

**BEAVER COUNTY
BYLAW NO. 21-1115**

**A BYLAW OF BEAVER COUNTY IN THE PROVINCE OF ALBERTA
FOR THE PURPOSE OF GOVERNING THE CONDUCT OF THE ELECTED OFFICIALS
REPRESENTING BEAVER COUNTY**

WHEREAS, pursuant to section 146.1(1) of the *Municipal Government Act*, RSA 2000, c. M-26, as amended, a Council must, by bylaw, establish a code of conduct governing the conduct of Councillors, and

WHEREAS pursuant to section 153 of the *Municipal Government Act*, Councillors have a duty to adhere to the code of conduct established by the Council, and

WHEREAS the public is entitled to expect the highest standards of conduct from the members that it elects to Council for Beaver County, and

WHEREAS the establishment of a code of conduct for members of Council is consistent with the principles of transparent and accountable government, and

WHEREAS a code of conduct ensures that members of Council share a common understanding of acceptable conduct extending beyond the legislative provisions governing the conduct of Councillors,

NOW THEREFORE, the Council of Beaver County, in the Province of Alberta, duly assembled, enacts as follows:

1. SHORT TITLE

1.1. The bylaw may be referred to as the "Council Code of Conduct Bylaw".

2. DEFINITIONS:

2.1 In this Bylaw, words have the meanings set out in the Act, except that:

- (a) "Act" means the *Municipal Government Act*, R.S.A. 2000, c. M-26, and associated regulations, as amended;
- (b) "Administration" means the administrative and operational arm of the Municipality, comprised of the various departments and including all employees who operate under the leadership and supervision of the Chief Administrative Officer;
- (c) "CAO" means the Chief Administrative Officer of the Municipality, or their delegate;
- (d) "FOIP" means the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, R.S.A. 2000, c. F-25, any associated regulations, and any amendments or successor legislation;
- (e) "Investigator" means Council or the individual or body established by Council to investigate and report on complaints;
- (f) "Member" means a member of Council and includes a Councillor or the Reeve;
- (g) "Municipality" means the municipal corporation of Beaver County.

3. PURPOSE AND APPLICATION

3.1. The purpose of this Bylaw is to establish standards for the ethical conduct of Members relating to their roles and obligations as representatives of the Municipality and a procedure for the investigation and enforcement of those standards.

4. CODE OF ETHICS AND CONDUCT

- 4.1 This Council Code of Conduct, summarized in Appendix A, will be used to guide the behavior of Members and provide a mechanism of accountability.
- 4.2 Members agree to sign the Statement of Code of Ethics and Conduct as provided in Appendix A.
- 4.3 The Statement of Code of Ethics and Conduct will be publicly displayed in the Council Chambers, on the County website, and at initial signing and after each election.
- 4.4 Members agree that for a period of at least twelve (12) months after leaving office, they will abide by the Council Code of Conduct.

5. REPRESENTING THE MUNICIPALITY**5.1 Members shall:**

- (a) act honestly and, in good faith, serve the welfare and interests of the Municipality as a whole,
- (b) perform their functions and duties in a conscientious and diligent manner with integrity, accountability, and transparency,
- (c) conduct themselves in a professional manner with dignity and make every effort to participate diligently in the meetings of Council, committees of Council, and other bodies to which they are appointed by Council, and
- (d) arrange their private affairs and conduct themselves in a manner that promotes public confidence and will bear close public scrutiny.

6. COMMUNICATING ON BEHALF OF THE MUNICIPALITY

6.1 A Member must not claim to speak on behalf of Council unless authorized to do so.

6.2 Unless Council directs otherwise, the Reeve is Council's official spokesperson and in the absence of the Reeve, it is the Deputy Reeve. All inquiries from the media regarding the official Council position on an issue shall be referred to Council's official spokesperson.

6.3 A Member who is authorized to act as Council's official spokesperson must ensure that their comments accurately reflect the official position and will of Council as a whole, even if the Member personally disagrees with Council's position.

6.4 No Member shall make a statement when they know that statement is false.

6.5 No Member shall make a statement with the intent to mislead Council or members of the public.

7. RESPECTING THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

7.1 Decision-making authority lies with Council and not with any individual Member. Council may only act by bylaw or resolution passed at a Council meeting held in public at which there is a quorum present. No Member shall, unless authorized by Council, attempt to bind the Municipality or give direction to employees in Administration, agents, contractors, consultants, or other service providers or prospective vendors to the Municipality.

7.2 Members shall conduct and convey Council business and all their duties in an open and transparent manner other than for those matters which by law are authorized to be dealt with in a confidential manner in a closed meeting (Closed Session), and in so doing, allow the public to view the process and rationale which was used to reach decisions and the reasons for taking certain actions.

7.3 Members shall accurately communicate the decisions of Council, even if they disagree with Council's decision, such that respect for the decision-making processes of Council is fostered.

8. ADHERENCE TO BYLAWS AND POLICIES

8.1 Members shall uphold the law established by the Parliament of Canada and the Legislature of Alberta and the bylaws and policies adopted by Council.

8.2 Members shall respect the Municipality as an institution, its bylaws and policies, and shall encourage public respect for the Municipality, its bylaws and policies.

8.3 A Member must not encourage disobedience of any bylaw, policy, or procedure of the Municipality in responding to a member of the public, as this undermines public confidence in the Municipality and in the rule of law.

9. RESPECTFUL INTERACTIONS WITH COUNCIL MEMBERS, STAFF, THE PUBLIC, AND OTHERS

9.1 Members shall act in a manner that demonstrates fairness, respect for individual differences and opinions, and an intention to work together for the common good and in furtherance of the public interest.

9.2 Members shall treat one another, employees of the Municipality, and members of the public with courtesy, dignity, and respect and without abuse, bullying, or intimidation.

9.3 No Member shall use indecent, abusive, or insulting words or expressions toward another Member, any employee of the Municipality, or any member of the public.

9.4 No Member shall speak in a manner that is discriminatory to any individual based on the person's race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, physical disability, mental disability, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status or sexual orientation.

- 9.5 Members shall respect the fact that employees in Administration work for the Municipality as a corporate body and are charged with making recommendations that reflect their professional expertise and a corporate perspective and that employees are required to do so without undue influence from any Member or group of Members.
- 9.6 Members must not:
- (a) involve themselves in matters of Administration, which fall within the jurisdiction of the CAO,
 - (b) use, or attempt to use, their authority or influence for the purpose of intimidating, threatening, coercing, commanding, or influencing any employee of the Municipality with the intent of interfering in the employee's duties, or
 - (c) maliciously or falsely injure the professional or ethical reputation, or the prospects or practice of, employees of the Municipality.

10. CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

- 10.1 Members must keep in confidence matters discussed during Closed Session at a Council or Council committee meeting until the matter is discussed at a meeting held in public.
- 10.2 In the course of their duties, Members may also become privy to confidential information received outside of Closed Session. Members must not:
- (a) disclose or release by any means to any member of the public, including the media, any confidential information acquired by virtue of their office, unless the disclosure is required by law or authorized by Council to do so;
 - (b) access or attempt to gain access to confidential information in the custody or control of the Municipality unless it is necessary for the performance of the Member's duties and is not otherwise prohibited by Council, and only then if the information is acquired through appropriate channels in accordance with applicable Council bylaws and policies;
 - (c) use confidential information for personal benefit or for the benefit of any other individual or organization.
- 10.3 No Member shall use confidential information for personal benefit or for the benefit of any other individual or organization.
- 10.4 Confidential information includes information in the possession of, or received in confidence by, the Municipality that the Municipality is prohibited from disclosing pursuant to legislation, court order, or by contract, or is required to refuse to disclose under FOIP or any other legislation, or any other information that pertains to the business of the Municipality, and is generally considered to be of a confidential nature, including but not limited to information concerning:
- (a) the security of the property of the Municipality,
 - (b) a proposed or pending acquisition or disposition of land or other property,
 - (c) a tender that has or will be issued but has not been awarded,
 - (d) contract negotiations,
 - (e) employment and labour relations,
 - (f) draft documents and legal instruments, including reports, policies, bylaws, and resolutions, that have not been the subject matter of deliberation in a meeting open to the public,
 - (g) law enforcement matters,
 - (h) litigation or potential litigation, including matters before administrative tribunals, and
 - (i) advice that is subject to solicitor-client privilege.

11. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

- 11.1 Members have a statutory duty to comply with the pecuniary interest provisions set out in Part 5, Division 6 of the Act and a corresponding duty to vote unless required or permitted to abstain under the Act or another enactment.
- 11.2 Members are to be free from undue influence and not act or appear to act in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, family, friends, or associates, business or otherwise.
- 11.3 Members shall approach decision-making with an open mind that is capable of persuasion.
- 11.4 It is the individual responsibility of each Member to seek independent legal advice, at the Member's sole expense, with respect to any situation that may result in a pecuniary or other conflict of interest.

12. IMPROPER USE OF INFLUENCE

- 12.1 No Member shall use the influence of the Member's office for any purpose other than for the exercise of the Member's official duties.

13. USE OF MUNICIPAL ASSETS AND SERVICES

13.1 Members shall use municipal property, equipment, services, supplies, and staff resources only for the performance of their duties as a Member.

14. ORIENTATION AND OTHER TRAINING ATTENDANCE

14.1 Every Member must attend the orientation training offered by the Municipality within ninety (90) days after the Member takes the oath of office.

14.2 Unless excused by Council, every Member must attend any other training organized at the direction of Council for the benefit of Members throughout the Council term.

15. REMUNERATION AND EXPENSES

15.1 Members shall be transparent and accountable with respect to all expenditures and strictly comply with all municipal bylaws, policies, and procedures regarding claims for remuneration and expenses.

16. GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY

16.1 Members shall not accept gifts, hospitality, or other benefits that would, to a reasonable member of the public, appear to be in gratitude for influence, to induce influence, or otherwise to go beyond the necessary and appropriate public functions involved.

16.2 Members may only receive gifts, hospitality, or entertainment that are received as an incident of protocol or social obligation that normally accompanies the responsibilities of elected office.

16.3 Members may accept hospitality or entertainment if the offer is infrequent and appropriate to the occasion.

16.4 Gifts, souvenirs, or mementos with a value greater than \$100, if accepted, shall be the property of the Municipality.

16.5 Members may also accept the following:

- (a) political contributions that are otherwise offered, accepted, and reported in accordance with applicable Provincial law,
- (b) food and beverages at banquets, receptions, ceremonies, or similar events,
- (c) services provided by a person volunteering their time,
- (d) food, lodging, transportation, and entertainment provided by other levels of government, boards, or commissions,
- (e) reimbursement of reasonable expenses incurred and honorariums received in the performance of activities connected with municipal associations or agencies.

16.6 Any gifts, benefits, or hospitality that exceed the guidelines of this Bylaw shall be returned with an explanation of the Council Code of Conduct.

17. ELECTION CAMPAIGNS

17.1 No Member shall use any facilities, equipment, supplies, services, municipal logo, or other resources of the Municipality for any election campaign or campaign-related activity.

18. INFORMAL COMPLAINT PROCESS

18.1 All Members have the primary responsibility to encourage and ensure that the Bylaw is understood and upheld.

18.2 All Members have a duty to help create an accessible, fair, and transparent municipal government. Accordingly, all Members have a duty to question whether another Member is violating the Bylaw.

18.3 Any person or Member who has identified or witnessed conduct by a Member that the person or Member reasonably believes, in good faith, is in contravention of this Bylaw, may address the prohibited conduct by:

- (a) advising the Member that the conduct violates this Bylaw and encouraging the Member to stop,
- (b) requesting the Reeve to assist in informal discussion of the alleged complaint with the Member in an attempt to resolve the issue. In the event that the Reeve is the subject of, or is implicated in a complaint, the person may request the assistance of the Deputy Reeve.

18.4 Individuals are encouraged to pursue this informal complaint procedure as the first means of remedying conduct that they believe violates this Bylaw. However, an individual is not required to complete this informal complaint procedure prior to pursuing the formal complaint procedure outlined below.

19. FORMAL COMPLAINT PROCESS

- 19.1 Any person or Member who has identified or witnessed conduct by a Member that the person or Member reasonably believes, in good faith, is in contravention of this Bylaw, may file a formal complaint in accordance with the following procedure:
- (a) all complaints shall be made in writing and shall be dated and signed by an identifiable individual,
 - (b) all complaints shall be addressed to the Investigator,
 - (c) the complaint must set out reasonable and probable grounds for the allegation that the Member has contravened this Bylaw, including a detailed description of the facts, as they are known, giving rise to the allegation,
 - (d) if the facts, as reported, include the name of one or more Members who are alleged to be responsible for the breach of this Bylaw, the Member or Members concerned shall receive a copy of the complaint submitted to the Investigator,
 - (e) upon receipt of a complaint under this Bylaw, the Investigator shall review the complaint and decide whether to proceed to investigate the complaint or not. If the Investigator is of the opinion that a complaint is frivolous or vexatious or is not made in good faith, or that there are no grounds or insufficient grounds for conducting an investigation, the Investigator may choose not to investigate or, if already commenced, may terminate any investigation, or may dispose of the complaint in a summary manner. In that event, the complainant and Council, if Council is not the Investigator, shall be notified of the Investigator's decision;
 - (f) if the Investigator decides to investigate the complaint, the Investigator shall take such steps as it may consider appropriate, which may include seeking legal advice. All proceedings of the Investigator regarding the investigation shall be confidential,
 - (g) if the Investigator is not Council, the Investigator shall, upon conclusion of the investigation, provide the Council and the Member who is the subject of the complaint, the results of the Investigator's investigation,
 - (h) a Member who is the subject of an investigation shall be afforded procedural fairness, including an opportunity to respond to the allegations before Council deliberates and makes any decision or any sanction is imposed,
 - (i) all discussions surrounding the alleged breach of the Bylaw shall be conducted in a Closed Session of a Council meeting with the intent that the discussion shall remain confidential under the appropriate sections of the Act and FOIP,
 - (j) a Member who is the subject of an investigation is entitled to be represented by legal counsel, at the Member's sole expense.

20. COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT

- 20.1 Members shall uphold the letter, the spirit, and the intent of this Bylaw.
- 20.2 Members are expected to co-operate in every way possible in securing compliance with the application and enforcement of this Bylaw.
- 20.3 No Member shall:
- (a) undertake any act of reprisal or threaten reprisal against a complainant or any other person for providing relevant information to Council or to any other person,
 - (b) obstruct Council, or any other person, in carrying out the objectives or requirements of this Bylaw.
- 20.4 Sanctions that may be imposed on a Member by Council, upon a finding that the Member has breached this Bylaw, may include:
- (a) a letter of reprimand addressed to the Member,
 - (b) requesting the Member issue a letter of apology,
 - (c) publication of a letter of reprimand or request for apology and the Member's response,
 - (d) suspension or removal of the appointment of a Member as the chief elected official under section 150(2) of the Act,
 - (e) suspension or removal of the appointment of a Member as the deputy chief elected official or acting chief elected official under section 152 of the Act,
 - (f) suspension or removal of the chief elected official's presiding duties under section 154 of the Act,
 - (g) suspension or removal from some or all Council committees and bodies to which Council has the right to appoint members,
 - (h) reduction or suspension of remuneration as defined in the Act corresponding to a reduction in duties, excluding allowances for attendance at Council meetings,

- (i) any other sanction Council deems reasonable and appropriate in the circumstances provided that the sanction does not prevent a Member from fulfilling the legislated duties of a Councillor and the sanction is not contrary to the Act.

21. REVIEW

21.1 This Bylaw shall be brought forward for review at the beginning of each term of Council, when relevant legislation is amended, and at any other time that Council considers appropriate to ensure that it remains current and continues to accurately reflect the standards of ethical conduct expected of Members.

READ A FIRST TIME this _____ day of _____, 20 _____.

READ A SECOND TIME this _____ day of _____, 20 _____.

READ A THIRD TIME this _____ day of _____, 20 _____.

REEVE

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

APPENDIX A TO BYLAW 21-1115

STATEMENT OF CODE OF ETHICS AND CONDUCT

The citizens of Beaver County have a right to expect from its local municipal government, one that is conducted with integrity and in a professional manner. Therefore, it is imperative that there not be, nor appear to be, any conflict between the private interests of elected officials and appointed board and committee members and their duty to the public.

Accordingly, it is the purpose of this Statement of Code of Ethics and Conduct to outline certain basic rules for Councillors so that they may carry out their entrusted duties with impartiality and dignity, recognizing that the function of a Council Member is, at all times, service to their community and the public.

In providing for good governance of the community, Beaver County Council has adopted the following ethics and conduct to apply to all Councillors to ensure that they act honestly, in good faith, and in the best interest of Beaver County as a whole.

Members of this Council agree to uphold the intent of these guidelines and will govern their actions accordingly.

1. I agree to govern my conduct in accordance with the requirements and obligations set out in the municipal legislation of the Province of Alberta (*Municipal Government Act*).
2. I agree to commit to honest, ethical, businesslike, and lawful conduct, including proper use of authority and appropriate decorum when acting as Council members.
3. I will represent, as a primary obligation superseding all other interests, the best interests of the community of Beaver County.
4. I will serve in a liaison role when appointed as a member of committees or boards.
5. I will avoid conflict of interest, by refraining from self-dealing or any conduct of private business or personal services between any Council Member and the County, except as provided by the *Municipal Government Act*.
6. I will not use my position to obtain employment with the County for myself, family members, or close associates.
7. I will not use confidential information for the personal profit of myself or any other person.
8. I will disclose my affiliations or interest with an organization that may affect my decision-making on matters before Council regarding that organization.
9. I will not attempt to exercise individual authority over the County.
10. I recognize, when interacting with the Chief Administrative Officer or with staff, the lack of authority vested in a Councillor except when explicitly authorized by Council.
11. I recognize, when interacting with the public, press, or other entities, the same limitation and the inability of any Council Member to speak for Council except to repeat explicitly stated Council decisions.
12. I will direct any comments on staff performance to the Chief Administrative Officer.
13. I will avoid public comment on staff performance.
14. I will respect the confidentiality of issues that are determined by policy of Council to be confidential and not communicate confidential information to anyone not entitled to receive same.
15. I will preserve the integrity and impartiality of Council.
16. For a period of twelve (12) months after leaving office, I will abide by the standards of conduct listed above, except those related to confidential information, which shall apply in perpetuity.
17. I will not assume that any unethical activities not covered by or specifically prohibited by this Code of Ethics and Conduct, or any legislation, are therefore condoned.

By our signatures below, we vow to subscribe to the above Code of Ethics and Conduct adopted on this ____ day of _____, 20 ____.

Kevin Smook – Councillor, Division 1

Lionel Williams – Councillor, Division 2

Eugene Hrabec – Councillor, Division 3

Barry Bruce – Councillor, Division 4

Dale Pederson – Councillor, Division 5