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<b>Title:</b>	<b>Preventing Political Interference</b>
<b>Policy No.</b>	<b>2025-003</b>
<b>Adoption:</b>	<b>April 16, 2025 by Council Resolution No. 2025-123</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Administrative Monetary Penalty System</b>

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Township of Puslinch is committed to ensuring that the Administrative Monetary Penalty System (AMPS) is conducted in a fair and independent manner and prevents political interference in the administration of AMPS.

## 2. Purpose

- 2.1. Ontario Regulation 333/07 made under the Municipal Act, 2001, requires a municipality establishing an Administrative Monetary Penalty System (AMPS) to have a policy for the prevention of political interference in AMPS.
- 2.2. This Policy is intended to address this requirement, to define what constitutes political interference in relation to AMPS, and to ensure that the responsibilities of individuals involved in AMPS are conducted in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice, which include decision making and procedural independence, fairness, impartiality and integrity, without any political interference.

### **3. Legislative Authority**

3.1. *Municipal Act, 2001* and O. Reg. 333/07

### **4. Policy Scope**

- 4.1. This Policy applies to all elected and appointed members of Township Council, Committees, and Local Boards, to Hearing Officers and Screening Officers, to Township employees involved in the enforcement and administration of AMPS, and to all other Township employees in relation to their interaction with AMPS.
- 4.2. All Township Policies, By-laws, Agreements, and Procedures also apply as it relates to AMPS including but not limited to the following:
  - 4.2.1. For Township employees involved in the administration of the AMPS program: the Employee Code of Conduct Policy, shall also apply in regard to the activities of an employee in the administration of the AMPS program.
  - 4.2.2. For Hearing Officers: the provisions of any agreement governing the retainer between the Township and a Hearing Officer(s), shall also apply in regard to the activities of the Hearing Officer. In the event of a conflict between this Policy and the agreement, the provisions of this Policy shall supersede.
  - 4.2.3. For elected and appointed members of Council, Committees, and Local Boards: the Code of Conduct (Council, Committees of Council, Local Boards) shall also apply in regard to the activities of members. In the event of a conflict between the provisions of this Policy and the provisions of the Council Code of Conduct, in relation to AMPS, this Policy shall supersede.
  - 4.2.4. This Policy shall apply in addition to all applicable law (i.e. Municipal Conflict of Interest Act, etc.). A breach of applicable law shall be deemed to be a breach of this Policy.

### **5. Definitions**

- 5.1. **“Administrative Penalty”** means an administrative penalty established by the Administrative Monetary Penalty System By-law for a contravention of a Designated By-law as defined therein;
- 5.2. **“Administrative Monetary Penalty System By-law”** means the By-law passed by the Township to establish administrative penalties, as amended from time to time, or any successor thereof;
- 5.3. **“AMPS”** means Administrative Monetary Penalty System, established by the Administrative Monetary Penalty System By-law;
- 5.4. **“By-law Enforcement Supervisor”** means the Supervisor of By-law Enforcement Services of the Township, or anyone designated by the Clerk to perform his or her duties relating to AMPS;

- 5.5. **“Council Code of Conduct”** means the Code of Conduct for Members of Council, Committees, and Local Boards adopted by the Township to govern the conduct of Members, as amended from time to time, or any successor thereof;
- 5.6. **“Council”** means the Council of the Township of Puslinch;
- 5.7. **“Director”** means the Director of Corporate Services/ Municipal Clerk of the Township, or anyone designated by the Director of Corporate Services/Municipal Clerk to perform his or her duties relating to AMPS;
- 5.8. **“Employee”** means Township volunteers, Volunteer Firefighters, Part-time and Full-time employees, temporary employees, contract employees, independent contractors, and consultants.
- 5.9. **“Hearing Officer”** means any person appointed by the Township from time to time pursuant to the Screening and Hearing Officer By-law, to perform the functions of a hearing officer in accordance with the Screening and Hearing Officer By-law and the Administrative Monetary Penalty System By-law;
- 5.10. **“Hearing Review”** means the process related to the review of a screening decision, as set out in the Administrative Monetary Penalty System By-law;
- 5.11. **“Penalty Notice”** means a penalty notice as described in the Administrative Monetary Penalty System By-law;
- 5.12. **“Person”** includes an individual or a corporation;
- 5.13. **“Power of Decision”** means a power or right, conferred by or under the Administrative Monetary Penalty System By-law, to make a decision deciding or prescribing the legal rights, powers, privileges, immunities, duties or liabilities of any person;
- 5.14. **“Reprisal”** means any measure taken or threatened as a direct result of disclosing or being suspected of disclosing an allegation of wrongdoing, initiating or cooperating in an investigation into an alleged wrongdoing, and includes but is not limited to:
- 5.14.1. Disciplinary measures;
  - 5.14.2. Demotion of the employee or individual;
  - 5.14.3. Termination of the employee or individual;
  - 5.14.4. Intimidation or harassment of the employee or individual;

5.14.5. Any measure that adversely affects the employment or working conditions of the employee or individual; and,

5.14.6. Directing or counselling someone to commit a reprisal.

5.15. **“Screening and Hearing Officer By-law”** means the By-law passed by the Township to establish the positions of screening and hearing officers and to provide for the appointment of screening and hearing officers, in relation to administrative penalties, as amended from time to time, or any successor thereof;

5.16. **“Screening Review”** means the process related to review of a Penalty Notice, as set out in the Administrative Monetary Penalty System By-law;

5.17. **“Screening Officer”** means any person appointed by the Township from time to time pursuant to the Screening and Hearing Officer By-law, to perform the functions of a Screening Officer in accordance with the Screening and Hearing Officer By-law and the Administrative Monetary Penalty System By-law;

5.18. **“Staff Code of Conduct”** means the policy adopted by the Township to govern employee conduct, as amended from time to time, or any successor thereof;

5.19. **“Township”** means the Corporation of the Township of Puslinch;

## **6. Principles of Preventing Political Interference**

6.1. No Person shall attempt, directly or indirectly, to communicate with any Township employee or other person performing duties related to the administration of AMPS for the purpose of influencing or interfering, financially, politically or otherwise, with the administration of AMPS or with any particular Penalty Notice;

6.2. No Person shall attempt, directly or indirectly, to communicate with a Screening Officer or Hearing Officer for the purpose of influencing or interfering, financially, politically or otherwise, the Screening Officer or Hearing Officer respecting a Penalty Notice and/or respecting a Power of Decision in a proceeding that is or will be pending before a Screening Officer or Hearing Officer, except:

6.2.1. A Person who is entitled to be heard in the proceeding or the Person’s lawyer, licensed paralegal or authorized representative; and

6.2.2. Only by that Person or the Person’s lawyer, licensed paralegal or authorized representative during the hearing of the proceeding in which the issues arise; and,

6.2.3. This paragraph shall not prohibit the giving or receiving of legal advice.

- 6.3. In addition to this Policy, the AMPS By-law sets out a prohibition regarding attempting to influence a Screening Officer or Hearing Officer and creates an offence for any contravention of the provisions of the By-law. Such penalty is in addition to any action taken pursuant to this Policy.
- 6.4. All individuals involved with the enforcement and administrative functions of AMPS shall carry out such duties in a manner which upholds the integrity of the administration of justice.

## **7. Accountability**

- 7.1. A Screening Officer or Hearing Officer, Township employee, or any other individual performing duties related to AMPS shall report any attempt at influence or interference, financial, political or otherwise, by any Person, to the Director as soon as possible. No action shall be taken against the Screening Officer, Hearing Officer, employee, or other person(s) for making any such report in good faith.
- 7.2. Where any employee, Screening Officer, Hearing Officer, or other person performing duties related to AMPS, is contacted by a member of Council, Committee, Local Board, or Township official with respect to the administration of AMPS or a specific Penalty Notice, he or she shall immediately disclose such contact to the Director in order to maintain the integrity of AMPS.
- 7.3. Any interference with or attempt to interfere with AMPS by any Person may result in charges under the Criminal Code of Canada, as applicable, or any other applicable law, in addition to any disciplinary action.
- 7.4. Any interference with AMPS or attempt to interfere with AMPS, by a member of Council, Committee, or Local Board will be addressed pursuant to the Council Code of Conduct.

## **8. Reprisal**

- 8.1. In addition to and without limiting Section 7. 1., no person shall take any Reprisal against a Township employee or other individual performing duties related to the administration of AMPS because the employee or individual, in good faith:
- 8.1.1. has sought information or advice about making a disclosure about wrongdoing contrary to this Policy;
- 8.1.2. has made a disclosure about wrongdoing contrary to this Policy in good faith;
- 8.1.3. has initiated or cooperated in an investigation or other process related to a disclosure of wrongdoing contrary to this Policy;



8.1.4. has appeared as a witness, given evidence or participated in any proceeding relating to the wrongdoing contrary to this Policy, or is required to do so;

8.1.5. has alleged or reported a Reprisal; or

8.1.6. is suspected or any of the above actions.

8.2. The identity of employees or other individuals performing duties related to the administration of AMPS involved in an investigation, including the identity of an individual alleging political influence contrary to this policy, will be protected to the fullest extent possible.

8.3. If an employee believes that he or she has suffered Reprisal, this should be reported immediately to the Director.

## **9. Compliance**

9.1. In cases of a Policy violation, the Director may investigate and determine appropriate corrective action.

## **10. Policy Communication**

10.1. This Policy will be posted on the Township's website.

10.2. Affected staff will be advised of the Policy and any major amendments.

10.3. All members of Council, Committee, and Local Boards shall be provided with a copy of this Policy, and the Policy shall form part of the Council, Committee, and Local Board Orientation package;

10.4. This Policy shall form part of the orientation for all Screening Officers, Hearing Officers and Township staff involved in the enforcement and administration of AMPS; and,

10.5. Without limiting Section 10.4., all current and new Township officials and staff, with the potential for interaction with the AMPS program, shall receive training in relation to this Policy.