

Media Relations Policy

1.0 Policy Statement

The City of Mount Pearl Media Relations Policy guides the interactions between media, the Mayor, Council and designated City staff on behalf of the City and its departments. It is in the best interest of the City to work with media to further enhance communications with various stakeholders in support of City goals, objectives and strategies.

2.0 Background

The Media Relations Policy integrates the foundations from the City's *Communications Protocol (2006)* with added amendments.

3.0 Purpose

To establish guidelines for the interactions between the media, Mayor, Council, CAO and designated City staff on behalf of the City and its departments to ensure residents are informed of City initiatives, programs and policies.

- Establish and maintain effective channels of communications.
- Establish procedures for CAO and designated City staff, including Directors, for the communication of potential media issues to the Mayor and Council.
- Establish procedures for CAO, designated City staff, Directors, the Mayor and Council for communicating with the media.

4.0 Communications Protocol

Guidelines

The City will provide information to media and interact with media in conformity with the following guidelines:

The Mayor is the chief spokesperson for the City of Mount Pearl and is charged with the responsibility of promoting the City's aims and objectives as well as promoting and outlining its approved policies, objectives and activities. The Mayor, by virtue of the office, is regularly called upon for media comment on City policies, activities and procedures and as such is the official spokesperson for such items.

However, all Councillors are expected to routinely respond to media inquiries on Council activities, in particular for items falling under their respective Council committees. The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), and Directors are also contacted by the media for comment on various City activities and events.

All discussions with media should be limited to matters of an administrative nature and in line with the process outlined in this policy.

Procedures

- Directors must ensure all personnel are made aware of the requirement to report, in a timely manner to their respective Directors, all incidents that potentially may become matters of public interest and that may receive media coverage.
- Media inquiries received by staff should be referred immediately to the Office of the CAO. Staff shall also inform the Director of their Department. Staff should ask any media for their name, contact information, reason for calling and deadline for submission.
- Directors must report immediately to the CAO, any incidents that may potentially become matters of public interest and that may receive media coverage.
- The CAO will report, in a timely manner to the Mayor, and subsequently to Council (as recommended by the Mayor), any incidents that may potentially become matters of public interest and that may be covered by the media.
- Directors shall refrain from commenting on any issues other than those of an administrative nature or items that may require timely comment to prevent negative press coverage to the City.
- When contacted or interacting with the media, Directors must immediately advise the CAO of the nature of the subject matter discussed and to whom such comments were made.
- Whenever possible and appropriate, content provided to media (i.e., media releases) will also be posted to the City's website and the City's social media sites for the information of residents, businesses and visitors.
- All media interaction will conform with provincial legislation, particularly, the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Other Instances

A. Emergency Information

a) In the event of an emergency necessitating the activation of the City's Emergency Operations

Centre (EOC) the City's Marketing and Communications Officer will be responsible for providing timely updates to media as per the City's Emergency Management Plan.

B. Volunteers

a) Volunteers who work with the City of Mount Pearl are asked to please adhere to the same media procedure as staff and if approached by media are requested to submit the request to their supervisor who will handle the request with the Marketing and Communications Officer. Volunteers approached by media to give a personal opinion outside of their volunteer duties are requested to remove any identification they may have identifying them as working with the City of Mount Pearl before speaking to media.

C. City Initiated Contact

a) Proactive media contact will be initiated through the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer. This includes issuing media advisories and releases on behalf of the City. Departments interested in seeking publicity for events or activities should coordinate with the Manager of Marketing, Communications and Economic Development as soon as possible to ensure the best coverage.

D. Personal Media Contact

a) Employees who choose to speak to media and/or write letters to the editor must be clear that they are not speaking on behalf of the City and are providing their own personal point of view if identifying themselves as a City employee in any correspondence or interview. Employees who have received approval to speak with media should identify themselves to media as an official City spokesperson.

5.0 Approvals



Steve Kent, Chief Administrative Officer

August 7, 2018

Date