



**Date:** Wednesday, February 7, 2024

**From:** Carly Craig, Manager of Legislative Services/Clerk

**Subject:** Council Correspondence Policy

**Report** COR2024-005

This document and its attachments are public and available in an accessible format upon request.

### **Recommendation**

That report COR2024-03 be received for information; and

That Policy COU2024-01 – Council Correspondence Policy be adopted.

### **Background/Analysis**

As publicly elected officials, Council members receive correspondence from the public in many formats. Council correspondence topics include requests for support and requests of Council related to items under their jurisdiction. Requests of Council must be appropriately placed on an agenda to be facilitated in an appropriate and timely manner for the benefit of the requestor and Council. The Township relies on its Procedure By-law to outline this process and provide direction to staff in handling correspondence and placing it on agendas.

In 2023, Council expressed concerns related to inconsistencies in petitions received by the Township, including the absence of a Council-approved petition form.

In addition, Council received a volume of correspondence that did not meet the requirements of Council's Procedure By-Law or found that the Procedure By-Law did not provide enough clarity in handling various items of correspondence.

To address these concerns and provide further clarity on the requirements of correspondence and petitions, staff are recommending a Policy be put in place to supplement the existing Procedure By-Law.

The attached draft Council Correspondence Policy addresses the above-noted concerns, including clearly identifying the criteria of petitions and prescribing a form for use by the public.



Staff also suggest that there is an opportunity to clarify the requirements of Council correspondence on the Township's website to better inform the public on the formatting and public disclosure requirements of correspondence, including the requirements of the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 1990*, as it applies to correspondence submitted by members of the public.

The draft Policy also provides an added layer of transparency to the public, outlining the procedures that are in place concerning how their correspondence will be handled.

In addition to the draft Council Correspondence Policy, staff are undertaking work related to records management which will aim to improve the public's knowledge of what happens to information submitted to and collected by the Township.

This draft Policy is informed by best practices and policies such as the Town of Pelham, City of Orillia, and Municipal procedural By-laws of surrounding municipalities.

## **Financial Impact**

N/A

## **Strategic Priorities**

Adoption of a Council Correspondence Policy achieves the following goal as included in the Township's 2020-2024 Strategic Plan:

1. Improve Communication, Collaboration and Transparency

## **Conclusion**

In 2023, areas for improvement were identified through correspondence received by Council, including the absence of a standard form for petitions. Adoption of a Council Correspondence Policy supplements the Township's existing Procedure By-Law and provides further clarity to Council, staff, and the public in handling and addressing correspondence received and prescribes an approved petition form for inclusion on agendas.

Respectfully Submitted: Carly Craig, Manager of Legislative Services/Clerk



### Report Approval Details

Document Title:	COR2024-03 - Council Correspondence Policy.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Jan 31, 2024

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

Brittany Drury, Director of Corporate Services

Niall Loble, Chief Administrative Officer