



Code of Conduct for Council Members & Members of Local Boards			
Effective Date	February 10, 2026	Policy Type Policy #	Governance GO-002
Responsibility	Clerk	Cross-Reference	By-Law No. 2016-16
Approver	Council	Appendices	
Review Schedule	5 Years		

1. Purpose

1.0 Application and Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to establish a general standard to ensure that all Members share a common basis for acceptable conduct, and to which all Members are expected to adhere to and comply with. This Code of Conduct augments other laws which Members are governed by and which requires Members to follow the Procedure By-law and other sources of applicable law, including but not limited to:

- *Municipal Act, 2001*
- *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*
- *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*
- *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*
- *Human Rights Code*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act*
- *Provincial Offences Act*
- *Criminal Code*

1.2 This Code of Conduct applies to all Members of the Council of the Town of Cochrane and, unless specifically indicated otherwise and with all necessary modifications, to all members of the Town’s local boards.

1.3 While this Code of Conduct applies to members of the Town’s local boards it is recognized that such members do not hold elected office nor do they represent the Town in general and at all times.

2.0 Statement of Principles

2.1 This Code of Conduct is intended to set a high standard of conduct for Members in order to provide good governance and to maintain and foster the reputation and integrity of the by its Members as duly elected and/or appointed public representatives of local boards to



ensure that they each operate from a foundation of integrity, transparency, accountability, justice, truth, honesty and courtesy.

- 2.2 The principles set out in Sections 2.1 and 2.2 are intended to facilitate an understanding, application and interpretation of the Code of Conduct – the principles are *not* operative provisions of the Code of Conduct and are *not* intended to and shall not be enforced independently as such.

All Members shall:

- serve and be seen to serve the public in a conscientious and diligent manner;
- observe and act with the highest standard of ethical conduct and integrity;
- avoid the improper use of the influence of their office and act without self-interest;
- perform their functions with honesty, integrity, accountability and transparency;
- perform their duties of office and arrange their private affairs in a manner that promotes public confidence and that will bear close public scrutiny;
- be cognizant that they are at all times representatives of the Town and of Council, recognize the importance of their duties and responsibilities, take into account the public character of their function, and maintain and promote the public trust in the Town; and
- uphold the spirit and the letter of the laws of Ontario and Canada and the laws and policies adopted by Council.

3.0 Definitions

3.1 The following terms shall have the following meanings in this Code of Conduct:

- (a) “CAO” means the Chief Administrative Officer of the Town or designate;
- (b) “child” means a child born within or outside marriage and includes an adopted child and a person whom a parent has demonstrated a settled intention to treat as a child of his or her family;
- (c) “Clerk” means the Clerk of the Town or designate;
- (d) “confidential information” means information or records that are in the possession, in the custody or under the control of the Town that the Town is either precluded from disclosing under the *Municipal Act, 2001* or other applicable legislation, its Procedure By-law or any of its other by-laws, policies, rules or procedures, or that it is required to refuse to disclose under the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* or other legislation, and all information and deliberations arising from any closed meetings;
- (e) “conflict of interest” means a situation in which a Member has competing interests or loyalties between the Member’s personal or private interests and his or her public

interests as an elected representative such that it might influence his or her decision in a particular matter, and can include a real or apparent conflict of interest where a reasonably informed person is able to discern a conflict between a Member's public duties and their personal or private interests but does not include a perceived conflict of interest;

- (f) "Council" means the council for the Town and includes, as the context may require and with all necessary modifications, any of the Town's local boards;
- (g) "disparage" means to minimize or belittle the value or importance of someone or something;
- (h) "family" means a Member's spouse, parent (including step-parent and legal guardian) and child (including step-child);
- (i) "frivolous" means of little or no weight, worth, importance or any need of serious notice;
- (j) "gift" means any kind of benefit, contribution or hospitality that has any financial or monetary value and includes the forms of benefits, contributions and hospitality that are set out in Section 7.0;
- (k) "Integrity Commissioner" means the person appointed by Council pursuant to section 223.3 of the *Municipal Act, 2001* to independently carry out the functions set out therein and such other functions as may be assigned by Council from time to time;
- (l) "local board" means a local board as that term is defined in subsection 1(1) and section 223.1 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*;
- (m) "meeting" means a regular, special or other meeting of Council or a committee of Council where:
 - (i) a quorum of Members is present, and
 - (ii) Members discuss or otherwise deal with any matter in a way that materially advances the business or decision-making of Council;
- (n) "Member" means a Member of the Council for the Town or a member of a local board, including a member of a joint board if that member is appointed by the Council to the joint board;
- (o) "non-pecuniary interest" means a private or personal interest that a Member may have that is non-financial in nature and that would be considered by a reasonable person, apprised of all the circumstances, as being likely to influence the Member's decision in any matter in which the non-pecuniary interest arises, and may include, but is not limited to, an interest that arises from a relationship with a person or entity;
- (p) "parent" means a person who has demonstrated a settled intention to treat a child as a member of his or her family whether or not that person is the natural parent of the child;



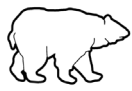
- (q) “pecuniary” means relating to or consisting of money or having financial, economic or monetary value;
- (r) “perceived conflict of interest” is one that is inferred by a person without a reasonable basis at law;
- (s) “spouse” means a person to whom the person is married or with whom the person is living in a conjugal relationship outside marriage;
- (t) “staff” means the CAO and all officers, directors, managers, supervisors and all administrative staff, whether full-time, part-time, contract, seasonal or volunteer, as well as agents, consultants and volunteers acting in furtherance of the Town’s business and interest (not including a Member);
- (u) “Town” means The Corporation of the Town of Cochrane and includes, as the context may require and with all necessary modifications, any of the Town’s local boards;
- (v) “vexatious” means troublesome or annoying in the case of being instituted without sufficient grounds and serving only to cause irritation and aggravation to the person being complained of.

4.0 Respectful Conduct

- 4.1 A Member shall always act civilly, respectfully and professionally when dealing with or communicating with any persons, including a member of the public and other Members as well as staff of the Town, and
- (a) shall not make statements that are or ought to be reasonably known to be false or with the intent to mislead or misinform Council or the public; and
 - (b) shall not make disparaging comments about any other person (including a Member) or unfounded accusations about the motives of any person (including a Member).

5.0 Respectful Conduct re Staff

- 5.1 Members acknowledge and agree that one of the roles of Council is to ensure the accountability and transparency of the Town’s operations, including the activities of the senior management of the Town, and that:
- (a) Council as a whole approves the budget, policies and governance of the Town and provides direction and instruction through its by-laws and resolutions;
 - (b) individual Members neither direct nor oversee the functions of the staff of the Town unless expressly authorized by statute or as delegated by Council; and
 - (c) staff serve Council and work for the Town as a body corporate under the specific direction of the CAO.



- 5.2 Members shall respect and have regard for the administration, managerial and organizational structure of the Town when requesting information, advice or services from staff.
- 5.3 A Member shall comply with the Town's Council - Staff Relations Policy.
- 5.4 A Member shall not:
- (a) publicly criticize staff and any issue with respect to any staff member shall be referred to the CAO who will direct the matter to the particular staff member's appropriate superior (if not the CAO); and
 - (b) falsely or maliciously injure the reputation of staff members whether professional or ethical or otherwise
- 5.5 A Member shall respect the role of staff in the administration of the business and governmental affairs of the Town, and acknowledge and appreciate that staff:
- (a) provide advice and make policy recommendations in accordance with their professional ethics, expertise and obligations;
 - (b) work within the administration of justice and that a Member must not make requests, statements or take actions which influence the independent administration of justice and, therefore, a Member shall not attempt to intimidate, threaten, or influence any staff member from carrying out that person's duties, including any duty to disclose improper activity; and
 - (c) carry out their municipal duties based on political neutrality and without any influence from any individual Member and, therefore, a Member shall not invite nor request or pressure any staff to act in furtherance of any Member's individual direction, to engage in partisan political activities or be subjected to any reprisal for refusing to engage in such activities.

6.0 Municipal Property

- 6.1 Council is the custodian of the assets of the Town. The community places its trust in Council and those it appoints to make decisions for the public good in relation to these assets.
- 6.2 By virtue of their office or appointment, a Member must not use or permit the use of the Town's property, including but not limited to land, facilities, equipment, supplies, services, staff or other resources for activities other than the business of the Town, unless they are entitled to such use equally with any other resident and have paid fair market value for such use. No Member shall seek financial gain for themselves, family or friends from the use or sale of the Town's intellectual property, computer programs, technological innovations, or other patent, trademarks, official marks or copyright held by the Town.



6.3 A Member shall not use any Town property for activities not associated with their duties of office unless prior approval has been granted by Council.

7.0 Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality

7.1 Members acknowledge that the receipt of any gift by Member risks the appearance of improper influence. Gifts may improperly induce influence or create an incentive for a Member to make decisions on the basis of relationships rather than in the best interests of the Town.

7.2 A gift provided to a Member's family that is connected directly or indirectly to the performance of the Member's duties shall be deemed to be a gift to that Member. Any doubt concerning the propriety of the gift should be resolved by the Member not accepting or keeping it.

7.3 A Member shall not accept any gift connected directly or indirectly with the performance of his or her duties except as permitted in the following circumstances:

- (a) a gift that normally accompanies the responsibilities of office and is received as an incident of protocol or social obligation as set out in 7.3(g);
- (b) a political contribution otherwise reported by law, in the case of a Member running for office;
- (c) services provided without compensation by persons volunteering their time for a charitable or non-profit event or for the Member's re-election campaign;
- (d) nominal tokens, mementos or souvenirs received as an incident of protocol or social obligation that normally accompanies the responsibilities of elected office or at a function honouring the Member;
- (e) food, lodging, transportation and entertainment provided by provincial, regional and local governments or any agencies or subdivisions of them or by the federal government or by a foreign government within a foreign country, or by a conference, seminar or event organizer where the Member is either speaking or attending in an official capacity as a representative of the Town;
- (f) entrance fees or food and beverages consumed at banquets, receptions or similar events, if:
 - (i) attendance serves a legitimate municipal business purpose related to the business of the Town,
 - (ii) the person extending the invitation or a representative of the organization is in attendance, and
 - (iii) the invitations are infrequent;



- (g) a gift (other than gifts as set out in Section 7.3(f)) not having a value greater than \$500.00 from a single source over a calendar year for any member of Council and \$1,000 from a single source over a calendar year for the Mayor; and
- (h) a gift received as a door prize, raffle or similar draw at an event, conference or seminar attended by the Member.

7.4 A Member shall not seek or obtain by reason of his or her office any personal privilege or advantage with respect to municipal services not otherwise available to the general public and not connected directly or indirectly to the performance of the Member's duties.

8.0 Confidential Information

8.1 A Member shall not disclose the content of any confidential information, or the substance of deliberations, from a closed meeting. A Member has a duty to hold any information received at closed meetings in strict confidence for as long and as broadly as the confidence applies. A Member shall not, either directly or indirectly, release, make public or in any way divulge any such information or any confidential aspect of the closed deliberations or information to anyone, unless authorized by Council or as required by law.

8.2 A Member shall not disclose, use or release confidential information in contravention of applicable privacy laws. Members are only entitled to information in the possession of the Town that is relevant to matters before the Council, or a committee. Otherwise, Members enjoy the same access rights to information as any other member of the community or resident of the Town and must follow the same processes as any private person to obtain such information.

8.3 A Member shall not misuse or attempt to release, relay, disclose or impart confidential information in any way or manner that may cause detriment to the Town, Council or any other person, or in a manner that creates a financial or other gain for themselves or others.

8.4 A Member shall respect the right to confidentiality and privacy of all clients, volunteers and staff, and should be aware of their responsibilities under applicable legislation, municipal policies, procedures and rules, ethical standards and, where appropriate, professional standards.

8.5 A Member shall not disclose any confidential information received by virtue of his or her office, even if the Member ceases to be a Member.

9.0 Discrimination and Harassment

9.1 A Member shall treat all members of the public, one another and staff with respect and without abuse, bullying or intimidation and ensure that their work environment is free from discrimination and harassment.

9.2 A Member shall not use indecent, abusive, demeaning or insulting words, phrases or expressions toward any member of the public, another Member or staff.

9.3 A Member shall not make comments or conduct themselves in any manner that is discriminatory to any individual based on the individual's race, colour, ancestry, citizenship,

ethnic origin, place of origin, creed or religion, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, disability, age or record of offences for which a pardon has not been granted.

- 9.4 A Member shall comply with the Town's Respect in the Workplace (Harassment and Violence) Policy.

10.0 Improper Use of Influence

- 10.1 A Member shall not use the influence of their office or appointment for any purpose other than the exercise of his or her official duties in the public interest.
- 10.2 A Member shall not use the status of their position to influence the decision of another person to the private advantage or non-pecuniary interest of themselves or their family, or for the purpose of creating a disadvantage to another person or for providing an advantage to themselves.

11.0 Conflicts of Interest

- 11.1 A Member is required to comply with the requirements of the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act* with respect to obligations relating to pecuniary interests. A contravention of the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act* by a Member shall not constitute a breach of the Code of Conduct but may be enforced in accordance with the provisions of the statute and section 223.4.1 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*.
- 11.2 A Member shall also avoid any conflict of interest that is a non-pecuniary interest in order to maintain public confidence in the Town and its local boards. If a Member has a non-pecuniary interest, the Member shall declare the non-pecuniary interest and then leave the meeting at which the matter is being considered. Under no circumstance shall the Member participate in any discussion or vote on the matter or attempt to influence the voting on the matter in any way, before during or after the meeting. A Member having a non-pecuniary interest is not entitled to remain at the meeting and to abstain from voting, thus having their abstention recorded as a negative vote.

12.0 Council Policies and Procedures

- 12.1 A Member shall observe and strictly adhere to any by-laws, policies, procedures and rules enacted and/or established from time to time by Council.

13.0 Election Activity

- 13.1 A Member is required to conduct themselves in accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* and any of the Town's policies pertaining to elections. The use of the Town's resources, both property and staff time, for any election-related activity is strictly prohibited. Election-related activity applies to the Member's campaign and any other election campaigns for municipal, provincial or federal office.

14.0 Respect for the Code of Conduct



- 14.1 A Member shall respect the process for complaints made under the Code of Conduct, applications under the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act* or through any process for complaints adopted by the Town.
- 14.2 A Member shall not act in reprisal or threaten reprisal against any person, including another Member, who makes a complaint or provides information to the Integrity Commissioner during an investigation.
- 14.2 A Member shall interact courteously and respectfully with the Integrity Commissioner and with any person acting under the direction of the Integrity Commissioner. A Member shall not act in reprisal or threaten reprisal against the Integrity Commissioner or any person acting under the instructions of the Integrity Commissioner. The Integrity Commissioner is authorized to report any incidents of threats or reprisals by a Member to Council or the local board and may recommend penalties or remedial or corrections measures or actions against such Member. The Integrity Commissioner is also authorized to report to Council or the local board any attempt by a Member to use their office to influence any decision or recommendation of the Integrity Commissioner.
- 14.3 A Member shall cooperate with requests for information during any investigations or inquiries under the Code of Conduct and shall not:
- (a) interfere with or obstruct an investigation by the Integrity Commissioner;
 - (b) destroy or damage documents or erase any digital or electronic communications or records;
 - (c) refuse to respond or provide records, information or documents to the Integrity Commissioner where a complaint has been filed under the Code of Conduct or any process for complaints adopted by the Town; or
 - (d) attempt to influence any other Member or staff with respect to the subject matter of the investigation or inquiry except as may be permitted pursuant to subsections 5(2.1) and 5.2(2) of the *Municipal Act Conflict of Interest Act*.
- 14.4 Staff shall remain neutral and impartial, and not seek to interfere with or attempt to subvert or obstruct the Integrity Commissioner in any way in carrying out its responsibilities and functions. Staff shall comply with any requests from the Integrity Commissioner for any assistance or information.

15.0 Penalties for Non-Compliance with the Code of Conduct

- 15.1 Where Council receives a report from the Integrity Commissioner that there has been a violation of the Code of Conduct by a Member, Council may impose the following penalties on the Member:
- (a) a reprimand; and/or
 - (b) a suspension of the remuneration paid to the Member in respect of his or her services as a Member for a period up to ninety (90) days.

15.2 In the case of a local board, if the Council has not imposed either of the penalties set out in Section 15.1 on its Member, the Integrity Commissioner may report to the local board that, in his or her opinion, the Member has contravened the Code of Conduct in which case the local board may impose the penalties set out in Section 15.1.

16.0 Remedial Measures or Corrective Actions

16.1 Council may, on the basis of a recommendation from the Integrity Commissioner, also take any or all of the following corrective actions or remedial measures, and require that the Member:

- (a) provide a written or verbal apology;
- (b) return property or make reimbursement of its value or of money spent;
- (c) be removed from or not be appointed to the membership on a committee of Council;
- (d) be removed from or not be appointed as chair of a committee of Council; and
- (e) comply with any other remedial measure or corrective action deemed appropriate by the Integrity Commissioner.

16.2 In the case of a local board, if the Council has not any remedial or corrective actions under Section 16.1, the local board may, to the extent it is authorized at law, impose such remedial or corrective actions as are set out in Section 16.1(a)-(e).

17.0 Legal Fees

17.1 A Member is entitled to seek the advice of the Integrity Commissioner with respect to their *own* obligations under the Code of Conduct, any ethical procedure, policy or rule, and sections 5, 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 of the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*. As such, a Member is solely responsible for their own legal costs if they retain a lawyer or paralegal to provide legal counsel, advice or representation on any matter related to the Code of Conduct, any ethical procedure, policy or rule, and sections 5, 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 of the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*, including, but not limited to, an investigation and the imposition of penalties or remedial or corrective actions recommended by the Integrity Commissioner or as imposed by Council, a complaint to the Ontario Ombudsman or a judicial review application to the courts from a decision based on a report and recommendations from the Integrity Commissioner, or any other related proceeding.

18.0 Complaint Protocol

18.1 The Complaint Protocol is Appendix “A” to the Code of Conduct and applies to complaints under the Code of Conduct and applications under the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*.

19.0 Short Title

19.1 This Code of Conduct for Members of Council and Local Boards shall be referred to by its short title “Council Code of Conduct”.