

## NEWS RELEASE

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### Council delivers on governance promise with new Code of Conduct

#### Summary

Nanaimo City Council voted Monday to adopt an enhanced code of conduct that will take effect on October 15, 2022.

The new Code of Conduct Bylaw builds on existing principles and includes behavioural expectations, accountability requirements and a process for handling breaches and complaints. The new Bylaw fulfills the governance commitment made by Council when they were elected in 2018.

The policy changes follow a BC government amendment to *Community Charter* legislation requiring that local governments consider developing new, or review existing, Codes of Conduct. The Union of BC Municipalities endorsed a resolution at its 2021 convention calling on the Province to enact legislation along those lines.

Nanaimo's revised Code of Conduct Bylaw will replace the existing Code of Conduct Policy. Council also adopted an Ethics Commissioner Establishment Bylaw where either an appointed or ad hoc Commissioner would oversee the complaint process, an Oath of Office Bylaw that embeds the existing Code of Conduct Bylaw within the Oath, and an amendment to the Council Spending and Amenities Policy where compensation provisions have been added to support conduct expectations.

Reece Harding, a lawyer specializing in municipal issues, reviewed the Bylaws and told Council that their approach benefits from lessons learned in the application of similar policies and bylaws introduced in other Canadian cities and that Nanaimo's Code of Conduct is probably the best legislation in the province.

While the new legislation to draft or review existing codes of conduct will be a requirement for new councils, Mayor and Council has demonstrated leadership by setting out clear conduct rules and expectations prior to the election so that newly elected officials have a clear understanding about those expectations.

The Bylaw is not applicable to City staff as their conduct is governed through the City's Respectful Workplace Policy.

*Strategic Link:* Upholding Council's commitment to developing a culture of governance excellence.

## Key Points

- Council has adopted a new Code of Conduct Bylaw which will take effect on October 15, 2022.
- The changes follow amendments to Community Charter legislation which require local governments to consider developing new, or reviewing existing, Codes of Conduct.
- The new Code of Conduct Bylaw builds on existing principles and includes behavioural expectations, accountability requirements and a process for handling breaches and complaints.

## Quotes

"Council has adopted a bylaw that significantly strengthens Council's commitment to governance excellence by building on the foundational principles of responsible conduct. The bylaws we have adopted are clear, with real consequences for breaching the rules. With these changes, Council is setting a new standard for good governance and fulfilling a promise to ensure everyone is treated fairly."

Leonard Krog  
Mayor  
City of Nanaimo

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