



# WHAT WE HEARD

Code of Conduct Consultation Report

Code of Conduct Working Group

## Summary

In August, the Code of Conduct Working Group released a draft model code of conduct for municipalities and villages. The draft code was taken out for consultation with municipalities and villages for 8 weeks and over 160 participants provided feedback on the entirety of the survey.<sup>1</sup> This report summarizes the feedback we received during consultation, indicates some feedback the working group is considering as possible amendments to their recommendations, and future plans for the code of conduct.

## Feedback received

- Every circumstance related to a code of conduct violation will need to be assessed individually.
- People with different personalities should be able to express themselves and be outspoken in their opinions.
- The same standards that apply to a municipality should apply to a village.
- Consideration should be given to acting in the interests of the municipality as a whole rather than just a particular district.
- Provisions related to sending emails and messages at appropriate times of the day and attire at business meeting should be considered.
- Some gifts and benefits that go along with being an elected official should be deemed socially acceptable.
- Elected officials should not be able to tender on items such as the sale of older or extra equipment.
- Suggestions that the code of conduct needs to relate specifically to online behaviour including bullying, inciting harm or cyberstalking.
- The code must be able to provide for respectful dissenting opinions at the council table.

97% of respondents agree there should be one standard code for all municipalities and villages.

93% of respondents agree that the code of conduct should apply to elected officials at all times

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<sup>1</sup> 160 individuals completed the survey while an additional 179 started to provide feedback on the survey but did not complete it in its entirety, resulting in a total of 339 survey respondents.

- Must make it clear that an individual does not speak on behalf of council but is still able to provide their own opinion.
- Must make it clear that elected officials articulate council's decisions accurately, even if the member was not supportive of the decision.
- Must make it clear that personal statements are allowed as long as they are done respectfully.
- Discrimination should not occur on individuals' religious beliefs.
- Must ensure the code of conduct does not deter people in running for office.
- Consideration should be given on applying this code of conduct to those who are running for office but not yet nominated.
- Must ensure that the code of conduct addresses assault and inappropriate touching.
- A code is rendered useless unless there are repercussions associated with it.
- The code should not be intended to be used as a personal vendetta against members.
- The code of conduct needs consequences for poor conduct otherwise bad behaviour will continue.

## Working Group Clarification and Considerations

This section includes some clarifications and considerations based on the feedback received during consultation. The clarification section is intended to clarify parts of the code and approach to the future of the codes of conduct. The considerations are comments received that the working group is reviewing as possible amendments to their recommendations.

### Clarifications

- The working group recommends there be one model code for municipalities and one model code for villages. While the terminology will be different, the standards/expectations are the same.
- The code is not intended to silence dissenting opinions.
- This consultation was only to receive feedback on the code provisions. The working group is continuing their efforts on developing recommendations for sanctions and the investigation process. Once these recommendations have been finalized, we will complete a consultation to seek municipal and village feedback.

## Considerations

- Behaviour relating to those during an election.
- Elected officials not being able to tender on items of older equipment.
- A statement being made about an identifiable group should be done respectfully.
- Making sure inappropriate touching is addressed in sexual harassment provisions.
- Updating value statements to reflect the municipal units' interests as a whole.

## Future Plans for the Code of Conduct

After the survey closed on September 24, 2022, the working group is considering some amendments to their recommendations based on the feedback provided. They are also working on developing sanctions and investigator process recommendations. It is expected these recommendations will be completed by November/December of 2022. Once the sanctions and investigation process recommendations have been completed, a consultation will take place with municipalities and villages to provide feedback on what is being proposed. It is expected these consultations will take place beginning of 2023.

Following the consultation on sanctions and investigator process, the working group will finalize all their recommendations for codes of conduct based on all three components – content, sanctions and investigator process. Once these recommendations have incorporated the feedback received during consultations, there will be one final chance to provide feedback on the entire process through a brief survey. The working group will use the feedback in this survey to finalize and present their recommendations to the Deputy Minister of the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing for consideration, followed by a submission to Executive Council for final approval.

We look forward to engaging with you again during the next stage of consultation to discuss the sanctions and investigation process recommendations in early 2023.

Sincerely,

Mayor Mood

Code of Conduct Working Group Chair