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TOWN OF CLARESHOLM PROVINCE OF ALBERTA BYLAW #1641

A Bylaw of the Town of Claresholm, in the Province of Alberta, to establish a **Council Code of Conduct**.

WHEREAS, the Town of Claresholm council values commitment, responsibility, respect and integrity;

AND WHEREAS, Council recognizes the responsibility of a Councillor's role in regard to these values;

AND WHEREAS, pursuant to section 146.1(1) of the *Municipal Government Act*, council must, by bylaw, establish a code of conduct governing the conduct of councillors;

AND WHEREAS, pursuant to section 146.1(3) of the *Municipal Government Act*, council may, by bylaw, establish a code of conduct governing the conduct of members of council committees and other bodies established by the council who are not councillors;

AND WHEREAS, pursuant to section 153 of the *Municipal Government Act*, councillors have a duty to adhere to the code of conduct established by council;

AND WHEREAS, the public is entitled to expect the highest standards of conduct from the members that it elects to council for the Town of Claresholm;

AND WHEREAS, the establishment of a code of conduct for members of council is consistent with the principles of transparent and accountable government;

AND WHEREAS, a code of conduct ensures that members of council share a common understanding of acceptable conduct extending beyond the legislative provisions governing the conduct of councillors;

NOW THEREFORE, under the authority and subject to the provisions of the *Municipal Government Act, Revised Statutes of Alberta 2000 Chapter M-26* the Council of the Town of Claresholm enacts as follows:


PART 1: Short Title

1.1. This bylaw may be referred to as the "Council Code of Conduct Bylaw".

PART 2: Definitions

2.1. In this bylaw:

- a) "**Act**" means the Municipal Government Act, R.S.A. 2000, c.M-26, and associated regulations, as amended;
- b) "**Administration**" means the administrative and operational arm of the Town of Claresholm, comprised of the various departments and business units and including all employees who operate under the leadership and supervision of the CAO;
- c) "**CAO**" means the Chief Administrative Officer of the Town of Claresholm, or their delegate;
- d) "**Council**" means the Town of Claresholm Council;
- e) "**Councillor**" means a member of Council and includes the Mayor;
- f) "**FOIP**" means the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.A. 2000, c.F-25, any associated regulations, and any amendments or successor legislation;
- g) "**Gift**" means any real or personal property given, including, but not limited to, artwork, clothing, money, gift certificates or gift cards, payment in any form, including the exchange of goods and services.
- h) "**Investigator**" means Council or the individual or body established by resolution of Council to investigate and report on complaints;
- i) "**Member**" means a member of Council and includes a councillor or the Mayor and includes members of council committees or other bodies established by Council who are not councillors or the Mayor;
- j) "**MGA**" is *Municipal Government Act, Revised Statutes of Alberta 2000 Chapter M-26*.
- k) "**Municipality**" means the municipal corporation of the Town of Claresholm;
- l) "**Pecuniary Interest**" is as set out in Division 6 of the *MGA*.
- m) "**Town**" means the Town of Claresholm;



PART 3: Purpose and Application

- 3.1. The purpose of this bylaw is to establish standards for the ethical conduct of Members relating to their roles and obligations as representatives of the Municipality and a procedure for the investigation and enforcement of those standards.
- 3.2. All Councillors shall take an oath as prescribed in Schedule "A" attached to this Bylaw upon assuming office, pledging to uphold the policies and laws of the Town, the Province of Alberta and the Government of Canada.
- 3.3. Members shall abide and adhere to the principles that form this Code of Conduct.

PART 4: Representing the Municipality

- 4.1. Members shall:
 - a) demonstrate the highest standards of personal integrity and honesty in order to foster public trust and confidence;
 - b) act honestly and in good faith, serving the welfare and interest of the Municipality as a whole;
 - c) perform their functions and duties in a conscientious and diligent manner with integrity, accountability and transparency;
 - d) arrange their private affairs and conduct themselves in a manner that promotes public confidence and will bear close public scrutiny.

PART 5: Communicating on Behalf of the Municipality


- 5.1. A Member must not claim to speak on behalf of Council unless authorized to do so. A Member must recognize when interacting with the public or the media, no individual authority exists except where explicitly authorized by Council resolution, bylaw or policy.
- 5.2. Unless Council directs otherwise, the Mayor is Council's official spokesperson and in the absence of the Mayor, it is the Deputy Mayor. All inquiries from the media regarding the official Council position on an issue shall be referred to Council's official spokesperson.
- 5.3. A Member who is authorized to act as Council's official spokesperson must ensure that their comments accurately reflect the official position and will of Council as a whole, even if the Member personally disagrees with Council's position.
- 5.4. No Member shall make a statement when they know that statement is false.
- 5.5. No Member shall make a statement with the intent to mislead Council or members of the public.
- 5.6. Members shall represent the official policies and positions of the Council.

PART 6: Respecting the Decision-Making Process

- 6.1. Decision making authority lies with Council, and not with any individual Member. Council may only act by bylaw or resolution passed at a Council meeting held in public at which there is a quorum present. No Member shall, unless authorized by Council, attempt to bind the Municipality or give direction to Administration, agents, contractors, consultants or other service providers or prospective vendors to the Municipality.
- 6.2. Members shall conduct and convey Council business and all their duties in an open and transparent manner other than for those matters which by law are authorized or required to be dealt with in a confidential manner in an in-camera session, and in so doing, allow the public to view the process and rationale which was used.
- 6.3. Members shall accurately communicate the decisions of Council, even if they disagree with Council's decision, such that respect for the decision-making processes of Council is fostered.
- 6.4. Members shall devote time, thought, and attention to the duties of a Councillor in order to make effective and knowledgeable decisions on behalf of the citizens and taxpayers.
- 6.5. Members shall inform themselves on items before Council and focus on the business at hand in order to make decisions based upon the merits and substance of the matter.

PART 7: Adherence to Policies, Procedures and Bylaws

- 7.1. Members shall uphold the law established by the Parliament of Canada and the Legislature of Alberta and the bylaws, policies and procedures adopted by Council.


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- 7.2. Members shall respect the Municipality as an institution, its bylaws, policies and procedures and shall encourage public respect for the Municipality, its bylaws, policies and procedures.
 - 7.3. A Member must not encourage disobedience of any bylaw, policy or procedure of the Municipality in responding to a member of the public, as this undermines public confidence in the Municipality and in the rule of law.
 - 7.4. A Member must commit to disclosing to the appropriate authorities and/or to Council any behaviour or activity of which a Councillor becomes aware that may qualify as corruption, abuse, fraud, bribery or any other violation of the laws of the Province of Alberta, the Government of Canada, or this bylaw.

PART 8: Respectful Interactions with Council Members, Staff, the Public and Others

- 8.1. Members shall act in a manner that demonstrates fairness, respect for individual differences and opinions, and an intention to work together for the common good and in furtherance of the public interest.
- 8.2. Members shall treat one another, Administration, and members of the public with courtesy, dignity and respect and without abuse, bullying or intimidation.
- 8.3. No member shall use indecent, abusive, or insulting words or expressions toward another Member, Administration, or any member of the public.
- 8.4. Members shall respect the fact that Administration works for the Municipality as a corporate body and are charged with making recommendations that reflect their professional expertise and a corporate perspective and that Administration is required to do so without undue influence from any Member or group of Members.
- 8.5. Members shall support and maintain a positive and constructive environment for residents and Administration.
- 8.6. Members shall communicate and work with fellow Councillors in an open and honest manner, promoting a spirit of cooperation by listening to and respecting those opinions that may differ.
- 8.7. Members must not:
 - a) involve themselves in matters of Administration, which fall within the jurisdiction of the CAO;
 - b) use, or attempt to use, their authority or influence for the purpose of intimidating, threatening, coercing, commanding or influencing any employee of the Municipality with the intent of interfering in the employee's duties; or
 - c) maliciously or falsely injure the professional or ethical reputation, or the prospects or practice of employees of the Municipality.

PART 9: Confidential Information

- 9.1. Members must keep in confidence matters discussed in private at a Council or committee meeting until the matter is discussed at a meeting held in public.
- 9.2. In the course of their duties, Members may also become privy to confidential information received outside of an "in-camera" meeting. Members must not:
 - a) disclose or release by any means to any member of the public, including the media, any confidential information acquired by virtue of their office, unless the disclosure is required by law or authorized by Council to do so;
 - b) access or attempt to gain access to confidential information in the custody or control of the Municipality unless it is necessary for the performance of the Member's duties and is not otherwise prohibited by Council, and only then if the information is acquired through appropriate channels in accordance with applicable Council bylaws and policies;
 - c) use confidential information for personal benefit or for the benefit of any other individual, organization, or group.
- 9.3. Confidential information includes information in the possession of, or received in confidence by, the Municipality that the Municipality is prohibited from disclosing pursuant to legislation, court order or by contract, or is required to refuse to disclose under FOIP or any other legislation, or any other information that pertains to the business of the Municipality, and is generally considered to be of a confidential nature, including, but not limited to, information concerning:
 - a) the security of the property of the Municipality;
 - b) a proposed or pending acquisition or disposition of land or other property;
 - c) a tender that has or will be issued but has not been awarded;
 - d) contract negotiations;

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- e) employment and labour relations;
 - f) draft documents and legal instruments, including reports, policies, bylaws and resolutions, that have not been the subject matter of deliberation in a meeting open to the public;
 - g) law enforcement matters;
 - h) litigation or potential litigation, including matters before administrative tribunals; and
 - i) advice that is subject to solicitor-client privilege.

PART 10: Conflicts of Interest

- 10.1. Members have a statutory duty to comply with the pecuniary interest provisions set out in Part 5, Division 6 of the Act and a corresponding duty to vote unless required or permitted to abstain under the Act or another enactment.
- 10.2. Members are to be free from undue influence and not act or appear to act in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, family, friends or associates, business or otherwise.
- 10.3. Members must not use the position of Councillor to benefit one's self or any other individual apart from the interest of the Town, and avoid placing one's self in a position where there may be a real or perceived conflict of interest or apprehension of bias.
- 10.4. Members shall approach decision-making with an open mind that is capable of persuasion.

PART 11: Improper Use of Influence

- 11.1. No Member shall use the influence of the Member's office for any purpose other than for the exercise of the Member's official duties.
- 11.2. Members shall not contact or otherwise attempt to influence members of any adjudicative body regarding any matter before it relating to the Municipality.
- 11.3. Members shall refrain from using their position to obtain employment with the Municipality for themselves, family members or close associates.

PART 12: Use of Municipal Assets and Services

- 12.1. Members shall use municipal property, equipment, services, supplies, and staff resources only for the performance of their duties as a Member, subject to the following limited exception:
 - a) municipal property, equipment, service, supplies, and staff resources that are available to the general public may be used by a Member for personal use upon the same terms and conditions as members of the general public, including booking and payment of any applicable fees or charges.

PART 13: Orientation and Other Training Attendance

- 13.1. Every Member must attend the orientation training offered by the Municipality within 90 days after the member takes the oath of office. Attendance at additional training sessions throughout the Council term is discretionary.

PART 14: Remuneration, Expenses, Gifts and Hospitality

- 14.1. Members shall be transparent and accountable with respect to all expenditures and strictly comply with all municipal bylaws, policies and procedures regarding claims for remuneration and expenses.
- 14.2. Members shall not accept gifts, hospitality or other benefits that would, to a reasonable member of the public, appear to be in gratitude for influence, to induce influence, or otherwise to go beyond the necessary and appropriate public functions involved.
- 14.3. Members may accept hospitality, gifts, or benefits that normally accompany the responsibilities of office and are received as an incident of protocol or social obligation, provided that the value of the hospitality, gift or benefit does not exceed \$500.
- 14.4. Gifts received by a Member on behalf of the Municipality as a matter of official protocol which have significance or historical value for the Municipality shall be left with the Municipality when the Member ceases to hold office.

PART 15: Informal Complaint Process

- 15.1. Any Member who has identified or witnessed conduct by a Member that the Member reasonably believes, in good faith, is in contravention of this Bylaw may address the prohibited conduct by:
 - a) advising the Member that the conduct violates this bylaw and encouraging the Member to stop;
 - b) requesting the Mayor to assist in informal discussion of the alleged complaint with the Member in an attempt to resolve the issue. In the event that the Mayor is the subject of, or is implicated in a complaint, the person may request the assistance of the Deputy Mayor.
- 15.2. Individuals are encouraged to pursue this informal complaint procedure as the first means of remedying conduct that they believe violates this bylaw. However, an individual is not required to complete this informal complaint procedure prior to pursuing the formal complaint procedure outlined below.

PART 16: Formal Complaint Process

- 16.1. Any Member who has identified or witnessed conduct by a Member that the Member reasonably believes, in good faith, is in contravention of this bylaw may file a formal complaint in accordance with the following procedure:
 - a) All complaints shall be made in writing and shall be dated and signed by an identifiable individual;
 - b) All complaints shall be addressed to the Investigator;
 - c) The complaint must set out reasonable and probable grounds for the allegation that the Member has contravened this bylaw, including a detailed description of the facts, as they are known, giving rise to the allegation;
 - d) If the facts, as reported, include the name of one or more Members who are alleged to be responsible for the breach of this bylaw, the Member or Members concerned shall receive a copy of the complaint submitted to the Investigator;
 - e) Upon receipt of a complaint under the bylaw, the Investigator shall review the complaint and decide whether to proceed to investigate the complaint or not. If the Investigator is of the opinion that a complaint is frivolous or vexatious or is not made in good faith, or that there are no grounds or insufficient grounds for conducting an investigation, the Investigator may choose not to investigate or, if already commenced, may terminate any investigation, or may dispose of the complaint in a summary manner. In that event, the complainant and Council, if Council is not the Investigator, shall be notified of the Investigator's decision;
 - f) If the Investigator decides to investigate the complaint, the Investigator shall take such steps as it may consider appropriate, which may include seeking legal advice. All proceedings of the Investigator regarding the investigation shall be confidential;
 - g) If the Investigator is not Council, the Investigator shall, upon conclusion of the investigation, provide the Council and the Member who is the subject of the complaint, the results of the Investigator's investigation;
 - h) A Member who is the subject of an investigation shall be afforded procedural fairness, including an opportunity to respond to the allegations before Council deliberates and makes any decision or any sanction is imposed;
 - i) A Member who is the subject of an investigation is entitled to be represented by legal counsel, at the member's sole expense.
- 16.2. All discussions surrounding allegations and substantiated violations of this bylaw shall be conducted at an In Camera meeting of Council only, with information being kept in confidence under the appropriate sections of the *MGA* and the *FOIP*.

PART 17: Compliance and Enforcement

- 17.1. Members shall uphold the letter and the spirit or intent of this bylaw.
- 17.2. Members are expected to co-operate in every way possible in securing compliance with the application and enforcement of this bylaw.
- 17.3. No Member shall:
 - a) undertake any act of reprisal or threaten reprisal against a complainant or any other person for providing relevant information to Council or to any other person;
 - b) obstruct Council, or any other person, in carrying out the objectives or requirements of this bylaw.
- 17.4. Sanctions that may be imposed on a Member, by Council, upon a finding that the Member has breached this bylaw may include:
 - a) a letter of reprimand addressed to the Member;
 - b) requesting the Member to issue a letter of apology;

- c) publication of a letter of reprimand or request for apology and the Member's response;
- d) suspension or removal of the appointment of a Member as the chief elected official under section 150(2) of the Act;
- e) suspension or removal of the appointment of a Member as the deputy chief elected official or acting chief elected official under section 152 of the Act;
- f) suspension or removal of the chief elected official's presiding duties under section 154 of the Act;
- g) suspension or removal from some or all Council committees and bodies to which council has the right to appoint members;
- h) reduction or suspension of remuneration as defined in section 275.1 of the Act corresponding to a reduction in duties, excluding allowances for attendance at council meetings;
- i) any other sanction Council deems reasonable and appropriate in the circumstances provided that the sanction does not prevent a Member from fulfilling the legislated duties of a councillor and the sanction is not contrary to the Act.

PART 18: Review

18.1 This bylaw shall be brought forward for review at the beginning of each term of Council, when relevant legislation is amended, and at any other time that Council considers appropriate to ensure that it remains current and continues to accurately reflect the standards of ethical conduct expected of Members.

PART 19: Passage

This Bylaw shall come into effect on the date of the third reading.

Read a first time in Council this **26th** day of **March** 2018 A.D.

Read a second time in Council this **26th** day of **March** 2018 A.D.

Read a third time in Council and finally passed in Council this **9th** day of **April** 2018 A.D.



Doug MacPherson, Mayor



Marian Carlson, CAO

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SCHEDULE "A"

**TOWN OF CLARESHOLM
CODE OF CONDUCT OATH**

I recognize that I have primary responsibility to assure that ethical standards are understood and met so that the public can continue to have full confidence in the integrity of Council. In recognition of my commitment and dedication to the public that has entrusted me, as a member of the Town of Claresholm Council, to provide governance, I _____, promise that I will:

- 1) Abide and adhere to the principles that form the Code of Conduct.
- 2) Govern my conduct in accordance with the requirements and obligations as set out in the *Municipal Government Act* or any other *Act* of the Government of Canada, or the Province of Alberta, as well as the requirements set by any Council policy, bylaw, process or rule of order established by Council.
- 3) Demonstrate the highest standards of personal integrity and honesty in all public activities in order to inspire the public confidence and trust in me and the municipality I represent.
- 4) Devote time, thought and attention to the duties of a Councillor so I may render effective and knowledgeable service.
- 5) Consider all available information in making decisions and, thereafter, abide by and uphold the decision of Council.
- 6) Treat my fellow Councillors, Administration and the public with respect, concern, courtesy and responsiveness.
- 7) Work with my fellow Councillors in a spirit of harmony, compassion and cooperation in spite of differences of opinion; and listen to and respect those opinions which may be different than my own.
- 8) Strive for open and honest communication with my fellow Councillors, Administration and the public.
- 9) Ensure that my comments accurately reflect the official position and will of Council as a whole, even if I personally disagree with Council's position.
- 10) Remember that, unless otherwise authorized by Council, I have no individual legal authority outside of a meeting of Council and I must conduct my relationships with staff, the public and the media on this basis.
- 11) Not involve myself in matters of Administration, which fall within the jurisdiction of the CAO.
- 12) Not use my position to benefit me or any other individual, organization, or group, apart from the total interest of the community; and avoid placing myself in a position where there may be a real or perceived conflict of interest.
- 13) Not use Town funds, property or information for my personal benefit or gain or for the personal gain or benefit of any other individual, organization, or group.
- 14) Protect the privileged information to which I have access in the course of my official duties; and maintain the confidentiality of information that is not otherwise available to the public.
- 15) Neither neglect my personal obligation to the public and my legal obligation to the Province of Alberta, nor surrender these responsibilities to any other person, organization, or group.
- 16) Commit to disclosing to the appropriate authorities and/or to Council, any behaviour or activity that I become aware of that may qualify as a violation of the law or the Council Code of Conduct bylaw.

Dated at the Town of Claresholm, in the Province of Alberta, this _____ day of _____ 20__.

Signature of Mayor or Council Member