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Media Relations

Prepared By: Office of the CAO

Council Approval Date: May 11, 2020

Effective Date:

Council Resolution No.: 20-174

References: Council Code of Conduct Bylaw 2018-01

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## **POLICY STATEMENT**

The Town of Olds supports a consistent approach to Media Relations.

## **PURPOSE**

To provide for standards on the response to media inquiries.

## **DEFINITIONS**

“Media Relations” involves working with media for the purpose of informing the public of an organization's mission, policies and practices in a positive, consistent and credible manner.

## **SCOPE**

This policy applies to all Town of Olds employees and Elected Officials.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) or designate is responsible for overseeing this policy.

Elected Officials should refer to Section 3 - Communicating on Behalf of the Municipality from the Council Code of Conduct Bylaw as follows:

- A Councillor must not claim to speak on behalf of Council unless authorized to do so.
- Unless Council directs otherwise, the Mayor is Council's official spokesperson and in the absence of the Mayor it is the Deputy Mayor. All inquiries from the media regarding the official Council position on an issue shall be referred to Council's official spokesperson.
- A Councillor who is authorized to act as Council's official spokesperson must ensure that their comments accurately reflect the official position and will of Council as a whole, even if the Councillor personally disagrees with Council's position.
- Councillors shall not make a statement when they know that statement is false.
- Councillors shall not make a statement with the intent to mislead Council or members of the public.

## **STANDARDS**

All media requests are to be directed to the Communications Coordinator as the first point of contact for Media Relations who will coordinate with subject matter experts for response.

The Town of Olds will communicate information to the media in a timely manner when the information is of public interest or concern.

The Town of Olds will take steps to correct inaccurate information communicated by the media.

The Town of Olds will strive to maintain positive relationships with key media personnel and outlets.

Whenever possible, Town of Olds employees will receive information *before* it is communicated externally to the media and/or general public.

When dealing with members of the media, Town of Olds representatives must:

- demonstrate professionalism at all times;
- be available for timely comment and response;
- understand the demands of an increasingly fast paced news cycle;
- be transparent (often without providing full disclosure);
- provide truthful, accurate, and factually approved information; and
- communicate with empathy (by genuinely demonstrating an understanding of the public's concerns, even if they are misled or based on misperceptions about the situation).