

Corporation of the Township of Howick

By-law No. 48-2014

**being a by-law to adopt a Municipal Council/Councillor Policy for the
Township of Howick**

Whereas, the Municipal Act, 2001, Section 224 (b), as amended, states that it is the role of Council to develop and evaluate the policies and programs of the municipality;

And whereas, members of the Township of Howick Council deems it desirable to implement effective policies and procedures to govern the operation of Council/Councillor;

And whereas, members of Council recognize and understand that the powers of the Corporation must be exercised by decisions and actions of the Council as a whole;

And whereas, members of Council are committed to fulfilling the roles and responsibilities as individuals and as a Council body, assigned to them by virtue of their election to municipal office;

Now therefore, the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Howick enacts as follows:

1. That the Municipal Council/Councillor Policy, identified as Schedule "A" to this By-law, be attached hereto and form an integral part of this by-law.
2. That any Municipal Council/Councillor Policy heretofore adopted is hereby repealed and rescinded.
3. That this by-law comes into force and effect upon the third and final reading thereof.

Read a first and second time this 2 day of September, 2014.

Read a third time and finally passed this 2 day of September, 2014.



Reeve Art Versteeg



Clerk Carol Watson

Schedule "A" to By-law 48-2014



**Corporation of the
Township of Howick**

Municipal Council/Councillor Policy

Adopted by Howick Township Council Resolution No. 121-03 to come into force and effect on June 17, 2003

Amended by Resolution No. 65-05 March 15th, 2005

Amended September 2, 2014 and adopted by By-law 48-2014

August 2014

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A. General

A-1 Policy Statement

Members of the Council of the Township of Howick are committed to fulfilling the roles and responsibilities as individuals and as a Council body, assigned to them by virtue of their election to municipal office.

Members recognize and understand that the powers of the Corporation must be exercised by decisions and actions of the Council as a whole.

Each Council member and Council as a whole strives to meet their mandate to provide effective and efficient management of the municipality by:

- being aware of the duties and requirements of their positions as Council members and of Council as a whole;
- recognizing the statutory and legal obligations and limitations and working within those given parameters;
- establishing and abiding by proper procedures and practices to ensure that the actions of Council are consistent and objective.

B. Council Roles and Responsibilities

B-1 Council Roles

B-1.1 Representative

Howick Council members recognize the dual representative roles they assume when elected to office:

- serving the needs and wishes of the constituents who elected them;
- acting in the best interests of the municipality as a whole.

B-1.2 Policy Making

Howick Council establishes rules and provides direction for the operation of the municipality by creating policies using the following criteria:

- identify and consider issues requiring attention;
- reach a consensus on the objectives to be met;
- identify and analyze solutions;
- arrive at a decision and formulate the policy.

Creating policies is a **team** effort, reconciling conflicting priorities, compromising, and making decisions in the interest of good governance.

B-1.3 Managerial

Howick Council will ensure that the municipality's financial and human resources are used as effectively and efficiently as possible by:

- providing specific guidelines, directions, procedures and standards, delineated in clear and concise policies;
- managing the Corporation's finances through an objective budget process of planning and prioritizing to determine the sources and allocation of funds (see 'Budget Policy' attached hereto as Schedule 'A');
- ensuring that qualified employees are hired, that staff members receive required education and training and that staff performance is monitored.

B-1.4 Law Making

The powers of a municipal corporation are exercised by by-laws created under the authority of provincial statutes and regulations. Howick Council will be vigilant in ensuring that the actions undertaken by by-law have the appropriate statutory authority, that the by-laws do not exceed or encroach upon provincial or federal jurisdiction and that the by-laws enacted are enforceable.

B-1.5 Interaction with the Public

Howick Councillors will take the opportunity to interact with the public – to receive, assess and respond to the views of the citizens – as a means of fulfilling his/her mandate as a representative of public interest and to ensure that Council's decision-making will reflect the wishes of the citizens.

Council members will provide information to the public on current issues. Good communication promotes interest and participation.

Complaints from the public will be listened to sympathetically and given prompt consideration and response. A carefully documented complaint procedure will govern how complaints are received, recorded and resolved (see 'Complaint Procedure' attached hereto as Schedule 'B').

B-1.6 Interaction with the Media

Members of Council will develop a good rapport with members of the media and maintain an atmosphere of open communication. Both sides benefit when the relationship is amenable. Council will ensure that news releases, inquiries and information of the municipality are handled in a consistent, impartial and advantageous manner to promote good public relations.

B-1.7 Interaction with Staff

Howick Council recognizes that the municipality's staff is a valuable resource and will encourage and support the education and training of personnel to optimize their value to the Township.

Howick Council ensures that qualified candidates are selected for employment and that pay and benefit structures are in place to attract, retain and motivate good employees. Established pay grids will be reviewed by Council in the second year of the Council's tenure.

Council will provide clear directions and policies delineating the duties and responsibilities of staff and will monitor performance to ensure that the expectations are being met.

Council fosters an atmosphere of open communication with staff members, receiving input and suggestions for improving administration and service delivery.

B-2 Council Responsibilities

B-2.1 Defamation, Libel and Slander

'**Defamation**' is a false utterance which degrades an individual in the eyes of fellow citizens and exposes him or her to hatred, contempt or ridicule.

'**Libel**' is a written statement or graphic representation (especially published) that damages a person's reputation.

'**Slander**' is an oral statement of false, malicious or defamatory nature that tends to damage of person's reputation or means of livelihood.

Municipal Councillors are not immune from prosecution for any of the above.

Howick Councillors will be vigilant and guard statements made about other persons at public meetings and during deliberations and debate. The 'rule of thumb' is to consider: is what is being said true and will it damage or injure the reputation of a person? If it may not be true and/or it may damage a reputation, **do not say it.**

B-2.2 Bias

The actions of Municipal Council must not be based on improper motive or bias.

Members of Howick Council will be objective and act impartially and in good faith in the exercise of their duties and powers.

B-2.3 Conflict of Pecuniary Interest

Members of Howick Council will place public interest before their own private advantage. Councillors will be familiar with the '**Municipal Conflict of Interest Act**' and be aware of their responsibilities therein, as follows:

- Each member must determine if he/she has a potential pecuniary interest in a matter to be brought before Council;

- If the member determines that there is a potential direct or indirect interest for which there is no exemption under the Act, then the member will:
 - a) disclose the interest and its nature prior to any discussion on that matter taking place;
 - b) refrain from taking part in the discussion of the matter;
 - c) make no attempt to influence the voting at any time before, during or after the meeting;
 - d) refrain from voting on the matter.
- If the matter is to be discussed at a meeting closed to the public, the member will declare the interest and also leave the meeting during the consideration of that matter;
- If the matter in which the member has a pecuniary interest is discussed at a meeting not attended by that member, it is the member's duty to declare the interest in the appropriate manner at the first meeting attended afterward.

B-2.4 Gifts and Benefits

Gifts and benefits are a means of wielding influence and could potentially compromise or obligate a member of Council. Howick Councillors will refrain from accepting gifts and benefits and will not put themselves in a position where they appear to be under obligation to favour an individual or firm.

B-2.5 Freedom of Information/Protection of Privacy

Members of Howick Council are aware of the tenets of the '**Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act**' which are:

- a) to provide a right of access to information under the control of institutions in accordance with the principles that,
 - i) information should be available to the public
 - ii) necessary exemptions from the right of access should be limited and specific, and
 - iii) decisions on the disclosure of government information should be reviewed independently of government; and
- b) to protect the privacy of individuals with respect to personal information about themselves held by institutions and to provide individuals with a right of access to that information.

Council members will safeguard information to which they have access through their official positions and will not disclose or use confidential information in an inappropriate way which could manifest as fraud, influence-peddling or personal injury.

B-2.6 Breach of Trust

Howick Township Councillors will discharge the duties of their office in the best interests of the public and without concealed self-interest or prospect of self-gain. The **Criminal Code** provides that "every official who in connection with the duties of office commits fraud or a breach of trust is guilty of an indictable offence..."

B-2.7 Municipal Corruption

Members of Howick Council are aware of the prohibitions in the **Criminal Code** with respect to:

- i) any person offering or giving to a municipal official
- or**
- ii) any municipal official demanding or accepting a reward, advantage, loan or benefit of any kind, as consideration for the official to:
 - a) abstain from voting at a Council or Committee meeting;
 - b) vote in favour or against an action, motion or resolution;
 - c) aid in procuring or preventing an action, motion or resolution;
 - d) perform or fail to perform an official act.

Any person who attempts to influence a municipal official to do any of the above (a–d) by suppression of the truth (by a person under duty to disclose truth), by threats or deceit or by any unlawful means is guilty of an indictable offence.

B-2.8 Insider Information

Members of Howick Council shall not use or disclose information that is gained in the execution of his/her office and is not available to the general public to further or seek to further his/her pecuniary interests or the pecuniary interests of any other person.

B-2.9 Civil Actions

The municipality may be sued as a result of failure to carry out or negligence in the conduct of its statutory duties. In addition, the municipality may be indicted under the **Criminal Code** should any municipal action (or inaction) endanger the health, safety, comfort or property of an individual.

Howick Council adopts risk management strategies to identify and reduce or eliminate hazards thus minimizing municipal liability.

Council ensures that the municipality has adequate insurance coverage to protect both staff and councillors in the exercise of their duties.

C. Council Procedures and Practices

C-1 Council Meetings

C-1.1 Procedural By-law

At the first meeting of Howick Township Council following an election, members of Howick Council will receive and review the Township **Procedural By-law** and will at all times adhere to the provisions of that by-law enacted under obligation and authority of the **Municipal Act**.

The **Procedural By-law** details statutory and discretionary procedures relative to the calling and place of meetings, duties of Head of Council and parliamentary processes with respect to quorum, conduct of meetings, the agenda, minutes, petitions, communications, delegations, by-laws, motions, rules of debate, voting and conduct of members.

C-1.2 Open/Closed Meetings

The business of the Township must be transacted at a duly constituted meeting of Council. In accordance with the **Planning and Municipal Statute Law Act**, all meetings of Howick Township Council and committees thereof shall be open to the public subject to certain **mandatory** and **discretionary** exceptions as outlined in the **Procedural By-law**.

Closed or in camera meetings are used only to deal with matters in accordance with Section 239(2), (3) and (3.1) of the Municipal Act, 2001. The issue may be discussed in closed session and recommendations decided upon which must then be referred to Council for consideration and action.

The Head of Council or presiding officer has the right to expel any person for improper conduct at a meeting.

C-1.3 Conditions of Council Actions/Decisions

The actions and decisions of Howick Township Council will be formulated with consideration to the following conditions:

- i) Good Faith: An action of Council must not be based on fraud, oppression or improper motive;
- ii) Public Interest: If municipal power is exercised to serve a private interest, such action would be quashed by the courts;
- iii) Reasonableness: A by-law passed by Council within its powers and in good faith would generally be considered reasonable; however, a perception of unreasonableness might be evidence of bad faith and may cause the action to be subject to attack and review;
- iv) Impartiality: Actions of Council must be fair, consistent and without discrimination. If an action is discriminatory in that it is applicable to a specific class or group, then treatment within that class or group must be impartial.

C-1.4 Legal Constraints

Howick Councillors are aware that actions may be lodged against the municipality:

- a) A by-law may be challenged in the courts if it was passed by Council without proper statutory authority (*ultra vires*);
- b) A by-law may be declared illegal if it contravenes or is expressly forbidden by provincial (or federal) legislation;
- c) Consideration must be given to the impact or effect of a by-law:

- will it impose restrictions or hardships?
- can it be administered and at what cost?
- can it be enforced?

Councillors will be familiar with the legal limitations and statutory authorities within which the municipality must operate and recognize that local needs or demands cannot substitute for proper legal authority. Council will recognize when legal advice is required and not expect staff to provide such advice.

C-2 Other Meetings

C-2.1 Special Council Meetings

“Special” Council meetings are called to deal with particular urgent matters which may arise from time to time. A special meeting may be called by the Head of Council or upon receipt of a petition of the majority of members of Council. The Clerk must provide notice of such a meeting to the members of Council not less than 48 hours prior to the scheduled time of the meeting. Only the business stated in the notice is to be considered and dealt with at the special meeting.

C-2.2 Intra-Municipal Board and Committee Meetings

An “Intra-Municipal” meeting is a meeting between or with one or more duly appointed Howick Council representatives and an associate Local Board, Committee or Association within the Township of Howick. Council representatives are appointed by by-law or delegated by resolution to attend these meetings.

C-2.3 Inter-Municipal Meetings

“Inter-Municipal” meetings are meetings between or with one or more duly appointed Howick Council representatives and a Council, Board, Committee or Association outside Howick Township. Howick Council members are appointed by by-law or delegated by resolution to attend these meetings.

C-2.4 Seminars and Conferences

Provincial, upper tier and related government associations provide learning opportunities for members of Council by way of educational seminars and conferences. Attendance at such events must be authorized by resolution of Council or by by-law. The Township of Howick ‘**Council Remuneration and Expenses**’ by-law provides that Council members may attend conferences for which allowable expenses and costs will be reimbursed up to the pre-determined maximum amount as specified in the by-law.

C-2.5 Social Events

Invitations are occasionally received for Council members to attend social events or functions. Attendance at these events is voluntary and reimbursement is deemed to be included in the honourarium. If official representation from the Township is required and requested, a delegate will be appointed by resolution of Council and in such cases the member will be reimbursed for attendance and associated costs.

D. Council Members Remuneration

D-1 Attendance at Meetings

D-1.1 Honourarium

Remuneration for members of Howick Council is an annual honourarium in an amount determined each year and set out in the **'Council Remuneration and Expenses'** by-law. The honourarium is paid in twelve monthly installments beginning in December of the year the member is elected to Council.

D-1.2 Per Diem

"Per diem" amounts are established and set out in the **'Council Remuneration and Expenses'** by-law each year to reimburse Councillors for attendance at:

- * regular council meetings
- * special council meetings
- intra- and inter-municipal Board, Committee and Association meetings
- seminars, training and information events
- conferences

* 'regular' and 'special' council meetings are defined and recognized as any meeting of Howick Township Council which has been scheduled or called in accordance with statutory procedures and for which an appropriate agenda and supporting documentation have been prepared.

The following 'per diem' payment types are currently in effect:

- Meeting per diem: i. Regular and Special Council meetings
ii. Board/Committee meetings
- Seminar/Training per diem: i. Half Day (up to 3 hours)
ii. Full Day (over 3 hours)
- Conference per diem: i. One day only
ii. Overnight (1 educational day + 1 overnight stay)

D-1.3 Submission of Attendance Report

Reimbursement for attendance at meetings, seminars, conferences, etc. is paid monthly. A **'Statement of Meetings & Expenses'** (see Addenda Form 'B') detailing dates and events must be completed, signed and submitted to the administration office at the end of each calendar month. Payment for same will be processed on the 1st Monday of the next month. Payments are made by direct deposit to your bank account (please note: bank processing may take up to 3 days).

D-2 Reimbursement of Expenses

Allowable costs and expenses shall be defined as those incurred as a consequence of authorized attendance at meetings and events on behalf of and for the business of the Township within the confines of those listed herein and exclusive of personal items, calls, alcoholic beverage or such other expenses not related to the exercise of duty as an official representative of the Township of Howick and for which the ratepayers of the Township should not reasonably be expected to pay.

D-2.1 Mileage

Council members will be reimbursed when providing a personal vehicle for the purpose of attending or conducting Township business outside the boundaries of the Township. Payment is made at the 'per-kilometer' rate as established and set out in the **'Council Remuneration and Expenses'** by-law. In the interest of efficiency, car-pooling is required whenever possible.

D-2.2 Meeting/Seminar Associated Costs

In addition to the per diem payment for duly authorized attendance at meetings and seminars, Council members will be reimbursed for the following related allowable costs and expenses:

- mileage to and from the event (if driving own vehicle)
- alternate travel expense (public transportation fare, etc)
- * meal allowance (if meal not included) to a maximum as specified in the **'Council Remuneration and Expenses'** By-law
- * parking charges

D-2.3 Conference Associated Costs

The following associated allowable costs and expenses for authorized attendance at a conference will be paid on behalf of the member or reimbursed to the member:

- registration fee for the conference
- spousal/companion registration fee
- * return fare for travel via economical mode of public transportation
- mileage to and from the venue (if driving own vehicle)
- * parking charges

- * accommodations
- member and companion luncheon/banquet tickets
- * other meals (not included in registration package) to the maximum specified in the 'Council Remuneration and Expenses' by-law

* Expenses claimed must be supported by accompanying receipts

D-2.4 Submission of Expense Accounts

Reimbursement of costs and expenses incurred by members of Council in the exercise of duties for the Township will be paid monthly. A **'Statement of Meetings & Expenses'** (see Addenda Form 'B') detailing the eligible expenses along with corroborating receipts, must be completed, signed and submitted to the administration office at the end of each calendar month. Payment for same will be processed on the 1st Monday of the next month in conjunction with payment for attendance.

When traveling to a conference or seminar, members will obtain a **'Travel Expenses (Conferences/Seminars)'** form (see Addenda Form 'C') to log the costs and expenses associated with that event. This report along with supporting receipts, will be submitted to the administration office immediately following the event or at the end of the calendar month with the attendance and expense reports and payment will be processed on the 1st Monday of the next month in conjunction with payments for attendance and other expenses.

NB: Payments for attendance and expenses must be processed through the payroll system early each month in order to submit the corresponding remittance to the Receiver General by the due date. If attendance and expense claims are not received in time for processing on the 1st Monday of the month, they must be held until the next month's payroll processing.

Corporation of the Township of Howick

Municipal Council/Councillor Policy

Acknowledgement

I hereby acknowledge receipt of a copy of the Township of Howick '**Council/Councillor Policy**'.

I have read the Policy carefully and confirm that I fully understand the information contained therein.

I hereby agree to abide by and adhere to the provisions of the Policy.

Signature of Member

Date



Township of Howick Municipal Budget Policy

Schedule 'A' to the Municipal Council/Councillor Policy

A. Objective

The Council of the Township of Howick recognizes that the financial decisions of the municipality must be guided by a process of planning and evaluation which provides a sense of direction and a framework for the overall goals of the Township of Howick.

Members of Howick Council are aware that the **budget** is a valuable and most important management tool:

- It is a process by which Council and management can **identify and prioritize** needed and desired programs and services and examine the costs of providing same;
- It determines the **extent of resources** and means available for providing the services and specifies the **allocation of the resources**;
- It is a means to **monitor and control** the activities throughout the year;
- It provides feedback to **evaluate** the effectiveness and efficiency of the programs and services.

B. Budget Process

B-1 Planning

B-1.1 Strategic Plan

Howick Council along with management staff will develop an **objective plan of overall goals**, identifying and prioritizing the projected needs and aims of the Township of Howick in the years ahead. Department Heads will use this information to prepare their respective plans for programs and expenditures in conformity with these overall goals.

B-1.2 Long Term Financial Plan

Council and management will prepare projected costs needed to finance the objectives of the strategic plan, identify the means of financing same and establish schedules and timeframes for implementing the plan.

B-2 Preparation

Council is required by Provincial legislation to prepare an annual budget in which the anticipated expenditures for the current year are estimated and the revenues necessary to meet the expenditures are determined.

B-2.1 Expenditures

The Treasurer will initiate the annual budget process by requesting Department Heads and Howick Boards to compile and submit estimates of their spending requirements for the current year. The estimates will include basic costs of operation as well as capital projects required or desired.

B-2.2 Revenues

Department Heads and Howick Boards will submit with their expenditure requests, information on any anticipated revenue sources and amounts relative to their respective departments or service area.

The Treasurer will add to this information estimates of other non-tax sources of revenue which may be available to the Township of Howick such as Licensing and Permit Fees, User Fees, Fines and Penalties, Development Fees, Special Capital Levies, Rents and Leases, Investment Income and Government Grants.

B-2.3 Capital Budget

Howick Council will establish and maintain a five-year capital works program in order to plan for in advance and incorporate such major expenditures into the annual budget. A capital expenditure is generally defined as any significant expense incurred to acquire or improve land, buildings and structures, to acquire or replace machinery and equipment used to provide services and office furniture and equipment. Such expenditures confer benefits lasting beyond one year and result in the acquisition or improvement of a fixed asset. Local Boards will submit a 5 year capital plan along with their operating budget each year.

B-2.4 Local Boards Budgets

The total budget for the Township of Howick must include the estimated revenues and expenditures of the Village Management and Local Service Boards each shown within the context of an individual department. Howick Township Local Boards are under the control of the municipality and Howick Council. All financial transactions must be routed through the Treasurer and revenues must be deposited in an account controlled by the Township of Howick. It is important that budgets submitted by Local Boards be in sufficient detail for effective review by Council.

With all of the above information, the Treasurer will prepare a draft current-year budget for Council's consideration detailing estimated expenditures and non-tax revenues and projecting the property tax revenue requirement for the year. This proposed budget information will be reviewed in detail by Howick Council in conjunction with management staff, revised as decided and adopted.

B-3 Adoption

B-3.1 Authorize Expenditures

The adoption of the current year budget by Howick Council in effect authorizes payment of the expenditures outlined therein. Department Heads are authorized to conduct purchases in accordance with the approved purchasing and procurement by-law. Unexpected or additional expenses not accounted for in the adopted budget must be justified to and receive approval of Council before the expenditure is made.

B-3.2 Establish Revenue Sources

Adoption of the budget also establishes and delineates all sources of revenues for municipal purposes for the current year including miscellaneous local fees and charges, senior government grants and revenue from property taxation.

B-3.3 Establishes Tax Rate

The budget process shows how the amount of revenue required from property taxation is determined and establishes the 'tax rate' which is the amount to be raised from taxes divided by the applicable property assessment on taxable real property. Any surplus or deficit from the prior year must be taken into account in determining the amount to be raised through taxation.

B-4 Implementation

B-4.1 Financial Reports

Following the adoption of the budget for the current year, the Treasurer will provide regular financial reports for Council's information detailing expenditures and revenues to-date in comparison with the established budget provisions.

B-4.2 Analysis

Council will examine the periodic financial reports to determine if actual expenditures and revenues are conforming to the budget. Areas tending toward over-expenditure may be identified before serious difficulties develop.

B-4.3 Variances

When pronounced variances in actual amounts from the prescribed budget amounts are identified, the department responsible should be called upon to explain the differences. It may be necessary to revise the budget due to circumstances. Requests for such revisions must document the reasons necessitating the change and be submitted to Council for approval.

B-4.4 Amendments: Budget amendments will be recorded and adopted when a new project is approved or expanded through the resolution of Council. The Treasurer will amend the budget to reflect Council decisions throughout the year. The budget will not be amended when a project or service area is overspent.

B-5 Review

B-5.1 Audit / Financial Statement

Howick Township is required by legislation to prepare a Financial Report and a Financial Information Return at the end of each year. The Municipal Act requires each municipality to circulate or provide notice that each ratepayer is entitled to a copy of the Audited Financial Statements and Auditor's Report for the preceding year, at no cost.

In accordance with the Municipal Act, Howick Council shall by by-law appoint one or more auditors licenced under the Public Accounting Act, 2004. The duty of the municipal auditor is to examine the financial documentation of the Township of Howick, prepare financial statements and report to Council, inhabitants and ratepayers whether the financial statements fairly present the financial position of the Township and the results of its operations for the year.

Council of the Township of Howick and management staff shall meet with the auditor to:

- review the Consolidated Financial Report;
- review the scope and findings of the audit;
- discuss any matter which the auditors wish to bring to Council's attention;
- make general inquiries about financial aspects of the municipality;
- review steps necessary to eliminate potential weaknesses in systems and procedures.

B-5.2 Performance Measures

The Provincial government requires municipalities to report on operations using efficiency and effectiveness measures, which are determined by:

- Identifying the services provided;
- Determining the total cost associated with providing each service;
- Determining the quality of the service provided.

Performance measures are used to:

- Account to the public for the cost of a service;
- Build the budget based on cost for providing the service;
- Monitor the budget on the basis of efficiency and effectiveness;
- Set targets internally for productivity improvement;
- Measure externally to gauge performance and identify best practices.

'Efficiency' is doing things right - 'Effectiveness' is doing the right things. Howick Council will use a program-based budget format to identify efficiencies and effectiveness.



Township of Howick Complaint Procedure

Schedule 'B' to the Municipal Council/Councillor Policy

A. Objective

The Council of the Township of Howick is desirous of hearing from the public and responding to any problems related to programs and services delivered by the municipality. It is the aim of Howick Council to develop procedures which will ensure that complaints are dealt with expeditiously, effectively and consistently.

Council is aware of the importance of dealing with a situation before it escalates or becomes a health, safety or liability issue.

The 'Municipal Performance Measurement Program' in part uses **public satisfaction** as a measure of service output effectiveness. Council recognizes the importance of documenting and analyzing complaints as a means of identifying shortcomings in specific services or programs and for determining and planning for required or desired improvements.

B. Procedure

B-1 Definition

For the purpose of this policy, a **complaint** shall be defined as any expression of discontent, displeasure, dissatisfaction, disagreement or any charge or allegation against an employee, contractor or Council member, related to the provision of the services and programs of the Township of Howick.

B-2 Receiving and Recording

Howick Council members and staff will treat complainants with courtesy, diplomacy, tact and confidentiality.

Any member of Council receiving a complaint should forward the written information to the municipal office as soon as possible to be recorded and dispatched.

Howick's municipal office will maintain a **complaint register** in which to record complaints received.

Complaints received by telephone or by other verbal means at the municipal office will be recorded in the register documenting the date, time, details of the issue, the name, address and telephone number of the complainant and a notation of the action taken or proposed.

Certain matters that relate to By-law Enforcement or an issue that may require the consideration of Council should be submitted in writing and the caller should be so instructed.

Complaints concerning **property standards** issues must be in writing and will be directed to the Property Standards Officer to be dealt with in accordance with the Township's 'Property Standards By-law'.

B-3 Dispatching

Verbal complaints received at the Howick municipal office will be recorded in the complaint register as required and the information will immediately be forwarded to the appropriate Department Head for attention and action. Letters of complaint will be forwarded directly to the Department Head.

A Department Head receiving a complaint will as soon as possible, act on the information by investigating the situation and if warranted, effect a remedy to the problem.

If the Department Head deems it necessary, the complaint will be included on the agenda for the next regular meeting of Council for consideration and recommendation for action.

B-4 Follow-up

As soon as possible after a complaint has been received, recorded and dispatched, the action taken will be recorded in the complaint register to complete the information relative to that complaint.

B-5 Analysis

Howick Council will analyze the information contained in the complaint register annually during budget deliberations as a means of identifying shortcomings in particular programs and services which may need to be addressed in the budget. The information can also be used to gauge performance and set targets for improvement.