

 Chatsworth	<b>ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY</b>	<b>GOV-01</b>
	<b>CATEGORY: GOVERNANCE</b>	<b>Adopted: Sept. 21, 2016</b>

**POLICY STATEMENT**

The Township of Chatsworth recognizes that it is responsible to provide good government for its stakeholders in an accountable and transparency manner by:

- Encouraging and facilitating public access to information about the Township’s services and programs and encouraging participation to ensure that decision making is responsive to the needs of its constituents and receptive to their opinions;
- Delivering high quality services to residents and businesses and actively seeking input for enhancing service delivery and achieving best practices and results.
- Promoting the efficient use of public resources and permitting constituents the opportunity to evaluate the Township’s performance in this regard.
- All inquiries, concerns and complaints shall be responded to in a timely manner.

Accountability, transparency and openness are standards of good government that enhance public trust. They are achieved through the adoption of measures that ensure to the best of our ability, that all activities and services are undertaken utilizing process that are open and accessible to our stakeholders.

**PURPOSE:**

Section 270(1)5 of the Municipal Act requires municipalities to adopt policies with respect to the manner in which the municipality will try to ensure that it is accountable to the public for its actions, and the manner in which the municipality will try to ensure that its actions are transparent to the public.

**DEFINITIONS:**

**“Accountability:** The principle that the Township of Chatsworth will be answerable to its constituents for decisions made and policies implemented, as well as its actions or inactions;

**“Transparency”** The principle that the Township of Chatsworth actively encourages and fosters public access to and participation and openness in its decision making process. Additionally, transparency means that the Township’s decision making process is open and clear to the public.

## **POLICY REQUIREMENTS:**

The principles of accountability and transparency set out herein shall apply equally to the political process and decision making and to the administrative management of the Township.

The Township has adopted various policies that contribute to creating an accountable and transparent municipal government. Council and staff will continue to support the principles set out in this policy in its future decision making process.

### i) Financial Requirements

The Township will be open, accountable and transparent in its financial dealings as required by the Municipal Act. The following are the policies that assist this regard:

*External Audits* – The Township complies with the statutory requirement to appoint an auditor who conducts an annual independent audit and reports on financial statements. The auditor's report is available to the public.

*Budget Process* – The Township is committed to encouraging public input into the budget process including inviting members of the public to a Budget Open House. The Township's draft budget will be posted on the Township's web site for public comment prior to the adoption of same by Council. The Township's Notice Provision By-law will determine the time required for posting the draft budget.

*Purchasing and Procurement* – The Township's purchasing and procurement policy and procedures establish a mandatory process for the purchase of goods and services in order to ensure transparency and competitive procurement. Delegated authority to staff is subject to purchasing limits.

*Fees and Charges* – The Township has a fees and charges bylaw which shall be posted on the Township's website setting out all fees and charges collected by the municipality.

*Administrative Procedures* – Various administrative policies and procedures have been adopted to ensure accountability regarding travel expense, benefits, overtime, etc.

*Council remuneration* – Remuneration for members of council is adopted in a public forum and an annual report is published setting out remuneration and expenses paid to Council members and other Council appointees.

*Asset Management* – The Township has adopted an asset Management Plan that is available to the public for review

ii) Administrative management (Internal Governance)

The Township's administrative practices shall ensure specific accountability on the part of its employees through the following initiatives:

*Code of Ethics* – Township employees are subject to a code of ethics governing financial responsibilities and ethical behaviour.

*Human Resources Policies* – The Township has adopted various human resources policies that govern the actions and accountability of municipal staff.

*Hiring Policy* – The Township of Chatsworth has adopted a hiring policy under Section 270 of the Municipal Act, which provides for a fair and transparent process and includes the hiring of relatives of current employees.

*Delegated Authority* – Where matters have been delegated to staff, such authority is given within clear limits. This ensures that decisions affecting interested parties will not be made without public accountability.

iii) Open Government

Township of Chatsworth Council is committed to open government by adopting the following measures:

*Procedural by-law* – Chatsworth's procedural by-law as amended, shall be posted on the Township's website.

*Public Posting of Council agendas* – Full council agendas are posted on the Township's website in an accessible format. Township Staff must ensure that information on the website is current and accurate.

*Access to Information* - A wide range of information and records are proactively made available to the public online, and routinely available information that is not available online can be requested directly from the service area or division responsible for the information. Records or information that is not routinely disclosed can be requested by making a Freedom of Information Request and the Township will make every attempt to provide appropriate access to records while respecting the need for privacy, in accordance with legislation.

*Complaints Process* – The Township of Chatsworth shall post its complaint policy and procedures on the Township's website

*Notice Provision Requirements* – Chatsworth shall adopt a Notice Provision by-law setting out how and when notice is to be given to the public. Public input on the notice provision bylaw is encouraged.

*Closed Meeting Requirements* – The Clerk is required to indicate the legislative authority or reason for a closed meeting, including the general nature thereof. Discussions during a closed meeting are limited to the activities identified on the agenda and the resolution to go into closed session. The Township has not appointed its own meeting investigator, and accordingly the Provincial Office of the Ombudsman shall investigate any and all complaints regarding closed session meetings.

*Elected Official Disclosure of Remuneration and Expenses* – As required by legislation Township of Chatsworth shall post annually, the statement of remuneration and council expenses on the Township's website.

### **MONITORING**

The CAO Clerk is charged with the responsibility for ensuring that administrative practices and procedures recognize Council's commitment to accountability and transparency.

The CAO Clerk shall be responsible for receiving complaints and/or concerns related to this policy. Upon receipt of a complaint and/or concern, the CAO Clerk shall notify:

- In the case of staff, the employee to whom the complaint relates and the appropriate Department Head
- In the case of a closed meeting, the Meeting Investigator and all Members of Council
- In the case of Council, all Members of Council

Inquiries regarding this policy made be made to the CAO Clerk at 519-794-3232, Ext. 124.