



Newmarket

CORPORATE POLICY

Topic: Employee Relations & Internal Communications (ERIC)

Policy No. CORP.2-01

Section: CAO

Employees Covered: All non-union and non-management

Effective Date: September 1, 2004

Council Adoption Date: April 3, 2006

Revision No: 001 Date: June 12, 2017

Policy Statement & Strategic Plan Linkages

The Town of Newmarket values its employees' viewpoints and welcomes their input and advice on issues affecting their work environment. The Town supports and encourages the formation of a non-management group of Town employees to represent and liaise with employees throughout the Corporation for the purpose of providing recommendations to the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) and Operational Leadership Team (OLT) regarding the Town's operations and policies. This mandate supports the Town's "Well Equipped and Managed" Strategic Plan objective to implement policy and decision-making processes that reflect sound governance and accountability through leading edge management.

Definitions

ERIC: The name of the committee is ERIC, an acronym denoting its two main focuses: **E**mployee **R**elations and **I**nternal **C**ommunications.

Chair/Co-Chair(s): elected ERIC member(s) that provide leadership and direction to the committee.

EAF: The Employee Assistance Fund provides relief to eligible employees on behalf of the Town of Newmarket that are facing financial emergencies. All funds are generated through events run by ERIC that generate voluntary donations from employees at the Town.

SLT: The Strategic Leadership Team is made up of Commissioners, which are staff that provide strategic direction and leadership to OLT and the Corporation as a whole.

OLT: The Operational Leadership Team. This team is made up of the Corporation's department heads, the Newmarket Public Library's Chief Executive Officer, and the Central York Fire Service's Fire Chief. One member of OLT participates as the OLT Liaison, which is responsible for collaborating with ERIC to bring issues or concerns to OLT's attention and for providing OLT updates to ERIC on a monthly basis.

OLT Liaison: A member of OLT that is responsible for advocating, educating and communicating on ERIC's behalf at OLT on a regular basis. The Liaison also represents OLT's interests in partnership with ERIC by attending ERIC meetings quarterly, meets

with the ERIC Chair/Co-Chairs monthly, and conveys messages between and develops solutions that serve ERIC, OLT and the Corporation.

Mandate

- Focus on improving employee relations and internal communications within the Corporation of the Town of Newmarket by providing recommendations for improvement to the SLT and OLT management teams, and implement new initiatives to help the committee achieve its goals.
- Encourage other committees at the Town to briefly attend ERIC meetings when seeking feedback from employees or proposing changes that impact staff directly.
- Act as **the liaison committee between employees and senior management** to ensure the voice of the employee is heard, understood and considered.
- Act as the “**employee focus group**” to represent employees’ interests as needed. This includes providing comments and/or making recommendations on matters that are presented to them by SLT, OLT, or employees.
- **Review employee related corporate policies and procedures** and/or provide recommendations through the ERIC’s formalized position within the Policy Review process.
- **Advocate for employees** or assist employees in the pursuit of information related to the over-arching goals of the committee. Should ERIC identify inequities or areas of concern through the committee’s membership or through a staff inquiry, the matter and any corresponding recommendations will be confidentially forwarded to the Director, Human Resources, OLT liaison, or the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) as requested. Any action or inaction deemed appropriate by the HR Director, OLT liaison, or the CAO is to be communicated back to ERIC through the Chair/Co-Chair(s) and to the originator of the inquiry.

Composition

Membership: The committee is typically composed of 10-15 employees and exemplifies a cross-section of departments within the Corporation of the Town of Newmarket. Serving the committee is voluntary and requires the approval of each member’s supervisor prior to joining ERIC.

Reporting Procedure

ERIC Minutes will be forwarded to OLT for information purposes. Action that is required by OLT or SLT will be clearly stated through a recommendation in the ERIC Minutes, which serves to keep senior management well-informed of employee issues

and concerns and assist in taking action when necessary. The Chair/Co-Chair(s) of ERIC, OLT Liaison, or designate of ERIC, can represent the group at SLT, OLT, or staff related meetings, as required.

Procedures

Chair/Co-Chair: The members will elect a Chair, a Co-Chair or two Co-Chairs that carry the responsibility of serving as the Committee's leadership for two years. If the Chair and/or Co-Chair(s) is re-elected and wishes to continue, they may continue in their role for one additional year.

Agenda: Chair/Co-Chair(s) are responsible for composing the agenda. Should a committee member wish to discuss an item not included on the agenda, the member will have the opportunity to do so under "New Business" during the meeting or request that the item be added to the Agenda prior to the meeting.

Minutes: A draft copy of the minutes will be forwarded to the ERIC Committee with the next meeting's Agenda and documents related to the meeting. Once approved, the minutes will be circulated to all committee members, posted in a visible location at Town Hall and the Operations Centre, and saved in ERIC's primary file storage location. Names of employees, position titles and items that are confidential in nature will not be included in the minutes – references to these items will be generic in nature.

Meeting schedule: ERIC members meet monthly from January to November for a period of two hours. ERIC will also meet as needed at the call of the Chair/Co-Chairs, if required.

Attendance: It is imperative that ERIC's diverse staff compliment is adequately represented at all ERIC meetings. Should a committee member not attend three or more meetings in a row, the Chair will meet with the member(s) to discuss whether continuing to sit on the committee is viable. Should it be determined that the member(s) will be unable to continue, new volunteer members will be sought.

Notification: Each member must ensure that his or her supervisor is aware of the committee's scheduled meeting times and to inform them of any new or unscheduled meetings at their earliest convenience.

Policy Review Sub-Committee: The sub-committee is responsible for reviewing staff related policies efficiently and effectively in partnership with the policy owner and/or the Human Resource's (HR) representative. It is the responsibility of the policy sub-committee's Team Lead to bring forward policies to the ERIC committee member for consideration and final changes within the agreed upon time frame with the policy owner.

Quorum: The majority of committee members must be in agreement before a

recommendation can be approved and adopted. A tied vote will represent a lost vote. All members including the Chair/Co-Chairs are required to vote. The recording secretary is not permitted to vote.

Confidentiality: To promote an atmosphere of non-intimidation, all conversations and discussions at ERIC – in which a specific name or position is cited – are to be considered confidential. However, topics that are non-contentious in nature and that are presented to ERIC for information purposes should be shared with other employees of the organization and/or posted in a central location.

Terms of Reference: Provides guidance related to the composition of membership and expectations of the different roles.

Recording secretary: A clerical staff member from within the Corporation of the Town of Newmarket provides staff support as Recording Secretary. The Recording Secretary is not a member of ERIC.

Soliciting information: Members of ERIC may request information as required from SLT, OLT, directors or other employees in order to serve the needs of employees.

Recording Secretary: Ensures that minutes are captured according to the details, decisions, and actions described during ERIC meetings. This role is responsible for drafting minutes and working with the Chair/Co-Chair(s) to create a confidential set of minutes for staff and a separate set for Newmarket staff. Once the draft minutes are approved at the following ERIC meeting by the committee, the recording secretary is responsible for carrying out the Minute's procedure.

Cross References

CAO 3.01 – Employee Code of Conduct
Corp 1.08 – Protection of Personal Information
HR 1.01 – Definition of Non-Union Employee Status
HR 4.02 – Employee Complaint
HR 13.03- Violence Free Workplace
HR 13.04 – Harassment & Discrimination Free Workplace

Revisions approved by the CAO on June 12, 2017.