

# CITY OF WHITEHORSE

## COUNCIL POLICY

**POLICY:**            **DECISION-MAKING GUIDELINES**

**PURPOSE:**        To provide a universal understanding of the fundamental process council will use to make decisions in the best interests of the corporation

**AUTHORITY:**      Council Resolution # 2004-24-03 dated November 22, 2004

## DECISION-MAKING GUIDELINES

### POLICY STATEMENT

The City of Whitehorse has determined a benefit to adopting the 'informed consent' decision-making model. While acknowledging that time constraints often make consensus or unanimous agreement unavailable, council believes the process associated with the 'simple majority' system of decision-making has weaknesses, in that it inhibits transparency and may fail to provide the opportunity for all members of council to support implementation of a decision for the following reasons:

- They were not offered full information or adequate research on the issue, or an explanation of why their colleagues voted in a certain manner;
- They felt their views were not fully heard and debate was limited;
- That the process failed to acknowledge and respect diverse opinions;
- That the planning, implementation and monitoring of the decision were weak.

### PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this policy is to:
  - (1) Provide a universal understanding of the fundamental process council will use to make decisions in the best interests of the corporation.
  - (2) Identify the information required to enable council to make informed decisions.
  - (3) Promote transparency in decision-making.
  - (4) Provide clear direction for municipal employees for the implementation of council policy.
  - (5) Set out objective decision-making criteria.

## **DEFINITIONS**

2. In this policy,

**Confidential Information** – while the classification of information as “confidential” is a matter of discretion, whether labelled as confidential or not, disclosure of information will not constitute a breach of the Council Oath unless that information is of an inherently confidential nature such as:

- (1) files prepared in connection with litigation and adjudicative proceedings.
- (2) information regarding the acquisition or disposal of land until it becomes a matter of public record.
- (3) personal data of employees or others.
- (4) preliminary reports of consultants, policy drafts and internal communications which, if disclosed, may prejudice the effective operation of a municipal operation or impugn the reputation of any person.
- (5) records related to internal policies and practices which, if disclosed, may prejudice the effective performance of a municipal operation.
- (6) records of a financial nature reflecting information given or accumulated in confidence.
- (7) any report prepared for council is to be released only by council.

**Corporation** – means the City of Whitehorse.

**Committee Meeting** – Council uses standing committees, each a Committee of the Whole, divided into six focus areas through which all reports going to council will pass.

**Council & Senior Management Meeting (CASM)** – Provides a venue for informal discussion on matters that are not at a point of decision. CASM's are issue based, designed to enhance understanding of an issue, clarify expectations, improve Council/Management working relationships, explore options to deal with an issue given to staff for further research, to undertake training, brainstorming on strategic issues and discuss drafts of external consultant reports.

**Municipal employee** - includes all employees and officers of the City of Whitehorse as defined in all collective agreements and employment bylaws.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

3. City Council shall:

- (1) Adopt the Council Decision-making policy and any amendments thereto.
- (2) Review the policy annually.

4. The City Manager shall:
  - (1) Ensure the Decision-Making Policy is added to the agenda of the annual Legislative Workshop for review.
  - (2) Recommend changes to the decision-making process.
  - (3) Ensure the Decision-making policy is implemented and that administration complies with the information requirements of the policy.
  - (4) Assist Council with the interpretation of the policy.
  - (5) Assign the issues to the appropriate administrative resource.
  
5. The Senior Management Team shall:
  - (1) Review administrative reports being prepared for an agenda and ensure that they present fairly the spectrum of information necessary for Committee to make a recommendation.

## **PROCEDURES**

6. Agenda Submissions
  - (1) All items requiring a council decision should initially appear on a Standing Committee agenda.
  - (2) Reports to committee should be initially researched by administration and submitted in Administrative Report format, meaning the issue should be clearly identified, reference materials disclosed, a brief summary of the issue provided, all options for resolving the item identified and analysed, and there is a clear administrative recommendation. All staff submissions are subject to the discretion of the City Manager.
  - (3) Standing Committees are designed to provide a forum where the administrative, public and political perspectives of the issue are discussed. Committees are advisory in nature, having no decision-making authority.
  - (4) Committee may receive a report for information, refer a report to administration for additional information or make a recommendation to council. When requesting additional information, the committee should be specific as to the information required. All referrals must go through the City Manager.
  - (5) When committee is of the opinion they have enough information to send a recommendation to council, the minutes of the committee meeting summarizing the discussion shall go on a council agenda with the committee recommendation.
  - (6) By the time the issue is placed on the council agenda, council should have enough information to debate the issue and make a decision. Should the debate identify additional information is necessary, the matter may be referred back to administration for research and re-entry. If council requires

additional public input or the matter has strategic direction implications, council may choose to refer the matter back to committee. The City Manager shall assign the staff necessary to assist council with the information required or to initiate the processes necessary for the matter to be resolved.

- (7) New issues entered at either committee or council should be referred to administration for report.
- (8) The senior management team will prepare committee and council agendas. It is not the role of the senior management team to decide what issues go onto an agenda; they simply facilitate the delivery of the item to committee for discussion and ensure the issue is placed according to the terms of reference for each of the standing committees in council's Procedure Bylaw.
- (9) All council direction to staff should be given by way of a resolution or notation in the meeting minutes. This step ensures clarity in the intent of council, documentation of the direction and accountability on the part of staff to follow up. It also allows council to control the administrative capacity box.
- (10) The City Manager is responsible for the implementation of all council decisions and shall report to council on their status.

■2004-11-22