

# Town of Lemberg

Incorporated 1907

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**POLICY NAME:** Citizen's Concerns Policy

**POLICY NO.:** 300-28

**DATE ADOPTED:** approved March 16, 2021  
resolution 2021/091

**DATE AMENDED/REVIEWED:**

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The Town of Lemberg is committed to addressing resident concerns ("concerns") in a timely and efficient manner. The intention of this policy is to streamline concerns through use of a standardized form ensuring that all concerns are documented in the same fashion and treated with the same level of importance.

## **PURPOSE OF POLICY**

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to the Mayor, Council, Town staff and citizens of Lemberg for responding to public concerns and requests.

The Town of Lemberg strives to maintain a high quality of service delivery, and improve relationships between Town staff, Council members, Mayor and the citizens. It is the policy of the Town to accept, investigate, and resolve concerns or requests fairly, consistently, effectively and efficiently.

In order to properly resolve and address a concern or request, the Chief Administrative Officer should be given first recourse for the customer. Any attempt to go through a Council member should be redirected to the Administrative staff; and unless the issue has not been resolved all the procedures outlined in Steps 2 and 3 in the procedures section of this policy shall be followed. Section 111 of *The Municipalities Act* and Lemberg Town Policy 500-6 sets out the minimum content for a municipality's Employee Code of Conduct.

## **DEFINITION OF A COMPLAINT**

The elected official or staff member fielding the concern will need to determine whether or not the issue is a complaint. It is important to recognize the difference between a complaint and a suggestion, observation, question, neighbor dispute, or simply a call pointing out a hazard or safety issue.

A **service complaint** is an expression of dissatisfaction with the service provided by the Town. For example:

- the decision of a staff member
- the advice of a staff member
- the quality and range of services provided;
- failure to meet a service standard;

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- a Council policy or procedure not being followed; or
  - the conduct of a staff member or agent.

A **formal complaint** is a concern of a more serious nature involving allegations of maladministration, serious and substantial waste of public money, corrupt conduct or pecuniary interests which may require notification or referral to another investigative agency.

A complaint is not:

- an initial request for service\*;
- a request for information or explanation of Council's policies or procedures;
- an objection; or
- negative feedback in a submission or survey, or dislike of a policy or procedure;

If the issue relates to something other than a complaint, the elected official or staff member must direct the customer to the Chief Administrative Officer that the proper response is provided effectively and efficiently.

## Lodging Complaints

All complaints lodged with Council or the staff members must be in writing and can be forwarded by facsimile, mail, hand delivery, email or other electronic means. The written complaint must include contact information of the complaint, details of the complaint, and any other pertinent information that will assist in having the matter addressed effectively.

## Anonymous Complaints

The Town of Lemberg does not accept verbal or anonymous concerns. Only formal concerns will be followed up on; the concern must be in writing and submitted using Form A, attached hereto.

## Persistent Complainant

From time to time, the Council and Town staff will encounter customers who are persistent and write again and again to the point that the Town's resources are unreasonably diverted. Where the complaints are about the same or similar issue(s) and the Town has either addressed or judged the issue(s) as being without substance, then an administrative control may be put in place to limit responses to future complaints.

Under these circumstances details of the number and nature of the complaints will be provided to the CAO who will provide notification to the customer explaining the Town's intention not to acknowledge or respond to further correspondence on the matter(s) unless new information is provided that the complaint warrants action. The customer will also be advised that future written material will be filed. With respect to telephone calls, the customer may be told that no future phone calls or office attendances will be accepted or interviews granted about the same matter.

## Difficult Complainants

In cases where a customer's behavior is aggressive or threatening, e.g. the customer:

- is consistently rude or abusive or uses inappropriate language or makes threats to Council or a staff member;
- causes damage to Town property or threatens physical harm to staff or third parties

Under these circumstances details of the aggressive or threatening behavior will be provided to the CAO will provide notification to the customer explaining the Town's intention not to

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acknowledge or respond to further correspondence on the matter(s) unless the customer refrains from such behavior. Serious threats and damage will be reported to the RCMP.

## **PROCEDURE UPON RECEIPT OF WRITTEN CONCERN OR COMPLAINT**

1. If a matter is brought to the attention of Council or a staff member verbally or otherwise, it should be determined whether it is a complaint or a suggestion, observation, question, or simply a notice pointing out a hazard or safety issue. Whether it is deemed to be a complaint or not, the customer should be dealt with in an attentive, polite and expedited manner; and the customer shall be directed to the CAO to address the matter.
2. If the matter has been determined as a complaint, the customer shall be asked to submit a written complaint to the Chief Administrative Officer which must include a name, address, and telephone number. This information will be kept strictly confidential and will not be released.
3. Should the response from the CAO be considered not to be what the customer expected, the customer shall be advised that it is his/her option to request, in writing, to the Town Council. The customer will be advised that the issue shall be placed before the Council at their next regular meeting. Note: the concern must be received prior to the deadline for adding items to the agenda as stated in the *Town Council Procedures Bylaw*.
4. The CAO shall place such written requests upon the Town Council at the next regular meeting agenda in order for the Council to give due consideration to the matter.
5. If necessary, Council shall review and come to a decision as to how to best address the concern and pass a motion to that effect; or request further information from Administration, the concerned citizen, or other involved parties. The concern will then be readdressed at the next meeting of Council, or as soon as practicable following receipt of the further requested information.
6. In a situation where a concern is unable to be fully addressed at the same Council meeting at which it was presented, Town CAO will keep in contact with the concerned resident as progress is made toward rectifying the concern.
7. Once Council determines how best to address the concern, a written reply will be sent to the concerned individual outlining what action has been, or will be, taken to resolve the concern.

