public access and participation to ensure that decision making is responsive to the needs of its constituents and receptive to their opinions;
 - b. Delivering high quality services to our citizens; and
 - c. Promoting the efficient use of public resources.
6. Accountability, transparency and openness are standards of good government that 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.

Administration

7. The principles of accountability and transparency shall apply equally, to the political process and decision making and to the administrative management of the Township of East Zorra-Tavistock.

Financial Matters

8. The Township of East Zorra-Tavistock shall be open, accountable and transparent to its stakeholders in its financial dealings as required under the Act. Some examples of how the Township provides such accountability and transparency are as follows:
- a. Internal audits are conducted on a sporadic basis throughout the year by the Treasurer and an external audit is conducted annually by a professional chartered accountant;
 - b. Financial Operating Statements are provided to Council on a regular basis in Council's agenda (which is posted on the Township's website);
 - c. An annual budget and five year Capital Forecast is prepared for Council's consideration on an annual basis;
 - d. The Township maintains a list of property assets in a property register maintained by the Township Clerk's Department;
 - e. The Township has a Purchasing Policy;
 - f. The Township has a Sale of Land Policy;
 - g. Council conducts annual budget meetings which are open to the public prior to approval of the budget. Budgets and Financial Statements are available to the public on the website or on request;

- h. The Township maintains a consolidated Fee Schedule that is reviewed annually in conjunction with the Budget.

Internal Governance

- 9. The Township's administrative practices ensure specific accountability on the part of its employees through the following initiatives:
 - a. The Chief Administrative Officer, with the assistance of Department Heads ensure that employees undertake their duties in a responsible cooperative manner;
 - b. The Chief Administrative Officer, with the assistance of the Department Heads ensure that performance evaluation is conducted in accordance with Township practices;
 - c. Several Policies are in place to enhance the employee's work life. Those policies include:
 - i. The Employment By-law which sets out terms and conditions of employment for Township employees;
 - ii. Hiring Policy;
 - iii. Health and Safety Program;
 - iv. Maintenance of job descriptions for all positions and an organizational chart;
 - v. Chief Administrative Officer By-law - outlines the duties and responsibilities of the Chief Administrative Office for ensuring that Council's commitment to accountability and transparency;
 - vi. Meeting Investigator-The Township has appointed a meeting investigator to investigate complaints in regards to alleged violations of the closed meeting provisions of the Municipal Act.

Public Participation and Information Sharing

- 10. The Township ensures that it is open and accountable to its stakeholders through implementing processes outlining how, when and under what rules meetings take place.
- 11. The Township's meetings are open to the public when and as required under the Act, and members of the public have an opportunity to make delegations or comments in writing on specific items at these meetings. In addition, the Township

has adopted policies which ensure that participation by the public can be meaningful and effective, through timely disclosure of information by various means including print media, websites, etc. Some specific examples include:

- a. Procedure By-law -This by-law outlines the processes of how, when and under what rules matters are presented to Council;
- b. The Township has a Records Retention By-law which outlines the period of retention for all of the Township's records;
- c. The Township has a Notice Policy which prescribes the form, manner and times when public notice will be provided prior to an action of Council;
- d. All Council Agendas, Minutes and By-laws are posted on the Township's website;
- e. The Township utilizes various methods to provide information to the public about Township operations and activities. These include items like the quarterly newsletter, website, e-mail information service and others.