

respectful towards each other and that they attempt to be on the same page. The CAO is bound by Council policy so whether or not the Mayor and CAO are working towards the same end will largely depend on whether the Mayor supports the rest of his Council. Where this is not true, and in circumstances where the Mayor is seemingly not able to accept the decisions of his Council, the CAO should still attempt to work with the Mayor but will recognize that there will be some inevitable tension relative to issues where Councillor and the Mayor are not aligned.

This role is the **essential linkage** between the Council as the governing authority and the administration who are charged with carrying out the will of Council and with following the provisions of the Community Charter. The CAO is expected to be held accountable for the delivery of programs and services by the administration in a timely and effective manner. While the person occupying this position is not expected to have training or academic preparation in all of the disciplines which report to him, the CAO is expected to have a broad understanding of what their principal duties are and to be able to distinguish between appropriate fulfillment of the role and service which is less than expected.

Anyone being appointed to the role of CAO will be appointed by bylaw which sets out the general provisions of the role and will be guided by an accompanying position description. These roles are generally described in a generic fashion which is sufficiently and purposely broad so as to “catch” all the key performance indicators.

#### **Generic roles of the CAO:**

- **Advisor to Council**
  - Ensure that Council has the best apolitical advice in all reports and recommendations being considered by Council for its approval
  - Coordinate information to Council from department heads and ensure that all direct reports are made aware of the decisions of Council
  - Maintain an open, fair, collegial and respectful relationship with the Mayor and Councillors
  - Ensure Council’s directions are being followed and oversee the prompt and effective implementation of Council decisions regardless of any input to the

contrary, unless that input has been provided by authorized legal counsel (in that case, the CAO will bring the matter back to Council with a full report)

▪ **Relationship to Mayor and Councillors**

- Act as the Mayor's primary linkage to the organization and as the person who is in touch regularly providing updates on what is happening on issues about which the Mayor needs to be kept abreast
- Be guided in all of his decisions and actions by Council resolutions, policies and bylaws as applicable and not be expected to follow the preferences of one or more Councillors

▪ **Organization Structure**

- Develop an organization structure which allocates staff to the required functions and service areas and recommend to Council the position titles and number of key functions at the level reporting to the CAO as a policy document; ensure that the structure is current and clearly defined
- Request Council approval of the organization structure (preferably by policy) as it pertains to the CAO and direct reports

▪ **Leader of the Administration**

- Report to all of Council as the administrative head of the corporation; acts as Council's primary linkage to the District's administration
- Be the final administrative arbiter on administrative questions posed by senior management to the CAO and from Council members to the CAO; making decisions on an apolitical basis
- Seek to build quality relationships with other senior administrative leaders in the region and across the Province
- Be the first person at the microphone introducing the key agenda issues to Council or the Governance and Priorities Committee given that the CAO will want to ensure that all of Council understands that it is he who is their primary spokesperson relative to issues coming to Council from administration

- Delegate any follow-up questions to the respective department head as appropriate
- Ensure that administrative directives empower the supervisory staff to take action within their areas of responsibility
- **Administrative Direction**
  - Oversee department heads in the performance of their duties; review and assess their work
  - Ensure departmental collaboration, so people are focusing on their functions and that there is no unnecessary overlap
  - Ensure that the services of the organization are clearly defined and are in concert with the expectations of Council (and thus the residents)
  - Ensure fairness in Council-approved policy application
  - Coordinate the efforts of the administration through regular meetings with the department heads and ensure that those people are meeting regularly with their own staff and communicating issues and plans and discussing and resolving problems
- **Champion the Administration**
  - Defend the work and attitudes of the senior management to Council whenever and wherever that is necessary
  - Provide ample support for staff in the face of any criticism from the public or from the Council
  - Meet with and discuss with management any issue pertaining to inappropriate responses by staff/management; ensure that clear messages are being communicated to staff
- **Performance Assessment**
  - Recognize good performance and take corrective action vis-à-vis poor performance where action is justified
  - Provide performance feedback on a regular basis to those staff reporting directly to the CAO

- **Managerial Development**
  - Groom possible successors at the next reporting level in the organization and ensure that each has an equal opportunity to fill in for the CAO in that person's absence
  - Delegate increasing responsibilities such that department heads can gradually develop their understanding of senior level management functions
  - Encourage ongoing and relevant training for senior staff (and through them for the other members of the administration)
- **Human Resource Management**
  - Ensure that the District has appropriate human resource policies and procedures which reflect the District as a fair employer interested in the well-being of its employees
  - Develop and update position descriptions for all District personnel (and the terms of reference for any contractors) so they reflect actual and current duties to be provided by each of the roles
  - Ensure that the District's compensation plan and personnel policies are current, appropriate, and fair for all employees.

The foregoing, while extensive, are not necessarily all-inclusive as the CAO will naturally fill in where called upon in circumstances related to their roles.

A CAO is **typically engaged under a contract** between Council and the incumbent. Council retains control through a list of tools that allow Council to exercise appropriate control over their only employee. These tools include:

- **CAO Bylaw:** This outlines the legal requirements of the CAO and their jurisdiction over the other employees of the municipal organization.
- **CAO Position Description and Profile:** The position description expands upon what is found in the bylaw and adds considerable depth and colour to the expectations of good management that the CAO is expected to perform. A "Profile" is a simpler, brief version of the foregoing and is often developed whenever the municipality is recruiting candidates for this role.

- **CAO Contract (Letter of Offer):** The CAO contract spells out the contractual requirements and obligations of both the CAO and the District when agreeing to the former's employment.
- **CAO Performance Appraisal:** The assessment of the CAO is an important process and document. This should be in place and utilized annually by the Council to ensure that the CAO knows and understands Council's assessment of their performance.
- **CAO Goals and Objectives:** Part of the performance assessment will include the CAO's goals and objectives, which are an indication of what the CAO expects to achieve over their next year of employment. These will be reviewed by Council during the performance assessment process.
- **Organizational Performance:** One of the aspects which a Council considers in conducting a CAO review is how well the organization appears to be performing. This is frequently used as one of the important indicators of the effectiveness of the CAO's leadership and managerial skills.

#### **7.4 Council-CAO-Management Relations & Impact**

Municipalities are complex organizations which require all components to function as designed if in fact there is to be the type of success envisioned by the framers of the legislation. It is not possible to have a strong Mayor and Council and believe that this will be viewed as a great success without the bureaucratic machinery of an organization to follow through on Council's commitments and get the job done.

Similarly, democracy at its core suggests the foolishness of relying solely on an administration to do their work without the express direction being set by the governing authority. It is not possible for any municipality to function as it is designed without strong collaboration between Council-CAO-Management; all need to be moving in the same or at least parallel direction.

Understanding the difference between governance and administration is a major indication of success in any municipality. The following practices of a well-functioning District point to the importance of a clear definition of the roles of Council and that of senior management:

#### **Practices Of A Well-Functioning District**