

**REGIONAL DISTRICT OF OKANAGAN-SIMILKAMEEN
BOARD POLICY**

POLICY: Decision-Making Guidelines

AUTHORITY: Board Resolution No. B22/09 dated January 8, 2009.
Reviewed Annually

POLICY STATEMENT

The Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen has determined a benefit to adopting the 'informed consent' decision-making model. While acknowledging that time constraints often make consensus or unanimous agreement unavailable, The Board believes the process associated with the 'simple majority' system of decision-making has weaknesses, in that it inhibits transparency, and may fail to provide the opportunity for all members to support implementation of a decision for the following reasons:

- They were not offered full information or adequate research on the issue, or an explanation of why their colleagues voted in a certain manner;
- They felt their views were not fully heard and debate was limited;
- That the process failed to acknowledge and respect diverse opinions;
- That the planning, implementation and monitoring of the decision was weak.

PURPOSE

1. To provide a universal understanding of the fundamental process the Board will use to make decisions in the best interests of the Corporation.
2. To identify the information required to enable the Board to make informed decisions.
3. To promote transparency in decision-making.
4. To provide clear direction for District employees for the implementation of Board policy.
5. To set out objective decision-making criteria.

DEFINITIONS

1. Commission – means all Standing Committees and Advisory Planning Commissions

2. Confidential Information - while the classification of information as "confidential" is a matter of discretion, whether labelled as confidential or not, disclosure of information will not constitute a breach of the Board Oath unless that information is of an inherently confidential nature such as:
 - (1) personal data of employees or others.
 - (2) records related to internal policies and practices which, if disclosed, may prejudice the effective performance of a district operation.
 - (3) records of a financial nature reflecting information given or accumulated in confidence.
 - (4) files prepared in connection with litigation and adjudicative proceedings.
 - (5) preliminary reports of consultants, policy drafts and internal communications which, if disclosed, may prejudice the effective operation of a district operation or impugn the reputation of any person.
 - (6) any report prepared for the Board is to be released only by the Board.
 - (7) information regarding the acquisition or disposal of land until it becomes a matter of public record.

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3. Corporation - means the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen.
 4. District Employee - includes all employees and officers of the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen as defined in all collective agreements and employment bylaws.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Board of Directors shall:
 - (8) Adopt the Board Decision-making policy, and any amendments thereto.
 - (2) Review the policy annually.

2. The Chief Administrative Officer shall:
 - (1) Ensure the Decision-Making Policy is added to the agenda of the annual Legislative Workshop for review.
 - (2) Recommend changes to the decision-making process.
 - (3) Ensure the Decision-making policy is implemented and that administration complies with the information requirements of the policy.
 - (4) Assist the Board with the interpretation of the policy.
 - (5) Assign the issues to the appropriate administrative resource.

3. The Management Team shall:
 - (1) Review administrative reports being prepared for an agenda and ensure that they present fairly the spectrum of information necessary for the Board to make a decision.

PROCEDURES

1. Agenda Submissions
 - (1) All items requiring a Board decision should initially appear on a Committee agenda first.
 - (2) Reports to Committee should be initially researched by Administration and submitted in Administrative Report format, meaning the issue should be clearly identified, reference materials are disclosed, a brief summary of the issue is provided, all options for resolving the item are identified and analysed, and there is a clear administrative recommendation. All staff submissions are subject to the discretion of the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO).
 - (3) Committees are designed to provide a forum where the administrative, public and political perspectives of the issue are discussed. Committees are advisory in nature, having no decision-making authority.
 - (4) A Committee may receive a report for information, refer a report to administration for additional information or make a recommendation to the Board. When requesting additional information, Committee should be specific in the information they require. All referrals must go through the CAO.
 - (5) When Committee is of the opinion they have enough information to send a recommendation to the Board, the minutes of the Committee meeting summarizing the discussion shall go on a Board agenda with the Committee recommendation.

- (6) By the time the issue is placed on the Board agenda, the Board should have enough information to debate the issue and make a decision. Should the debate identify additional information is necessary, the matter may be referred back to administration for research and re-entry. If the Board requires additional public input or the matter has strategic direction implications, the Board may choose to refer the matter back to Committee. The CAO shall assign the staff necessary to assist the Board with the information required or to initiate the processes necessary for the matter to be resolved.
- (7) New issues entered at either the Committee or Board should be referred to Administration for report.
- (8) Draft Committee and Board agendas will be prepared by the Senior Management Team. It is not the role of the Senior Management Team to decide what issues go onto an agenda; they simply facilitate the delivery of the item to Committee for discussion and ensure the issue is placed according to the terms of reference for the Committee as identified in the Procedure Bylaw. Final agenda's will be presented to the Chair by the CAO prior to distribution.
- (9) All Board direction to staff should be given by way of a resolution or notation in the meeting minutes. This step ensures clarity in the intent of the Board, documentation of the direction and accountability on the part of staff to follow up. It also allows the Board to control the administrative capacity box.
- (10) The CAO is responsible for the implementation of all Board decisions and shall report to Board on their status.

