

Policy Title: COMMUNICATION POLICY

Policy Number: Communication - 01
Authority: Town of Coronach Council
Approval date: September 8th, 2020
Effective date: September 8th, 2020
Last Review date: September 8th, 2020
Next Review date: September 2021

PURPOSE:

This purpose of the Municipal Communications Policy is to establish guidelines for the Town of Coronach for communications, including the procedures, roles and responsibilities for all Municipal employees and representatives when communicating or releasing information on behalf of the Town.

The purpose of this policy is:

- To ensure information is provided in a timely, consistent and appropriate manner;
- To provide guidelines and procedures that support transparent, consistent, and informative communications from the Municipality of Coronach.

This policy applies to all employees and all contractors or partners who communicate with citizens, other agencies, or the media, on behalf of the Town of Coronach.

POLICY:

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Town Chief Administrative Officer is responsible for:

- Implementing this policy;
- Ensuring policy and procedures reviews occur;
- Ensuring employees are aware of this policy and related procedures;
- Review and amend this policy as required.

All Town of Coronach employees, contractors, partners, or anyone who communicates with citizens on behalf of the Town are responsible for understanding and adhering to this policy.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

All communication activities conducted by the Town of Coronach must adhere to the appropriate policies, guidelines, or statutory requirements set out by legislation.

Communications activities must also reflect the Town of Coronach Communications Principles:

1. Provide information that is timely, accurate, clear, accessible, and responsive.
2. Consider the range of communication tools at our disposal and use those most appropriate to address the needs associated with each circumstance.
3. Work collaboratively across the organization to ensure that information is thorough, factual and timely.
4. Respect the access to information and privacy rights of citizens and employees.
5. Support opportunities for engagement to inform public policy.
6. Strive to achieve a culture of two-way communication and “communications excellence” practices.

PLAIN LANGUAGE

The Town of Coronach will use ‘plain language’ for its external communications whenever possible.

‘Plain language’ can be broadly described as any writing designed to ensure the reader understands the message as quickly, easily, and completely as possible. Plain language strives to be easy to read, understand, and use. It avoids verbose, convoluted language and jargon and uses document structure and visual aids (such as graphics or charts) to guide the reader.

TIMELY RESPONSE

The Town of Coronach provides residents, business, visitors, and other stakeholders timely, accurate, clear, accessible, and responsive information. As such, Town employees must respond to enquiries in a prompt manner, either in person, by telephone or voicemail, by email, or through other official Town channels such as social media.

Enquiries should be responded to or acknowledged within one business day. When the information requested is not immediately available, the message must be acknowledged as soon as possible. Information in the acknowledgement may include an estimated timeline for the response, alternate staff members or employees the enquiry is being forwarded to, or other information that informs the citizen their enquiry is being actioned.

ENGAGEMENT

The Town of Coronach is committed to involving its citizens as part of decision-making processes. The Town uses the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Core

Values as its foundation when considering public participation and engagement. Core Values for the Practice of Public Participation (source: IAP2 Canada):

1. Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
2. Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
3. Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.
4. Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
5. Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
6. Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
7. Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

MEDIA RELATIONS

All media relations activities are coordinated by the Chief Administrative Officer or authorized delegate. The chief spokespersons for the Town are members of Town Council or the Chief Administrative Officer. The Mayor or a Councillor is the authorized spokesperson to speak with media on behalf of Council-related to decisions and outcomes of Council business. The Chief Administrative Officer (or authorized delegate) is authorized to speak with the media on policy matters or on matters affecting the administration of the Town.

In addition to the Chief Administrative Officer, designated employees may be called upon to speak to the media regarding specific areas of responsibility or subject matter. Town of Coronach employees who are not authorized to act as spokesperson will not respond on behalf of the Town to any enquiry, or initiate communication with the media. All media enquiries must be referred to the Chief Administrative Officer in a timely manner for official response and follow up.

Media releases are used to communicate official Town activities, decisions, projects, or services, or for use as official statements during Emergency Operations. Media releases must be approved by the Chief Administrative Officer, or delegate, prior to release (or EOC Director during Emergency Operations). All media releases are distributed by email to Council and published to the Town website. Inaccurate media coverage should be brought to the attention of the Chief Administrative Officer for correction.

PARTNERSHIPS AND THIRD-PARTY PROMOTION

A partnership is defined as an arrangement where parties agree to cooperate to advance their mutual interests in order to increase the likelihood of each achieving their mission and to

amplify their reach. A sponsorship is defined as a formal agreement in which cash and/or an in-kind fee is paid toward a program, service or amenity in return for marketing, advertising, public relations or other recognition.

The Town of Coronach regularly as part of its day-to-day operation enters into partnerships and/or sponsorships with other organizations, governments, societies and businesses. As a course of business and transparency, the Town should acknowledge these partnerships as part of its regular communications. This may include short statements outlining the partnership or sponsorship arrangement, use of a logo on advertising materials, or another similar tactic.

The Town of Coronach will not actively promote or advertise any third-party organization, individual, society, entity or business over another similar organization, unless as part of an officially recognized partnership or sponsorship relationship.

SOCIAL MEDIA

The Town of Coronach uses social media as a communication and engagement tool to share information and encourage dialogue with a wide variety of audiences. All social media accounts must first be recommended by a manager, supervisor or chair of a committee and approved by the Chief Administrative Officer. All social media accounts must be branded in such a way as to reflect their official attachment to the Town of Coronach and include appropriate contact information and a statement outlining the rules of use.

BRANDING AND BRAND ELEMENTS

The Town of Coronach establishes policies, provides services, and maintains a variety of facilities. For its role and responsibilities to be clearly recognized, it must have a single and consistent visual identity. The Town of Coronach logo reflects the organization's role as the accountable and authoritative body and distinguishes the Town from other organizations and groups. The logo is protected by copyright and trademark, and cannot be used without the expressed consent of the Town of Coronach. Town logo use by outside organizations must reflect the Town official role or partnership in a program, service, or event. Logo use requests by outside organizations must be directed to the Chief Administrative Officer.

WEBSITE

The Town of Coronach will maintain an official website (www.townofcoronach.ca) to provide the public with information regarding Town services, Council decisions, Council, and committee meeting schedule, minutes and agendas, bylaws, activities and events, and ongoing local government business. Wherever possible, the website will provide links to other official information sources, rather than copying and pasting information directly to the website.

The website should be considered as the first point of contact when new or revised information regarding programs and services is established. Employee designates are responsible for content edits, additions, and deletions for their scope of work sections, and designates may make routine edits and additions to their website content. Non-routine, complex, or brand-new content (for example, a new page or section, or a rewrite of an existing page) must be approved by the Chief Administrative Officer. Exceptions to this include recreation programs and event content. In some cases, the relevant employee may draft content prior to review and approval by the Chief Administrative Officer. Appropriate lead time should be considered when edits or additions involve more complex or technical content.

The Town of Coronach website will not be used to promote an individual business, not-for-profit organization, or community organization over any other, and will not be used to promote an individual political philosophy.

COMMUNICATIONS PROCEDURES

To ensure consistent communications, messaging and exchange of information as it relates to Town Council, Staff, partners, contractors, boards, and Committees of Council activities, the following procedures shall be followed by the aforementioned groups:

1. Complete a "Communications Plan" (Appendix A) detailing what is to be communicated to the public before any communication to the public occurs. This includes press releases, communiqués, external memos, news articles, media interviews, creation of social media sites and social media posts, websites and website posts, etc.
2. Once a communications plan is completed. A copy of the communications plan must be submitted to the Town Chief Administration Officer for approval.
3. The Chief Administrative Officer, may at their discretion, approve the communications plan for release to the public or distribute to Council or relevant heads or relevant parties for discussion before release. This will ensure the accurate delivery of information and mitigation of any issues arising from the communication.
4. The Chief Administrative Officer may, at their discretion, change, alter, decline or approve any communication plan based on the best interests of the Town based on the mandates and/or objectives of Council, the Town's Communications Policy and adherence to any contractual obligations, rules, regulations, policies, bylaws, laws of the province of Saskatchewan and Canada as they relate to Town Council, staff, contractors, partners, Town boards and committees under the purview of the Town.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Cresswell".

Mayor

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mackay".

Administrator

Appendix A - Communication Plan

1. Whom do you want to reach with your message? (Be specific; i.e. General population, seniors, youth, etc.)

2. What do you want your audience to do? (Example: Attend an event, adhere to policy like a fire ban or items not to dispose of in the landfill, etc.)

3. What is the benefit of doing this action? (Example: Protect the environment, community spirit, etc.)

4. What is the single key message you want to get across? (Example: Benefits for small businesses, increased community spirit and participation, etc.)

5. What type(s) of media will you use to reach your target audience? (Example: radio, newspaper, social media sites, word of mouth)

6. How will the communication plan be evaluated for effectiveness?

Submitted by: _____

On Behalf of: _____