



Section <b>Councillor Policies</b>	Policy No. <b>18-2</b>	Page <b>1 of 3</b>
Policy Title  <b>Kneehill County Public Consultation Policy</b> <i>References:</i> <i>Communications Strategy</i> <i>Communications Policy</i> <i>Strategic Plan 2014-2017</i> <i>Crisis Communications Plan</i>	Date:  <b>February 2015</b>	Resolution No.  <b>64/15</b>

**Purpose:**

Kneehill County Council is committed to open and accountable decision making, which includes appropriate levels of communication and consultation between Council and the public. The Municipal Government Act (MGA) establishes a legal requirement for Council and Council committees to conduct business in public and to ensure the public is notified of certain kinds of decisions. Communicating with residents is a key function of the County, involving officials and employees at all levels.

**Definitions:**

1. *"Consultation"* means the process of providing information to the public and obtaining feedback, whether to test an idea or concept, or collaborating to develop solutions.
2. *"Information Sharing"* means the process of providing information to the public to raise awareness.
3. *"Public"* means residents, businesses, community associations and all other stakeholders who may have a vested interest, whether statutory, legal or otherwise, in the issue, project, policy, initiative or bylaw proposed by Kneehill County.
4. *"Public Consultation Plan"* means a written document outlining the level of public participation that will be employed to address the issue, project, initiative or bylaw proposed by Kneehill County, and includes a communications plan outlining strategies required to activate the plan.
5. *"Public Hearing"* means the portion of a regular or special meeting of Council during which any person, group or representative affected by a proposed bylaw shall be heard, and includes all statutory and non-statutory hearings as identified within the *Municipal Government Act*.
6. *"Public Meeting"* means an information session that includes a formal presentation by the organizer and includes an opportunity for attendees to ask questions and provide input.
7. *"Public Notification"* means a method of informing the public as required for proposed bylaws, land use matters, and other notifications as specified in the *Municipal Government Act*.
8. *"Request for Decision" (RFD)* means a document that is presented to Council required to make a decision/motion. A RFD includes an issue title, background information, how it connects to the Strategic Plan, communication requirement, and recommendations by the CAO, Director or Manager.

**Policy Scope:**

This policy applies to all Kneehill County employees and Council when it is required to engage the public, whether to inform, consult or engage the public regarding issues, projects, policies, initiatives and bylaws proposed by Kneehill County.

Section <b>Councillor Policies</b>	Policy No. <b>18-2</b>	Page <b>2 of 3</b>
Policy Title <b>Kneehill County Public Consultation Policy</b>	Date: <b>February 2015</b>	Resolution No. <b>64/15</b>

This policy also applies to consultants working on behalf of Kneehill County, as well as any boards, committees and other quasi-judicial bodies as appointed by Kneehill County Council through bylaw, policy or other legislation.

### **Policy Standards:**

1. This policy is not to circumvent any statutory requirements as outlined in the *Municipal Government Act* or any other legislation to which Kneehill County must adhere to. This also applies to Planning and Development consultation processes.
2. Council shall follow the public hearing process as per the *Municipal Government Act*, and/or the associated bylaw/policy passed by Council.
3. Council is required to approve the level of public consultation on each Request for Decision (RFD) that is recommended to Council by the CAO and/or staff. Should a full process plan be employed, a communication action plan to address the issue, project, initiative or bylaw proposed by Kneehill County will be attached to the RFD. The plan will outline timelines, budget and strategies required to activate the plan.
4. The CAO may adopt procedures consistent with this policy to provide a framework and consistent approach when engaging the public for operational purposes.

### **Roles and Responsibilities:**

#### **Council is responsible to:**

- Provide direction to staff by setting the budget and other resources required in relation to the public consultation plan.
- Be supportive of the importance of communication.
- Support public engagement processes by participating.
- Ensure the communications is defined on the RFD's prior to making a decision using at least one of the following three Community Engagement types:
  - a) Directive Decisions (information sharing) – Staff and Council have the authority to inform the public on any decision made by Council motion.
  - b) Consultative Decisions (consulting the public) – Council sets this level to receive public feedback using the Public Consultation Plan.
  - c) Collaborative Decisions (active participation by public) – Council sets this level to share in the decision making process with the public/stakeholders, using the Public Consultation Plan for the full public consultation process.
- The Reeve, or designate, will act as a Public Information Officer, and will speak with/to the public on behalf of Kneehill County as a whole.
- Council members are the principle spokespeople of Kneehill County, and will be supported in this role by the Communications Department and the CAO or designate. At all times, spokespersons will respect privacy rights, matters before the courts, and Council confidentiality.

Section <b>Councillor Policies</b>	Policy No. <b>18-2</b>	Page <b>3 of 3</b>
Policy Title <b>Kneehill County Public Consultation Policy</b>	Date: <b>February 2015</b>	Resolution No. <b>64/15</b>

**Department Directors are responsible to:**

- Ensure all RFD's are completed with a Continuum of Community Engagement identified (Directive Decisions, Consultative Decisions or Collaborative Decisions), as defined in the Public Consultation Plan.
- Inform the public on any decision made by Council motion, using informative methods of communication techniques as outlined in the Public Consultation Plan.
- Ensure staff implements the Public Consultation Plan.
- Ensure adequate time and resources are dedicated to planning, coordinating and conducting consultation processes, whether internal or external.
- Ensure staff participation in recommended training.
- Ensure that policy is adhered to by all consultants and contractors hired to do public consultation on behalf of Kneehill County.

**Communications is responsible to:**

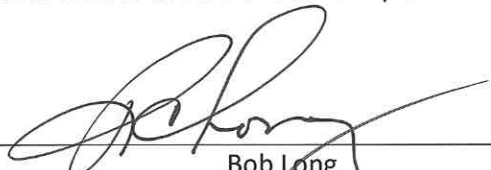
- Support public engagement processes with communications planning and implementation to build awareness of the opportunity to participate.
- Help facilitate interactive public engagement activities on the web.
- Help build a resource bank and training relating to clear language use.
- Inform the public on any decision made by Council motion, using informative methods of communication techniques.

**Kneehill County Employees are responsible to:**

- Use the Public Consultation Plan and Policy to plan and define level of public consultation for every project which public involvement is expected/warranted.
- Support public engagement processes by participating, if necessary.

**Procedures:**

A Public Consultation Plan has been developed to support this policy. Administration will develop procedures over time to ensure effective implementation of this policy.




---

Bob Long  
Reeve




---

Al Hoggan  
CAO

Original: February 24, 2015 64/15

Review Date: February 2018