

Lac La Biche County *Policy*

TITLE: Correspondence and Submissions at Public Meetings

POLICY NO: ADM-14-008

RESOLUTION: 21.196

EFFECTIVE DATE: December 10, 2019

DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBLE: Legislative Services

NEXT REVIEW DATE: March 23, 2024

POLICY STATEMENT:

Lac La Biche County welcomes correspondence and submissions from all municipal stakeholders. In consideration of the balance between open government and protection of privacy, Lac La Biche County deems it desirable to establish a process that will inform stakeholders of how written correspondence and submissions are administered by the County, especially at it relates to correspondence and submissions forming part of the public meeting record.

DEFINITIONS:

“CAO” means the Chief Administrative Officer appointed by County Council in accordance with the MGA.

“Closed session” means a portion of a meeting that is closed from the public pursuant to section 197 of the MGA.

“Correspondence” includes but is not limited to written letters, emails, photographs, maps or other images, but excludes petitions provided for under sections 220-226 of the MGA, comments on social media and text messages.

“County Council” means the Council of Lac La Biche County.

“Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act” means the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, RSA 2000, c F-25.

“MGA” means the Municipal Government Act, RSA 2000, c M-26.

“Personal information” means recorded information about an identifiable individual, as defined by the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

“Public Hearing Submissions” means written letters or emails submitted to Lac La Biche County as part of a public hearing provided for under section 230 of the MGA.

“Public Hearing” means a public hearing held in accordance with section 230 of the MGA.

“Public Meeting” means a Council or Committee meeting held in accordance with sections 192, 193, 194 and 195 of the MGA and is open to the public pursuant to section 197 of the MGA.

“Stakeholders” means the residents of Lac La Biche County, as well as other individuals or organizations that are affected by a municipal decision.

PRINCIPLES:

General Provisions

1. Written correspondence from stakeholders specifically intended for County Council should be addressed to “Mayor and Council” or “County Council” or “Members of Council”.
2. Correspondence that is not specifically addressed to County Council and/or correspondence that is outside of the Administrative authority delegated to the CAO, may also be subject to the provisions of this policy.
3. Correspondence should contain the name and contact information of the author. Anonymous correspondence will not be acknowledged.
4. In writing to Lac La Biche County, stakeholders should recognize that their name and correspondence may be discussed during a public meeting or closed session, and further that their name and nature of the correspondence, and in some instances a copy of the correspondence, may form part of the agenda and minutes of that meeting.
 - a. If the correspondence refers to a matter in relation to the stakeholder’s personal property or location of residence, stakeholders are encouraged to state the general location rather than the specific street/rural address within their correspondence (i.e. “ABC Subdivision” rather than “12345 678 Road”).
 - b. If a stakeholder chooses to disclose their personal street/rural address within the correspondence, that information may not be redacted if it is relevant and necessary information to decide on the matter (i.e. during public hearings).
5. When correspondence items are received:
 - a. All correspondence addressed to Council must be emailed to all Members of Council;
 - b. Administration will bring correspondence submissions forward to a Regular Council Meeting for Council consideration when action is required; and
 - c. Council may request a correspondence item be brought forward to a Regular Council Meeting via submission of a Council Meeting Addition Form. The addition will be brought forward to the next Regular Council Meeting adhering to Council’s Procedural Bylaw.
6. In receiving correspondence that is brought forward to a Regular Council Meeting, Council may:
 - a. accept the correspondence as information, whereby no specific direction or follow up of the correspondence will take place;
 - b. direct further action on the correspondence; or
 - c. refer the correspondence to Administration or a Council Committee.
7. All correspondence brought forward to a Regular Council Meeting for Council consideration will be responded to in writing, informing the stakeholder of Council’s direction.
8. Letter of support requests to Council will adhere to the CS-11-017 Council Letters of Support Policy provisions.

Public Hearing Submissions

- 9. In accordance with the procedures outlined in Council’s procedural bylaw, stakeholders should recognize that their name, written submission and/or verbal statements may form part of a public agenda package and record of minutes.

Public Input Submissions

- 10. In accordance with the procedures outlined in Council’s procedural bylaw, stakeholders should recognize that their name, written submission and/or verbal statements may form part of a public agenda package and record of minutes.

Quasi-Judicial Boards

- 11. This policy does *not* apply to quasi-judicial boards of Lac La Biche County, including the Subdivision and Development Appeal Board and Assessment Review Board, as these boards are at arm’s length from the County and have their own legislative requirements with respect hearing processes and disclosure.

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy

- 12. In addition to the provisions of this policy, stakeholders should be aware that all records, including correspondence and written submissions, under the custody and control of Lac La Biche County, may be requested and disclosed in accordance with an access request under the provisions of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

“Original Signed” _____
Chief Administrative Officer

April 1, 2021
Date

“Original Signed” _____
Mayor

April 1, 2021
Date

SPECIAL NOTES/CROSS REFERENCE: Correspondence and Submissions at Public Meetings Procedure ADM-14-008; Council Meeting Procedure Bylaw

AMENDMENT DATE: March 23, 2021



Procedure

TITLE: Correspondence and Submissions at Public Meetings

PROCEDURE NO: ADM-14-008

EFFECTIVE DATE: December 10, 2019

DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBLE: Legislative Services

NEXT REVIEW DATE: March 23, 2024

GENERAL GUIDELINES:

The purpose of this procedure is to supplement the *Correspondence and Submissions at Public Meetings Policy* to ensure stakeholders are made aware of how their written correspondence and public hearing/input submissions will be treated by Lac La Biche County, especially as correspondence and submissions form part of the permanent meeting record.

DEFINITIONS:

See definitions in the *Correspondence and Submissions at Public Meetings Policy*.

PROCEDURE:

1. It is the standard of Lac La Biche County to actively and routinely disclose public meeting agenda packages and meeting minutes. This means that Council public agenda packages and minutes are posted to the County's website actively, as well public agenda packages and minutes not posted to the website (i.e. from committees) can be requested and may be disclosed routinely. This active and routine disclosure may occur without a formal access request in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.
2. When correspondence is to be included in the public meeting agenda, the following procedure will be followed:
 - a. Correspondence intended for County Council will be sent via email from Administration to Members of Council, as received.
 - b. Under the authority of Council's Procedural Bylaw, the general practice will be to include a listing of correspondence in the public meeting package that requested/requires action. This listing may include the name of the stakeholder and a summary of the correspondence.
 - c. Council may also submit a Council Meeting Addition Form requesting that a correspondence item be addressed as Council Correspondence at a Regular Council Meeting.
 - d. Notwithstanding 2(b), there may be instances at public meetings when it is appropriate for a complete copy of the correspondence to form part of an agenda package.
 - e. If a copy of the correspondence forms the public agenda, the personal contact information will be redacted.

3. During public hearings:
 - a. If provided in advance, written submissions for public hearings may form part of the agenda package and the name of the stakeholder and submission may be read into record during the hearing.
 - b. The stakeholder's name along with a summary of the submission will be recorded in the minutes.
 - c. If a copy of the submission forms a public meeting agenda, the personal contact information will be redacted. However, if the submission refers to property ownership or residence, as it relates to the stakeholder being affected by the matter under consideration during the public hearing, that information will be read into record and may not be redacted from the submission.
 - d. If correspondence is provided during the public hearing, the written record will be filed with the meeting agenda.
4. During public input sessions:
 - a. The name of the stakeholder along with a summary of their verbal statement will be recorded in the minutes.
 - b. If written correspondence is provided in advance, a copy of that record may form the public meeting agenda.
 - c. If correspondence is provided during the public input session, the written record will be filed with the meeting agenda.
5. When submitting correspondence or when making submissions at public meetings, stakeholders are encouraged to exclude sensitive personal information, such as health and medical information or financial circumstances, that they do not want disclosed to the public.

“Original Signed”
Chief Administrative Officer

April 1, 2021
Date

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AMENDMENT DATE: