



City of Merritt  
 2185 Voght Street  
 Merritt, BC V1K1B8  
 250 378-4224  
 merritt.ca

Policy 1-02

<p><b>CATEGORY</b> 1.0 - Legislative</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>COUNCIL POLICY</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">CODE OF CONDUCT FOR COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Contact Department: Administrator</p>
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**1. Statement**

Local government is an open, accessible and accountable form of government. Recognizing that the City of Merritt seeks to maintain and enhance the quality of life for all City residents through effective, responsive and responsible government, Council, Committee and Commission members (collectively, the “Members”) will conduct their business with integrity, in a fair, honest and open manner.

**2. Background**

**2.1** The City of Merritt seeks to maintain and enhance the quality of life for all city residents through effective, responsible and responsive government. To help achieve this goal, Members commit to strive to ensure that:

- a) Public business is conducted with integrity, in a fair, honest and open manner;
- b) Members respect one another, the public and staff and recognize the unique role and contribution each person has in making the City a better place to work and live;
- c) Their conduct in the performance of their duties and responsibilities with the City be above reproach;
- d) The decision making process be accessible, participatory, understandable, timely and just, in addition to the requirements of applicable enactments.

**3. Objectives**

- 3.1** To establish a Code of Conduct that governs the behavior and actions of Members;
- 3.2** To enhance and strengthen the relationship of trust and mutual respect that exists between the public, staff and Members



#### **4. Council Code of Conduct**

**4.1 Compliance with the Law** - Members shall comply with all applicable federal, provincial and local laws in the performance of their public duties. These laws include but are not limited to:

- a) the *Constitution Act*;
- b) the *British Columbia Human Rights Code*;
- c) the *Criminal Code*;
- d) the *Local Government Act*;
- e) the *Community Charter*;
- f) laws pertaining to financial disclosures and employer responsibilities; and
- g) relevant City bylaws and policies.

**4.2 Conduct of Members** - The conduct of members in the performance of their duties and responsibilities must be fair, open and honest. Members shall refrain from public criticism, abusive conduct, personal charges or verbal attacks upon the character or motives of other Members, the staff or the public.

**4.3 Respect for Process** - Members shall perform their duties in accordance with the policies, procedures and rules of order established by the City Council governing the deliberation of public policy issues, meaningful involvement of the public, and implementation of policy decisions of the Council by City staff. Members of committees shall be aware of the mandate of their respective committee, and act in accordance with it.

#### **4.4 Conduct of Public Meetings**

- a) Members agree to prepare themselves for public meetings, listen courteously and attentively to all public discussions before the body and focus on the business at hand.
- b) Members shall not interrupt other speakers, make personal comments not germane to the business of the body or otherwise disturb a meeting.

**4.5 Decisions Based on Merit** - Members shall base their decisions on the merits and substance of the matter at hand.

**4.6 Communication** - Subject to Article 4.9, Members shall publically share substantive information that is relevant to a matter under consideration by the Council or a committee, which they may have received from sources outside of the public decision-making process.



- 4.7 Conflict of Interest** - Members shall be aware of and act in accordance with Division 6 of the *Community Charter*, and Mayor and Council shall fulfil their Oath of Office.
- 4.8 Gifts and Favours** - Members shall not accept any money, property, position or favour of any kind whether to be received at the present or in the future, from a person having, or seeking to have dealings with the City in accordance with the provisions of Division 6 of the *Community Charter*.
- 4.9 Confidential Information** - Members shall respect the confidentiality of information concerning the property, personnel or legal affairs of the City. They shall neither disclose confidential information without proper authorization, nor use such information to advance their personal, financial or other private interests.
- 4.10 Use of Public Resources** - Members shall not use public resources not available to the public in general, such as staff time, equipment, supplies or facilities, for private gain or personal purposes.
- 4.11 Advocacy** - Members shall represent the official policies or positions of the City Council or committees to the best of their ability when designated as delegates for this purpose. When presenting their individual opinions and positions, Members shall explicitly state they do not represent Council, their committee or the City of Merritt, nor will they allow the inference that they do.
- 4.12 Policy Role of Members** - Members shall respect and adhere to the Council-Chief Administrative Officer structure of government as practiced in the City of Merritt. In this structure, the Council determines the policies of the City with the advice, information and analysis provided by the public, committees and City staff. Members, therefore, shall not interfere with the administrative functions of the City or with the professional duties of City staff; nor shall they impair the ability of staff to implement Council policy decisions.
- 4.13 Positive Workplace Environment** - Members shall treat other Members, the public and City staff with respect and shall be supportive of the personal dignity, self-esteem and well-being of those with whom they come in contact with during the course of their professional duties. Members shall be aware of and act in accordance with the Discrimination and Harassment Policy.



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#### **4.14 Implementation and Enforcement**

- a) The City of Merritt Code of Conduct for Council and Committee Members is intended to be self-enforcing. It, therefore, becomes most effective when Members are thoroughly familiar with the Code and embrace its provisions. Council may impose sanctions on Members whose conduct does not comply with the City's ethical standards, such as an inadmissible motion. Council may also rescind the appointment of a Member to a committee for breaching the Code of Conduct for Council and Committee Members.
- b) To ensure procedural and administrative fairness, a Member who is accused of violating any provision of the Code of Conduct for Council and Committee Members, with the exception of Article 4.14, shall have two (2) weeks to prepare to respond to these allegations. Before considering a sanction, Council must ensure that a Member has received a written copy of the case against him or her and an opportunity to be heard.
- c) A violation of this Code of Conduct for Council and Committee Members shall not be considered a basis for challenging the validity of a Council or committee decision.

#### **Amendments**

March 24, 2015 Adopted (Resolution 094/15)  
December 20, 2016 Amended (Resolution 274/16)  
June 26, 2018 Amended (Resolution 173/18)



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### Member Statement

As a member of the City of Merritt Council or of a City committee, I agree to uphold the Code of Conduct for Council and Committee Members adopted by the City and conduct myself by the following model of excellence. I will:

- Recognize the diversity of backgrounds, interests and views in our community;
- Help create an atmosphere of open and responsive government;
- Conduct public affairs with integrity, in a fair, honest and open manner;
- Respect one another and the unique role and contribution each of us has in making the City a better place to work and live;
- Strive to keep the decision-making process open, accessible, participatory, understandable, timely, just and fair;
- Avoid and discourage conduct which is not in the best interests of the City; and
- Treat all people with whom I come in contact in the way I wish to be treated.

I attest that I have read and understood the City of Merritt Code of Conduct for Council and Committee Members.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Office