

RESIDENT COMMUNICATION & INFORMATION ACCESS POLICY

Town of Main Brook

Adopted: April 13, 2026

Authority: *Towns and Local Service Districts Act & Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 2015 (ATIPPA)*

1. PURPOSE

To ensure all resident inquiries are handled fairly, accurately, and in accordance with the law, while protecting the Town's limited administrative resources from undue burden.

2. THE "VERBAL VS. WRITTEN" PRINCIPLE

To ensure accuracy and create a permanent record of Council business, the Town strictly differentiates between Transactional Inquiries and Governance Requests.

2.1 Transactional Inquiries (Verbal Permitted)

Residents may make verbal inquiries (in person or by phone) *only* regarding matters specific to their own personal accounts or immediate property.

- *Examples:* "What is my tax balance?", "Is my building permit ready?", "When is garbage collection?", "Can I see the survey on file for my property?"
- *Response:* Staff will answer immediately if the information is readily available.

2.2 Governance Requests (Written Required)

Any request involving municipal records, Council decision-making, financial oversight, or complaints against the Town must be submitted in writing (email or letter). Verbal requests for these items will not be processed.

- *Examples:* "I want to see the travel expense ledger for Council," "Why was the road paved there and not here?", "I want a copy of the Minutes from 2015," "I want to file a complaint about a Councillor."
- *Reasoning:* These require staff research, legal review, and a formal record of delivery.

3. NO "ON DEMAND" PRODUCTION

3.1 Immediate Access: The Town is under no obligation to produce documents, reports, or detailed answers immediately upon demand at the front counter.

3.2 The Queue: All requests are processed in the order received. A resident standing at the counter does not take priority over a written request received earlier.

4. HOW TO SUBMIT A REQUEST

4.1 General Inquiries:

Residents must submit a hand-written or typed letter or send a detailed email to the Town Manager/Clerk.

- *Must include:* Name, contact info, and specific details of the request.

4.2 Delegations (Speaking at Council):

Residents wishing to address Council must submit a "Delegation Request" in writing or via email no later than 48 hours prior to the scheduled meeting.

- *Constraint:* The request must outline the specific topic. Council reserves the right to refuse delegations on topics that have already been decided or are currently under legal review.

4.3 Statutory Requests:

- **ATIPPA Requests:** Requests for significant volumes of records, or sensitive information must be made using the official *ATIPPA Access Request Form*.
- **Code of Conduct Complaints:** Complaints regarding Councillor behavior *must* be submitted in a sealed envelope to the Clerk or Mayor using the mandatory form prescribed by the *Municipal Conduct Act*. Verbal allegations will not be recorded or acted upon.

5. SERVICE STANDARDS (TIMELINES)

Recognizing the limited staff resources of the Town, the following response times apply on a best-effort basis:

- **Acknowledgement of Receipt:** Within 3 business days.
- **Substantive Response (General):** Within 7 to 10 business days.
- **ATIPPA Requests:** Strictly within the timelines prescribed by Provincial legislation.
- **Code of Conduct Complaints:** Strictly within the timelines prescribed by Provincial legislation.
- **Complex Matters:** If a request requires Council review, it will be placed on the agenda for the *next available* Regular Council Meeting.

6. FRIVOLOUS OR VEXATIOUS REQUESTS

The Town Manager/Clerk is authorized to deprioritize or refuse repeated requests from the same individual that:

- (a) Have already been answered; or,
- (b) Are trivial, frivolous, or vexatious; or,
- (c) Are abusive in tone or language.

7. ESCALATION (APPEALS)

If a resident is dissatisfied with the Town's response or lack thereof:

- **Administrative Issues:** Request a review by the Mayor.
- **Access to Information (ATIPPA):** You have the right to appeal to the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner (OIPC) of Newfoundland and Labrador.
- **Fairness/Process:** You may contact the Office of the Citizens' Representative (Ombudsman).
- **Code of Conduct:** If Council fails to act on a Conduct Complaint, you may contact the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs.

Motion for Adoption:

"WHEREAS the Council of the Town of Main Brook recognizes the need to manage limited administrative resources efficiently while ensuring accurate, timely, and lawful responses to resident inquiries;

AND WHEREAS the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 2015* imposes strict requirements on the collection, use, and disclosure of personal and municipal information;

BE IT RESOLVED that, pursuant to the general management powers under the **Towns and Local Service Districts Act**, the Council hereby:

1. **ADOPTS** the document titled '**Resident Communication & Information Access Policy**' as presented, to take effect immediately;
2. **DIRECTS** the Town Clerk/Manager to enforce the requirement for written submission of all Governance Requests and to refuse verbal processing of such requests in accordance with the Policy; and
3. **REPEALS** any previous unwritten practices or policies regarding information access that conflict with this Policy."