

COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE POLICY

Council Policy No. 158/24

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To establish guidelines to ensure that all correspondence addressed to Mayor and Council received by the City of Fort St. John is distributed in a timely and consistent manner and that appropriate record keeping policies are applied.

2. DEFINITIONS:

- 2.1 **Correspondence** includes any non-confidential written communication addressed to the Mayor and Council that is sent by mail, fax, or in person and received by the City of Fort St. John from someone outside of the organization. Correspondence may be addressed to “Mayor”; “Council”; “Mayor and Council”, or individual Council members; or any request sent to the City of Fort St. John, not addressed to a member of Council but deemed appropriate by the Corporate Officer due to the content of the letter.
Routine information sharing, general communication, and service requests directed to or handled by the CAO or individual departments are not considered correspondence.

3. POLICY:

GENERAL

- 3.1 All correspondence received by the City of Fort St. John will be filed, tracked, and dispositioned according to the City of Fort St. John records management policies and procedures.
- 3.2 Correspondence received by Council which include threats, defamatory, offensive, or inappropriate language may not be published and may be referred for response at the Chief Administrative Officer’s discretion.
- 3.3 Anonymous correspondence received will not be investigated unless potential safety, liability, or health issues are raised. Determination will be made by the Chief Administrative Officer.
- 3.4 Correspondence addressed to a member of Council and marked “confidential” or “private” shall be considered to be private correspondence and directed unopened to that individual’s mail box at City Hall.

CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESSED TO MAYOR

- 3.5 Correspondence addressed to the Mayor will be forwarded directly to the Mayor and dealt with at the Mayor’s discretion and a copy as appropriate be directed to Council for information.

CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESSED TO MAYOR AND COUNCIL

- 3.6 Correspondence addressed to Mayor and Council will be circulated electronically to all Council members when it is received. Correspondence will be added to a Council agenda according to the procedures outlined in this policy. Staff will provide clarification on whether the correspondence is for informational purposes or has been referred to or responded to by staff.

CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED BY A MEMBER OF COUNCIL

- 3.7 A Council member who has received correspondence directly shall submit the correspondence to the Corporate Officer.

COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE ON COUNCIL AGENDA

- 3.8 The Corporate Officer will determine whether the correspondence must be circulated to other department managers and whether the item is to be added to a Council agenda, under the heading Correspondence or within the Council Information Package (CIP) report.

- 3.9 Correspondence included on a Council agenda will be added with the following considerations:

3.9.1. Itemized on the agenda heading “Correspondence” and attached to the agenda package when the correspondence:

- is a request from an organization for a specific action.

3.9.2. Itemized on the Council Information Package Administration Report when the correspondence is:

- an event invitation,
- request for support of a resolution to another body,
- of a political nature for Council’s information,
- from external organizations or a member of the public,
- is related to an item already deliberated by Council except correspondence related to concluding public hearings,
- newsletters, annual reports, conference information and updates,
- a letter of thanks, appreciation or commendation, or
- correspondence that is outside the scope of the City.

- 3.10 Correspondence regarding the following will be excluded from a Council agenda:

- exempt from public release under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*,
- related to the subject of a Public Hearing when the correspondence is received after the close of the Public Hearing,
- subject of a bylaw enforcement file and related ongoing investigations,
- general operational matters,

- unsolicited information items that are not seeking a Council decision such as bulletins, newsletters, invitations to events, commercial advertising,
- anonymous correspondence,
- subject matter does not fall within Council's mandate.

3.11 The deadline for adding items of correspondence on a Council agenda is noon on the Tuesday before the scheduled meeting date.

4. APPEAL:

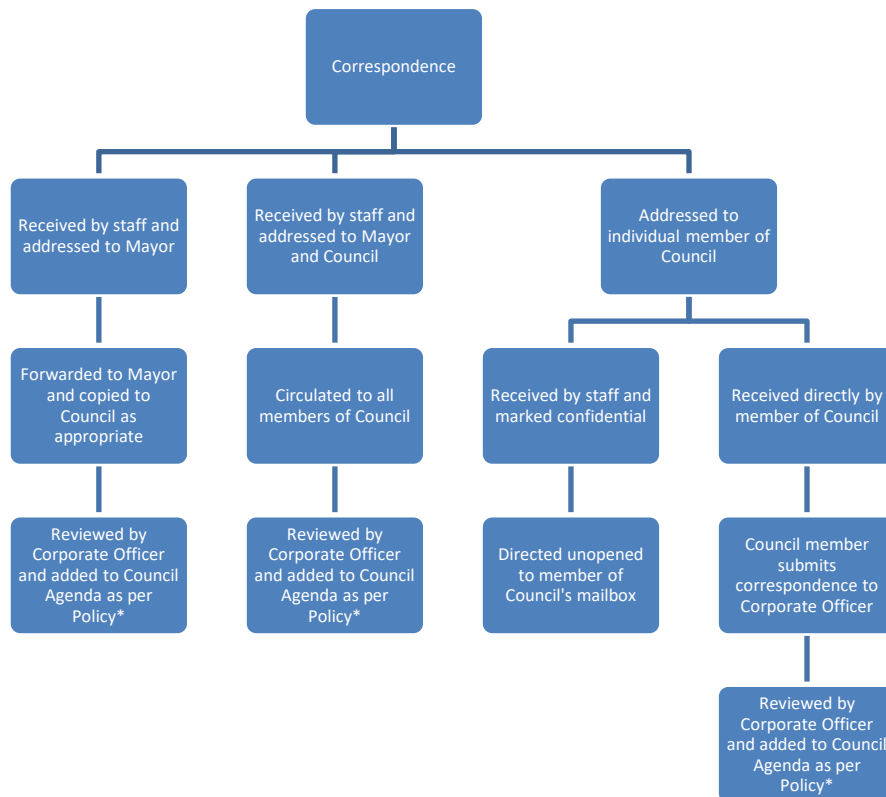
4.1 A person who believes their correspondence should be included on the Council agenda despite the exclusions listed in this policy, may appeal to the Mayor for a decision on whether the item should be added to the Council agenda. The Mayor's decision is final.

5. PRIVACY:

5.1 Correspondence received by the Council or City of Fort St. John is subject to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and City of Fort St. John records management policies and is the property of the City of Fort St. John and should not be deleted or forwarded without the consent of the Corporate Officer.

5.2 Correspondence considered on a Council Agenda forms part of the public record and will be published. The author's name and address are relevant to Council's consideration of the matter and will be disclosed through this process. The house number, phone numbers, and personal email addresses will be redacted pursuant to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

5.3 Correspondence submitted relating to a matter under Section s 90 of the *Community Charter* that is not of an operational nature will be considered at a Closed Council Meeting.



***The Corporate Officer will forward Correspondence to Department Managers when appropriate.**