



CITY OF CORNER BROOK

Policy Statement

Index	Communication		Section	Internal		
Title	Media Relations – News Media		Policy Number	12-03-02	Authority	Council
Approval Date	May 15, 2006	Revision Date	May 26, 2009 (Rescinded)			
New Policy Approved	March 20, 2017					

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to define roles and responsibilities within the City of Corner Brook with respect to interacting with news media representatives. It will also assist the media by clarifying the level of service they can expect regarding access to officers, provision of information, and responses to inquiries. The policy deals with the day to day relationship between Council and City staff in dealing with the media and does not address Council's relationship with the media in a disaster\emergency situation.

Policy Statement:

It is the policy of the City of Corner Brook to foster strong, professional relationships with journalists and respond to news media questions or inquiries effectively, accurately and quickly in an effort to inform its internal and external stakeholders, residents, businesses, and visitors.

Inquiries from the news media are given a high priority by the City of Corner Brook and should be responded to as quickly and efficiently as possible. Every reasonable effort should be made to meet media deadlines and to ensure that all information released is accurate.

The City Clerk’s Office is responsible for coordinating media relations under the direction of Council and the City Manager. Unless otherwise authorized, the City's spokespersons are:

- Mayor and City Council members
- City Manager
- Directors*
- Assistant Directors*

**Exceptions regarding departmental spokespersons may be made at the discretion of a Director.*

City Spokesperson

The **Mayor and City Manager** are responsible for determination of a spokesperson for media inquiries as per the guidelines of the policy.

1. Unless otherwise authorized, the City of Corner Brook's spokespersons are:
 - *The Mayor is the chief spokesperson for matters pertaining to City policy, organizational performance and official City Council announcements for the City of Corner Brook.*
 - *Committee Chair or their designate are the spokesperson's for matters related to their respective Committee's.*
 - The City Manager is the chief spokesperson for operational and technical matters pertaining to the City of Corner Brook. The City Manager may authorize members of the Senior Management team and other designated staff to represent the organization in the media as required.

Official Spokesperson Policy – Members of Council

The Mayor and or Committee Chair's are the authorized spokesperson for any official Council announcements. In situations where the media contacts a member of Council directly, the member of Council is authorized to respond to the media inquiry.

The following are guiding principles related to Official City spokesperson:

- The Mayor is the authorized spokesperson for official City Council Announcements, City Policy and organizational performance for the City of Corner Brook. In the absence of the Mayor the Deputy Mayor is the authorized spokesperson.
- Councillors have been elected to represent the City and are free to speak to the media on any subject. While Councillors have the right to express personal opinions on any issue they should qualify that they are expressing their own opinion on the matter and that comments do not necessarily reflect the opinion of Council.

Official Spokesperson Policy – City Employees

All City employees should notify the Information Officer when approached by the media for an interview so that a coordinated response can be prepared. Only City employees assigned as designated spokesperson can comment on City business, policy, decisions, programs or activities. Contractors, service providers or suppliers engaged by Council must refer all media inquiries relating to Council to the Information Officer

Responding to Media Inquiries:

In situations where the media contacts City staff requesting a media interview the request should be immediately forwarded to the Information Officer. Staff should obtain the reporter's name, phone number, topic of the story and the deadline for replying to the inquiry and email this information to the Information Officer for coordination.

Upon receiving notification of the media inquiry, the Information Officer will notify the City Manager the Mayor and the Council members on the respective Committee advising them on the nature of the inquiry and request that they designate a spokesperson to respond to the inquiry. Concurrently, the Information Officer will also request the respective Director of which the inquiry pertains to prepare a briefing note for the designated spokesperson on the subject matter. Upon receiving a copy of the briefing note the designated spokesperson will respond to the appropriate media.

Litigation, Personnel, Private Interests

Generally, the business conducted by the City of Corner Brook is public, and therefore is public information. Inquiries regarding pending litigation, matters involving a significant exposure to litigation and certain personnel-related information are exception and should be directed to the City Manager. The City of Corner Brook also reserves the right to withhold confidential information concerning commercial transactions (e.g. purchase and sale of land and property). This applies to Council's own commercial interests and to the various parties involved in individual business transactions. The City of Corner Brook complies with all applicable federal and provincial laws relating to Access to Information including the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Legislation and the City of Corner Brook Act.

Emergency Situations

In the case of a fire, water main break, boil water advisory or other emergency situations involving public safety issues the City Manager, Directors or senior administrative staff member are authorized to make statements to the media pertaining to the nature of the emergency and what action is being undertaken to address the situation.

During a disaster or major emergency the procedure for dealing with media will be governed through the City of Corner Brook's Emergency Disaster (EMO) Plan. In accordance with this plan the EMO's Public Information Officer will coordinate the preparation and dissemination of emergency public information under the direction and guidance of the Coordinator of the EMO Committee.

Public Service Announcement regarding road closures, water shut-offs, or other planned disruption in municipal services can be issued through the Department initiating the activity.

City Initiated Releases

An employee or a department that seeks to publicize a program, event, or achievement should contact the Information Officer's Office and provide documentation on the event so that this information can be disseminated to members of Council and senior staff prior to being released to the media or public.

All media releases (with the exception of water outages) from the City of Corner Brook are to be issued through the Information Officer. Media releases are to be circulated to members of Council and senior staff prior to being released to the media.

The City of Corner Brook's information Officer shall be the identified as the Media Contact person for the media releases issued on behalf of Council

Media Releases during Election Campaign

During pending elections campaigns the following provisions will be made to the Media Relations Policy.

- ***The Mayor and Councillors*** will not be quoted in any issued media releases, interview or inquiries unless it is during an emergency situation.
- The City Manager or designate will be the only spokespersons quoted in media releases

- Media release will be kept to an absolute minimum during the election period

The election campaign period as per the provisions outlined in the Elections Act:

- a. starts on the last day on which nominations for the election can be received: and
- b. ends at 8 p.m. on election day

Social Media Use

Social media is an excellent tool to collaborate and engage with the public on City services. The City routinely uses online social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube) and the website to communicate City initiatives and to inform residents of events, activities and municipal programs and services offered by the organization. The City's social media accounts are not intended to be used for political forums.

Only information communicated by the City's authorized social media platforms and website is considered official City communication. Social media profiles and websites representing members of Council do not represent official media platforms on behalf of the City of Corner Brook.

Definitions:

For the purpose of this policy news media refer to any print, radio, television or online media outlet.

Reference:

Briefing Meeting: August 31, 2015

F&A Standing Committee: December 2, 2015

Briefing Meeting: Sept 12, 2016

F& A Standing Committee: December 14, 2016

Briefing Meeting Jan 9, 2017

Briefing Meeting: Jan 18, 2017

Briefing Meeting: Feb 13, 2017

F&A Standing Committee: Feb 15, 2017

Briefing Meeting: March 6, 2017

Public Meeting: March 20, 2017

In WITNESS WHEREOF this policy is sealed with the Common Seal of the City of Corner Brook


Mayor


City Clerk

Approved by Council: 20 March 2017

Printed on Friday, September 22, 2017