



Legislation Details (With Text)

File #: AR-17-343 **Version:** 1 **Name:**
Type: Agenda Reports **Status:** Passed
File created: 6/22/2017 **In control:** City Council
On agenda: 9/5/2017 **Final action:** 9/5/2017
Title: Whistleblower Protection Policy
Presented by: Michelle Bonnici, GM of Corporate Services

Sponsors:

Indexes:

Code sections:

Attachments: 1. CMD -HRS-1111, Whistleblower Protection

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
9/5/2017	1	City Council	approved	Pass

TAMRMS#: B06

Whistleblower Protection Policy

Presented by: Michelle Bonnici, GM of Corporate Services

RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the agenda report entitled "Whistleblower Protection Policy" be received as information.

PURPOSE OF REPORT

A whistleblower directive will establish and maintain a system to allow employees to report fraud, to ensure confidentiality where possible and prevent retaliation for reporting.

COUNCIL DIRECTION

On February 27, 2017 Council passed the following motion:

(CM-17-014)

That Administration develop for Council's consideration a Whistleblower Protection Policy similar to that of City of Edmonton and other communities with the Internal Auditor before the end of Q3 2017.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

Administration researched whistleblower policies and procedures from other municipalities and organizations (including City of Edmonton, Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, City of Medicine Hat, Lethbridge College and Government of Alberta).

The proposed administrative directive supports transparent and ethical practices and encourages

accountability by providing a venue to report fraud without retribution.

Complainants would file a report to a third party provider (i.e. a law firm) which would vet the complaint and provide it to the General Manager of Corporate Services to assign to the appropriate department for investigation. All efforts would be taken to protect confidentiality when requested, unless required by law to release. However, complainants are reminded that anonymous complaints may be difficult to investigate if insufficient information is provided. The whistleblower directive excludes respectful workplace complaints which already have an investigative process.

STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATIONS OR ENGAGEMENT

The development of this directive included research from other organizations and involved an internal review from Legal Services, Legislative Services and Human Resources.

IMPLICATIONS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

A communication strategy will be developed to inform Leadership and their departments on this new directive.

Financial:

The requirement to have all reports submitted to a third party legal firm would require a retainer be established with a law firm. The cost of this is yet to be determined.

Legal / Risk:

None at this time

Program or Service:

None at this time

Organizational:

It is difficult to predict the impact on organizational workload of whistleblower complaints and related investigations. However, the experience of other municipalities is that there may be an initial increase in complaints which tends to level off. It is also common that many of the complaints are related to respectful workplace issues. Any such complaints will continue to be directed to Human Resources and addressed in accordance with established protocols.

ALTERNATIVES AND IMPLICATIONS CONSIDERED

N/A

STRATEGIC CONNECTIONS

This directive would support the following two Council pillars by providing accountable practices and opportunities for continuous improvement of service delivery:

Governance Strategy

Council is committed to ensuring that the City of St. Albert is a responsive, accountable government that delivers value to the community.

Service Delivery Strategy

Council is committed to ensuring that the City of St. Albert is engaging residents to identify opportunities to improve delivery of services to the community.

Report Date: September 5, 2017

Author(s):

Committee/Department: Human Resources

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