

Subject: Human Resources Policy Updates

Recommendation:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council receive Report #2022-0256 Human Resources Policy Updates, for information;

AND THAT Council repeal the Respectful Workplace Policy S101-03;

AND THAT Council approve the Workplace Violence, Harassment, and Discrimination Policy S101-16 and the Employee Code of Conduct Policy S600-03, as amended.

Background:

The Human Resources Department is undertaking a review of its current policies. Significant changes have been made to two currently separate, but related policies: the Workplace Violence, Harassment, and Discrimination Policy S101-16 and the Employee Code of Conduct Policy S600-03.

Analysis:

The Workplace Violence, Harassment, and Discrimination Policy is reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team annually, however, changes have not been made since 2019. After reviewing its contents, along with the Respectful Workplace Policy S101-03, much of the information was found to be duplicated. Both policies addressed violence and harassment in the workplace, while Policy S101-03 was the only one to discuss discrimination. Their contents have been combined into one policy so that information regarding unacceptable workplace behaviour and the repercussions for engaging in such behaviour can be easily found in one place. This document also now references the Whistleblower Policy S600-11 that was approved in 2020.

The existing Employee Code of Ethics (now renamed Code of Conduct) has not been reviewed since 2013 and is severely inadequate as it addresses only the use of Town property, political activity, and the receipt of gifts and benefits. It has been updated to include a variety of new provisions, including the disclosure of confidential or personal information, private interests, professionalism, additional

employment, membership on boards and committees, intellectual property, software, employment of relatives, public criticism of the Town, and financial integrity. Further, the policy made no mention of consequences for non-compliance nor reporting procedures, both of which are now addressed in the updated version. These changes provide for a significantly enhanced Code that will allow management to better enforce appropriate workplace behaviour.

Financial Considerations:

There will be no financial impact to the Town to implement these policy changes.

Alternatives Reviewed:

The policies could remain unchanged, however, this is not recommended as the existing policy language does not adequately address many scenarios or behaviour that would be deemed inappropriate, making it more challenging for management to enforce. Additionally, Policy S101-03 had many similarities to Policy S101-16 and combining the two reduces duplication and redundancy.

Strategic Plan Relationship: Strong Organization

These policy changes will provide staff with a clearer understanding of how to appropriately represent the Town, engage with their co-workers, and will be relied upon to establish and enforce acceptable conduct in the workplace.

Consultation:

Policies from the City of Welland, the City of Port Colborne, the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, and the Region of Niagara were referenced during the draft of these policies. The Senior Leadership Team was also consulted and provided Human Resources with feedback.

Other Pertinent Reports/Attachments:

Appendix "A" – Updated Workplace Violence, Harassment, and Discrimination Policy

Appendix "B" – Updated Employee Code of Conduct

Appendix "C" – Existing Workplace Violence and Harassment Policy

Appendix "D" – Existing Employee Code of Ethics

Appendix "E" – Respectful Workplace Policy

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