

*Department:* General Government

*Title:* **Electronic Communications Policy**

*Purpose:* To establish guidelines for use of electronic devices and e-communications by the Village of Burns Lake. Use of electronic devices and electronic media is necessary and useful for Village Council in order to improve communication, efficiently perform Village duties, and maximize resources.

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## **Part 1 – Definitions**

**Electronic Communication Devices-** devices or products designed to electronically process, transmit, or store information such as computers, iPads, tablets, cell or smart phones, and other such devices.

**User-** Village of Burns Lake Council members

**E-Communication-** electronic text or visual communication and attachments distributed via email, websites, instant messaging, text messaging, social media such as Facebook and Twitter, blogs, or comparable services.

**Electronic Media-** a method for processing or transmitting information in electronic form, including E-Communication, software programs, and the internet.

## **Part 2 – Procedures**

- a. **Distribution of Agenda and Reading Files:** The distribution of agendas and reading files to Village Council will generally be through electronic media. Users are expected to access agendas, reading files, and other Village documents via Electronic Communication Devices before and during meetings.
- b. **Distribution of Late or Additional Items:** All efforts will be made to distribute late agendas or additional items to Users via E-Communication prior to the meeting at which they are to be discussed. Users are expected to access these documents using their Electronic Communication Device before or during the meeting.

### Part 3 – Standards of Use

- a. **Use of E-Communications during Meetings:** During Village Council meetings open to the public as per the *Community Charter*, Council members are not permitted to use Electronic Communication Devices to access the internet (other than as necessary to retrieve official Village agendas or documents), or to receive and send email or text messages. Urgent or emergency emails or text messages received from family members or family caregivers are permitted during meetings. Users wishing to respond to such a message during the meeting shall do so during a recess or shall excuse themselves from the meeting to place the return call or text in a manner that does not disrupt the meeting.
- b. **Communication with other Council members or the public:** Council members must not send or exchange any form of E-Communication with one another or with members of the public during a Council meeting. Discussions or exchange of information in relation to an item on the agenda or any Village business is not permitted during meetings via Electronic Devices or E-Communications.
- c. **Use of recording devices during meetings:** Use of electronic communication devices are not permitted during meetings. However, audio recording during a Council meeting open to the public is permitted only after notification of the intent to record is received by the Deputy Corporate Officer via the attached 'Notification of Recording' no less than (3) working days in advance of a meeting, using the application form provided. (Application form is attached to the Policy as Addendum A.) Please note: if recording all regular and special Council meetings in a calendar year, only one form is required to be filled out.) Audio or video recording of a closed meeting is not permitted.

### Part 4 – Confidentiality

- a. **Users shall protect the security of the E-Communication System:** Users shall make all reasonable and necessary efforts to protect the confidentiality of information which is placed in their control or care, minimize the likelihood of inadvertent transmission of confidential information to unintended recipients, prevent unauthorized intruders from accessing the E-Communications system and documents, and prevent the introduction or spread of computer viruses.
- b. **Confidential information via Electronic Communication:** For the communication of sensitive and confidential information, users shall minimize the use of email and maximize the use of written memoranda, letters or phone calls, because of the ease with which E-Communications may be inadvertently or intentionally re-transmitted to others not authorized to receive such information. The Village CAO or Corporate Officer should be contacted concerning any questions about whether a communication is confidential. |

## Part 5 – Reimbursement of costs

- a. **Users shall be reimbursed by the Village:** Up to a maximum of \$500 shall be reimbursed by the Village once every electoral term for the purchase of an electronic device. A receipt showing proof of purchase of electronic device must be submitted.

*Approved:* [April 10, 2012]

*Amended:* [November 8, 2016]

*Amended:* [January 9, 2018]