

Committee of the Whole (2) Report

DATE: Tuesday, December 10, 2019

WARD(S): ALL

TITLE: NEPOTISM POLICY

FROM:

Michael Coroneos, Deputy City Manager, Corporate Services and Chief Financial Officer

ACTION: DECISION

Purpose

The City of Vaughan is required to abide by all employment legislation in the Province of Ontario including laws relating to fair and equitable hiring practices. This report provides Council with the details of a new Nepotism Policy and seek approval of the Policy allowing Staff to implement.

Report Highlights

- The current Hiring and Nepotism Policy was established in 2007 and requires a review and update
- The Nepotism Policy drafted using the City's existing policy and leading practice from other municipal and public sector organizations, including provincial legislation
- Separate Nepotism Policy from Recruitment Policy is in keeping with other large municipalities
- Policy requires certain conditions are met before hiring family members
- Nepotism Policy is linked to other policies and procedures (i.e. Recruitment and Employee Code of Conduct)

Recommendations

1. That Council approve the new Nepotism Policy (Attachment 1).

Background

Hiring in the City of Vaughan is done by individual departments with guidance from Human Resources. Hiring managers and Human Resources are committed to hiring the best staff possible and currently abide by leading practices and legal obligations with respect to recruitment. The City's current Hiring and Nepotism Policy required a review and update in order to strengthen our current hiring and employment practices.

The updated Nepotism Policy reflects the City's existing policy as well as leading practices from other public sector organizations. The Recruitment and Nepotism policies could be merged; however, it would mean that the Nepotism Policy would have to be shortened, which would take away some of the details in the current policy as well as its importance and the significance of having a policy dedicated to nepotism. It is recommended that a separate policy that deals specifically with nepotism be maintained. It is especially important for public sector organizations, responsible for maintaining the public's trust, to have a clear standard on the issue of nepotism. In addition, a separate Nepotism Policy from a Recruitment Policy is in keeping with other large municipalities who are also responsible for a significant amount of hiring and who must ensure their recruitment processes are free from conflicts.

The Nepotism Policy outlines the guiding principles, purpose, definitions, application and responsibilities with respect to preventing nepotism and addressing incidents that could lead to the perception of nepotism. The purpose of this policy is to legitimately prevent a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest that arises through the hiring or employment of family members; and/or legitimately prevent the misuse of authority and influence or the appearance of such misuse. The adoption of the revised Nepotism Policy will ensure that our hiring processes continue to be free of any conflict of interest, and allow for a fair, open, and transparent recruitment process.

The Policy is aligned with the City's Recruitment policies and practices, and consistent with requirements set out in employment legislation. The Nepotism Policy applies to all employees of the City of Vaughan, and clearly outlines responsibilities for employees, managers/supervisors and Human Resources.

Analysis and Options

The Nepotism Policy has been drafted in a way that is open, inclusive, protects the rights of all applicants, and establishes controls to prevent the perception of a conflict and/or addresses issues when identified through an established process.

The Nepotism Policy has been updated and strengthened by including supplementary definitions to ensure clearer understanding of the Policy requirements; Clearer roles and responsibilities for employees and management; Specific accountabilities and requirements for handling and resolving issues; Reference to legislative requirements and links made to Employee Code of Conduct and Recruitment Policy and Procedures and finally, well-defined process to avoid conflict of interest.

Adoption of this strengthened policy will provide clear standards, requirements and accountabilities on the issue of nepotism. Maintaining an up to date policy will guide and inform all employees of the City's standards and expectations. An effective implementation and communication plan will prevent issues associated with nepotism and conflict of interest in the City's hiring and employment practices.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact associated with this Policy.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

Research has been conducted with respect to other municipal and public sector practices involving nepotism. There are no broader Regional impacts/implications.

Conclusion

For the reasons outlined above, it is recommended that Council approve the updated Nepotism Policy and direct the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer and appropriate staff to take the necessary steps to implement the Policy effective immediately.

The adoption of this policy will provide necessary guidance to managers/supervisors in their hiring and employment related decisions. Once the policy is adopted a detailed implementation plan will be rolled out including an education session with our senior leaders in the first quarter of 2020 with further education session for all staff and front line leaders. This will further ensure fair hiring practices and prevent any conflict of interest. Ultimately, these efforts will continue to make the City an attractive place to work and increase employee engagement and retention.

For more information, please contact:

Demetre Rigakos, Chief Human Resources Officer, at Demetre.Rigakos@vaughan.ca or at 905-832-8585 extension 8297.

Mark Bond, Manager, Human Resources, at Mark.Bond@vaughan.ca or at 905-832-8585 extension 8327.

Attachments

1. Nepotism Policy, Office of the Chief Human Resources Department

Prepared by

Demetre Rigakos, Chief Human Resources Officer

Mark Bond, Manager, Human Resources