



<b>ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY</b>	<b>No. 18</b>
<b>COMMUNICATIONS</b>	Resolution # 2003-184 Adopted on: October 6, 2003

### **OBJECTIVE**

1. The purpose of this policy is to ensure the efficient management of communications within the Edmundston Municipality.

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

2. The following terms apply to the entire Edmundston territory:
  - a) Providing information to the citizens, informing them and communicating with them is a responsibility inherent to any representative government.
  - b) It is essential that the information provided to individuals, to groups representing them or to municipal councilors be sufficient for them to understand, influence, and deal with the development and implementation of the Municipality's policies and programs.
  - c) The free movement of information between the Municipality and the public must be assured through formal and informal exchanges, in a dialog that is continuous, open, relevant, understandable and reliable.
  - d) Good communication is essential for reaching municipal objectives. Planning, coordination and communication are an integral part of the municipal management process.
3. Consequently, the Municipality's policy is:

- a) That when it comes to the Municipality's policies, programs and services, the public shall be provided with information that is accurate, complete, objective, timely, pertinent and understandable;
- b) To take the public's concerns and views into consideration when it comes to establishing priorities, developing policies and implementing programs;
- c) To make sure that the Municipality is visible, approachable and accountable to the public it serves.

## **HOW COMMUNICATION WORKS**

4. Communication is a management activity through which the population is informed about municipal policies, programs and services; it is also the means through which their concerns and interests are taken into consideration when it comes to the formulation and implementation of the Municipality's policies and programs. It involves the following elements:
  - a) research and analysis, namely studying the public environment in order to evaluate the population's wishes, needs, perceptions and knowledge with regard to policies, programs and services, and evaluating communication programs and projects regarding planned objectives and occupational standards;
  - b) advice given to elected officials and administrators with regard to the development of policies, the planning and implementing of programs as well as matters of public interest.
  - c) planning, namely the development of communication strategies, whether global or program specific, that address the public's concerns and integrate the Municipality's important objectives;
  - d) communication management, namely applying the principles and uses of good management to the coordination of research and analysis, advising and planning, as well as to the implementation of communication programs and activities;
5. **Assertive approach:** The Municipality shall adopt an affirmative approach with regard to communication, especially in its relationship with the media. Communicators shall also be assertive when it comes to providing viewpoints and support services to elected officials and administrators.

6. **Internal communications:** Where relevant, the principles stated in this chapter shall be applicable to internal communications.

## **POLICY REQUIREMENTS**

### **Service to the public**

7. The Municipality shall provide the public with a service that is fast, courteous and unbiased, while considering its needs, concerns and rights.

### **Management and coordination**

8. The Municipality is responsible for integrating communications into its global management process. The Communication department shall:
  - a) Make sure that the communication staff and the administrator assume their respective roles and responsibilities with regard to the management and implementation of communication plans within the municipality.
  - b) Make sure that there are adequate resources for the planning and management of all communication programs;
  - c) Make sure that responsibilities are assigned for the approval of all communication projects;
  - d) Inform the Administration about all important amendments to plans made during the year;
  - e) Evaluate the public environment with regard to policies, programs and important initiatives, and meet the requirements with regard to the policies and procedures on public opinion research and other forms of information collection;
  - f) Monitor communication activities and evaluate their effectiveness according to the objectives stated in the communication plans;

- g) Seek advice from the Municipal Administration regarding communication activities that might have an impact on the entire organization or those that must be coordinated;
- h) When developing crisis management emergency plans, designate one responsibility center that will be in charge of communicating with the public;
- i) In matters of communication, public opinion research and publicity, the Communication department shall reconcile its own needs with the requirements of the entire organization;
- j) Make sure that the work involved in matters of communication, public opinion research and publicity is in accordance with the Municipality's financial responsibility agreement;

#### **Consultation and release of information**

- 9. The Municipality shall make sure that information regarding its policies, programs and services is available and released throughout the territory. The Municipality shall:
  - a) Reply as thoroughly as possible to information requests from the public;
  - b) Designate key spokespersons to communicate with the public, the media and other target groups;
  - c) Keep a record of documents that have been published and make sure that these publications are made available to the public;

#### **Best practices with regard to media relations**

- 10. These guidelines reaffirm the importance that the Municipality attaches to good relations with members of the media. By using the services of its Communication department, the organization can more easily communicate information to the public regarding its policies, programs and services. The information communicated will be more credible, which will reflect on the Municipality as a whole.
- 11. The Communication department, the employees and the elected officials must join together to maintain good relations with the media. In doing so, the public will have timely access to reliable information, thus promoting transparency and trust. This will allow the municipal

government as a whole to have a better communication with the citizens.

- a) The Municipality shall provide reporters with a point of access to information.
- b) In the Administration department, as well as in all sectors, the Municipality shall maintain an updated list of spokespersons who are authorized to discuss issues that fall under their jurisdiction with the media.
- c) The spokespersons should be authorized to openly discuss information on questions of fact with members of the media. They should have access to all the information necessary to perform their duties.
- d) The interviews given should be official and the persons giving them should be identified by their name and title.
- e) The commitments made with the media should be respected; if they cannot be respected, the reason should be quickly and clearly given.
- f) The Communication department in charge of coordinating information requests from the media should have direct access to the designated spokespersons in order to respond quickly to the reporters' requests.
- g) The Communication department should coordinate the training on media relations that is offered to the designated spokespersons.
- h) The spokespersons shall seek help and advice from the Communication department on how to talk to the members of the media, on issues that might interest the media and on the relevance of the documents prepared for them.
- i) The spokespersons shall inform the Communication department about their contacts with the media and provide a report on the interviews they gave if necessary.
- j) Documents prepared for the news media should be released in a manner so as to reach as quickly and efficiently as possible the public media and reporters who are interested in the subject.

- k) With the help of the Communication department, the following elements should be quickly corrected: errors of fact, inaccurate quotes and misleading data attributed to the Municipality or to a spokesperson.
- l) The Communication department, together with the Administration, should evaluate the best ways to use modern techniques for releasing information to the target public, whether through news bulletins, press releases, electronic messaging, newspapers or radio broadcasting.
- m) The Communication department is encouraged to regularly consult with reporters, editors in chief and news services directors in order to examine the quality of services provided to them.

## **OFFICIAL LANGUAGES**

- 12. As a New Brunswick municipality, we have to respect the equal status of both official languages as defined in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the *Official Languages Act*. The Edmundston Municipality is therefore committed to offering municipal services in both French and English in support of official language groups.
- 13. On a day-to-day basis, we have to function according to the majority language. However, we will be able to respond in English to any request for documents, by-laws, policies or forms.

## **PLAIN LANGUAGE**

- 14. The obligation of informing the public includes the obligation of communicating efficiently. The information on municipal policies, programs and services shall be presented in a clear, objective, simple and understandable manner.
- 15. The Municipality's Communication department should be responsible, as far as possible, for the quality of the content and of the language in messages prepared in both official languages.

## **PRESENTATION AND VISIBILITY**

16. The municipality shall:
  - a) Adopt fair communication practices by avoiding sexual stereotyping in its communications, making sure that all members of society are fairly represented and take reasonable measures to communicate efficiently with handicapped persons and multicultural community members.

## **CORPORATE IMAGE, SLOGAN AND GRAPHIC CHART**

17. A corporate image is the external representation of an institution and its activities. A coordinated and well thought out corporate image can and should help promote a positive image of the municipality.
18. The various applications for the corporate image range from “permanent support” (stationery, traffic signals, vehicle marking, personnel identification) to “transitional support” (all kinds of documentation, advertising, audiovisual documents, displays).
19. The Communication department shall make sure that the use of the corporate image throughout the municipality is consistent. Therefore, in order to maintain uniformity, a graphic chart shall be designed to manage the logo. This chart first established the presentation of the logo, then the use of colors and fonts.
20. The chart dictates the various sites and uses for the logo according to the support (stationery, posters, vehicles, etc.). The graphic chart improves the legibility of the municipality’s communications, the coherence of the support, and the proper use of the logo. It also constitutes an important part in the Municipality’s identity and promotes a coherent image.
21. With the corporate image comes the slogan. The slogan is very useful for promotional purposes, but also to make our municipality stand out among other municipalities. A well-conceived slogan inevitably accompanies the logo and normally emphasized a particular theme; it may promote the municipality’s qualities with regards to well being, quality of life, dynamic economy or geography.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY**

22. The person in charge of the Communication department shall report to the general manager.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

23. The **Communication department staff** provides the required support to the organization for the achievement of overall objectives, the development of policies and programs, the assessment of important issues and the establishment of the Municipality's course of action. When allocating resources to the Communication department, the organization shall evenly distribute the professional resources to cover all the main communication elements: research and analysis, counseling, as well as the planning and administration of communications.

## **POLICY IMPLEMENTATION**

### **Service to the public**

24. The duty of the Communication department is not only to give and receive information. It also involves the manner in which the information is shared. The usefulness of the information and the general public's perception of the municipal government ultimately depend on the quality of the exchange.
25. To provide an acceptable level of service, the Municipality must make sure that:
  - a) The information concerning the Municipality's facilities, programs and services are released in a complete, clear and useful manner;
  - b) The municipal facilities are easily identifiable and accessible within a reasonable time limit;
  - c) The service is fast and efficient while taking into consideration the protection of personal information, the security, the practical reasons, the well-being and special needs of the general public;
  - d) It respects the constitutional right of members of the public when it comes to being served in the language of its choice;

- e) There are mechanisms in place to allow individuals the opportunity of making complaints in a confidential manner;
- f) The commitments to the public are respected and the inability to respect them is quickly and clearly explained;
- g) The public is always treated courteously and fairly;
- h) The quality of service to the public is reviewed regularly as part of a cyclic review of programs;

## **COMMUNICATIONS MANAGEMENT**

### **Resources planning and management**

- 26. The annual communications planning must be fully integrated in the organization's overall planning cycle. It consists in establishing the range of communication activities and determining the needs with regard to resources.
- 27. The first step is strategic planning. The Communication department's strategic plans must link together the municipality's priorities, which constitute the foundation for all communication activities, and indicate the eventual general direction of the action plan.
- 28. The Communication department's operational plans must allow the implementation of global strategies and determine the needs in resources.
- 29. All plans must provide supervision and evaluation mechanisms, as well as adjustments according to circumstances.

### **Crisis management**

- 30. Good communication is essential to deal efficiently with crisis management. It is the Municipality's responsibility, as far as possible, to be ready for important crisis such as environmental and public health risks as well as natural or other disasters; crisis for which we can rely on numerous federal, provincial and regional government organizations for help.
- 31. The end result is that the governing bodies must prepare emergency planning, develop operational procedures for the coordination of government aid and designate one responsibility center for all

communications with the public. This stage is essential if we want to quickly provide precise, pertinent and coherent information, facilitate service delivery, eliminate the possibility of contradictions and have the public's trust.

### **Public environment**

32. Exchanges with the public consist not only of giving out information but also of listening to the public. In order to develop programs and policies that meet the public's needs, the Municipality must completely understand the public environment it is dealing with.
33. Therefore, for important decisions, a consultation process with the clients must be anticipated, a process that shall be determined as required.

### **Supervision**

34. The extent to which the organization respects this policy shall be evaluated. For this purpose, strategic and operational plans will be used to verify if the policy has been respected. An evaluation of the communication projects shall be performed to determine to what extent it meets the policy requirements.

### **ABROGATION**

35. This policy replaces any policy regarding communications or other in the four municipalities involved in the Edmundston amalgamation.

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**Mayor**

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**Clerk**