



Administration & Finance Division

To: Mayor and Council

From: Jordan Forbes, Human Resources Manager

Date: November 7, 2018

Subject: Policy Update – Media Communication

Attached, for your approval, please find a copy of the proposed updates to our Media Communications policy with amendments as directed by the Administration and Finance Executive Committee. The policy statement has been updated to provide clarity on the responsibilities of staff, management, and interactions with council.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jordan Forbes", is shown within a rectangular box.

Jordan Forbes
Human Resources Manager

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| Council approval of this report will agree to the recommendation of the Administration & Finance Executive Committee to approve the updated Media Communications Policy. |
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| <i>The Town of Fort Frances</i> | SECTION |
| | ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE |
| <u>MEDIA COMMUNICATION</u> <u>POLICY</u> | NEW: January 1989 REVISED: February 2011 November 2018 |
| Resolution No. 106 (consent) 03/14 | Supercedes Resolution No. |
| Policy Number 1.1 | PAGE 1 of 2 |

1. POLICY STATEMENT

It is important to ensure that matters of civic interest are communicated effectively, and in a timely way. Where feasible, matters of civic interest should be communicated in a proactive manner.

Given the need to reach a wide audience and make every effort to inform stakeholders of matters of civic importance, engagement with the media is frequently required. Given that division managers, and other Managers who report to the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), are well informed regarding issues related to their divisions, the Town of Fort Frances encourages them to communicate directly with members of the media to help ensure that accurate information is provided to all relevant stakeholders. In addition, it is recognized as good practice that subject matter experts be utilized to communicate information related to their areas of expertise.

Managers must consult with the CAO prior to issuing formal media releases or holding a press conference. General advertisements, public notifications, meeting notices, and job advertisements, are not considered media releases for the purpose of this policy.

All media interactions should be consistent with the direction provided by Council, and at no time should a member of staff provide comment in the media on issues which are coming before Council or are subject to a future decision by Council. In these instances, it is appropriate to inform the member or member(s) of the media the staff is interacting with that the matter is subject to a decision from Council.

Media releases should be directed to all relevant local, and regional media outlets including print, web, television and radio. It is the responsibility of the CAO's office to keep a current list of key media outlets, which can be provided to senior managers, and upper management upon request. Media releases, should be posted on the Town's website, and official social media accounts, as appropriate for the period of time for which they are relevant. This direction does not apply to advertisements, or routine notices.

Media inquiries, whether by phone, e-mail, letter, or in person, should be addressed promptly to accommodate publication or broadcast deadlines, wherever possible, subject to guidelines, identified in this policy, established by Town Council. While it is important to provide information promptly, it is imperative that only accurate information be provided to the media. Therefore, if a staff member is unsure of the answer to a question from a member of the media, it is appropriate

for them to take additional time to research the answer, or seek direction from a more senior manager prior to responding.

Administration is expected to consider all media forms when evaluating publicity value for advertising initiatives.

Guidelines for Divisions and Departments are as follows:

- a) Respect the authority and responsibility of Town Council, whose Members are entitled to learn about proposed policy initiatives or major new programs, services or initiatives before information about them is released to the Media.
- b) Ensure that all media correspondence aligns with direction provided by Council.
- c) Consult with the CAO when preparing campaigns or strategies that require participation by the Mayor or Members of Council, or when preparing a response to a Media inquiry that could have implications for the Mayor or Members of Council or the Corporation. In these instances, the CAO may consult with the Mayor and members of Council prior to issuing a response.
- d) Keep confidential information that is related to matters before the courts, or under the jurisdiction of another authority such as the Police Services Board.
- e) Media requests, particularly for interviews or technical information, should be directed to knowledgeable staff. Managers are responsible to ensure that all staff in their divisions and departments who may be interacting with the media, have reviewed this policy, prior to them engaging with the media.

2. CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS

In a crisis, timely, accurate, coordinated communication must be used to maintain or restore confidence. Divisions must advise the CAO's Office as soon as they identify an event or situation occurring in or affecting their division that may attract widespread interest to the Media. In these situations, it is imperative that accurate, timely information be provided to the public, however, consideration should also be given to whether it may be more appropriate for another agency such as law enforcement to take the lead in providing communications.

3. EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

The Town of Fort Frances Emergency Plan details the protocol for Emergency Media communications.

4. ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

Information on the Town's policies, programs, services, and initiatives should be generally available to the public in a variety of formats including electronically using platforms such as the Town of Fort Frances website, and official social media presence. As many people use electronic media as their primary method of gathering information, divisions must:

- a) Make publications of interest to citizens that are widely distributed in paper copy, available on the website, as soon as possible after distribution to the public.
- b) Establish ongoing updates and regular reviews of division webpages so that information on policies, programs, services, initiatives and related third-party links is up to date, accurate, and can be easily understood.
- c) Follow the standard for the look and feel of the Town website. Training will be provided as required to all Town staff responsible for updating the Town website.