

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF JOCELYN

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January 18, 2024

Bridget Schulte-Hostedde
Regional Director
Ministry of Municipal Affairs
Municipal Services Office North (Sudbury)

Dear Ms. Schulte-Hostedde:

Council has directed me to respond to your letter, dated December 1, 2023, addressed to the Reeve and Council. We greatly appreciate your offer of assistance. As you may know, we have been dealing with a delegation that seems to have an inability to understand or accept our actions to reconcile oversights and misdirection of previous administrations. Our attempts to correct these legal matters were the primary reason for the resignation of our Clerk-Treasurer, two Councilors, Deputy Clerk-Treasurer and an attempt to coerce a third Counselor to quit; thereby collapsing Council.

Decorum at meetings has sometimes been difficult in recent months. We are now following the provisions and requirements of our procedural by-laws to the best of our ability. With marked improvement. We feel that Council is doing their utmost to adhere to our accountability and transparency policies. However, a delegation with opposing views reappears at each meeting asking analogous, obscure and irrelevant questions, sometimes repeatedly. This discord has escalated and spread to open animosity within our municipality, culminating in a need to involve the O.P.P to protect one of our employees from repeated verbal abuse.

Council and staff are doing their best to adhere to our accountability and transparency policy. These repeated questions and complaints have created a backlog and delays in carrying out day-to-day business. Adding to these delays was a personnel retention problem due to community friction. This greatly impeded our ability to function appropriately. We are working with our legal counsel and consultants to ensure compliance with all legislated requirements. We have also brought in our accounting firm B.D.O. to assist in putting our financial house in proper order (e.g. taxes). In all, this will take several more months to fully rectify. Consequently, we are in the process of hiring a second individual to assist our office administrator. While these officers and employees may not have previous municipal administration experience, we have already reached out to Kathy Horgan at MMAH to provide appropriate training and would welcome any additional support that your office would be able to provide.

By-laws were passed in July of this year to appoint our Clerk and two Deputy Clerk-Treasurers, one of whom has now been appointed as Treasurer. These by-laws were prepared by our former staff; and while we are aware of the prescribed duties for such officers as outlined in Sections 228 and 286 of the

Municipal Act, 2001, we were not made aware that those prescribed duties that must be formalized by a by-law. With your assistance, we would be pleased to enact appropriate by-laws to formalize all appointments and their prescribed duties.

Our Hiring Policy was, and is, being followed in respect to the hiring of employees. The appointment of volunteer Pro Bono Publico officers however falls outside the provisions of that policy, as that policy specifically applies only to the hiring of employees.

Regarding the financial administration of the municipality, our Treasurer is aware of his responsibilities and is working with our Auditor to develop appropriate internal controls for the safeguarding of municipal funds, including funds raised by public donation.

Also, as suggested in your letter, we will be contacting the Ministry of Labour and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board for information and clarification of requirements for volunteer staff and emergency volunteer residents.

Regarding the roles of Council and municipal staff, I believe we have a clear understanding of Council's role and that of its officers and employees, as set out in the Act. The municipality had only one email address however, we have recently created new email addresses for all Council members and officers.

We do not however have a comprehensive complaint policy or mechanism in place at the present time and would welcome any assistance that your Ministry might be able to provide in developing one.

As per your request, we are attaching hereto copies of the following documents:

- copies of resolutions and by-laws appointing the Clerk, Treasurer and Deputy Clerk-Treasurers.
- copy of our Hiring Policy
- copy of our Council – Staff Relations Policy
- copy of our Public Notice Policy
- copy of our Accountability and Transparency Policy
- copy of our Procedure By-law

We do not have a Delegation of Powers and Duties Policy and would welcome the Ministry's assistance in developing one. We are also pleased to have accepted your offer of an in-person training session for administration staff, Council and officers and we are in touch with our Municipal Advisor to discuss potential dates.

Sincerely,



Mark Henderson,
Reeve,
Township of Jocelyn

- c. Members of Council
Kathy Horgan, Manager, MMAH
Enrique Paraco, Municipal Advisor, MMAH