

Category: Governance

Title: Expression of Sympathy Policy

Policy Number: GOV-170

Approved by: GC035-2019 & C354-2019

Administered by: Protocol Office, City Clerk's Department

Effective: September 25th, 2019

1. Background

Having served the City of Brampton as an elected Member of Council, upon their death former and current Members are acknowledged by the City in a manner that is consistent and honours their contribution.

In the event that a current staff member has passed away, the City offers condolences.

The City also recognizes former elected officials and significant members of the community and holds community gatherings of remembrance which are important ways residents can express collective mourning.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to define appropriate and consistent methods for expressing the City's sympathy of a death of significance to the City and its residents.

3. Application and Scope

This Policy applies:

- a) Upon the death of:
 - i) A current Member of Council;
 - ii) A former Member of Council;
 - iii) A significant community member;
 - iv) A current City of Brampton staff member; or
- b) Upon a significant event where the community would like to express collective mourning.

3.1 Exceptions

- a) This Policy does not apply to former City of Brampton staff.

- b) This Policy is not to replace or impede the standards of practice of the Brampton Fire and Emergency Services Department with regard to honouring their members or other fire and emergency personnel who have died in the line of duty.
- c) Should there be a desire to name a City asset on behalf of the deceased, the appropriate procedure and process for acknowledgment will be followed in accordance with the Asset Naming Policy PND - 110 and accompanying SOPs.

4. Outcomes

The intended outcomes of this Policy are:

- 4.1 Provide standardized and consistent methods of expressing sympathy.
- 4.2 Ensure the reputation of the City is maintained.
- 4.3 Ensure City's readiness to respond in an appropriate way to collective acts of mourning and sympathy in a prompt manner.

5. Policy Statements

- 5.1 Upon receipt of notification of death the Protocol Office will disseminate this information to appropriate groups including: Mayor's Office, Council Office, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)'s Office, Senior Leadership Team (SLT), and Strategic Communications.
- 5.2 The City will liaise with the family to determine their wishes, in accordance with this Policy.
- 5.3 The family may wish to receive any, all, or none of the services offered.
- 5.4 The Protocol Office will liaise with the Mayor's Office, CAO's office, the SLT and other business units as required to implement the agreed upon expressions of sympathy.
- 5.5 The Protocol Office will maintain the record of the City's acknowledgements provided to the family, in compliance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the Records Retention Bylaw.
- 5.6 Commemorative Activities Upon the Passing of a Current Member of Council**

The City of Brampton, in discussion with the family, where possible may offer the following commemorative activities upon the death of a current Member of Council:

- a) Lower all City flags in accordance with the Flag Policy GOV-150;

- b) Coordinate public statements, internal and external messaging including news release informing the media of any commemorative service and expressions of sympathy;
- c) Coordinate recognition at the first Council or Committee of Council meeting following the Member's death;
- d) Establish a book of condolences;
- e) A token expressing sympathy from the City;
- f) A letter or card from the Mayor and/or CAO sent to the family on behalf of the City;
- g) Provide a floral arrangement and a small candle arrangement at the Member's seat for the next committee or Council meetings;
- h) Loan City of Brampton flag(s) to the family;
- i) Coordinate Honour Guard services; and
- j) Arrange for a corporate representative from Senior Leadership Team and/or Council to attend a public funeral or memorial service.

Please refer to Expression of Sympathy Standard Operating Procedures for further details.

5.7 Additional Activities Upon the Passing of the Current Mayor

In addition to section 5.6, the City, in discussion with the family, will offer the following commemorative activities upon the death of the current Mayor:

- a) Arrange for an Honour Guard;
- b) Lying in state services at City Hall, with public visitation hours, as determined appropriate by the CAO and City Clerk with the advice of the Protocol Office; and
- c) Provide protocol support to the family for any commemorative services.

5.8 Commemorative Activities Upon the Passing of a Former Member of Council

The City of Brampton, in discussion with the family, where possible may offer the following commemorative activities upon the death of a former Member of Council:

- a) Lower all City flags in accordance with the Flag Policy GOV-150;
- b) Coordinate public statements, internal and external messaging including news release informing the media of any commemorative service and expressions of sympathy.
- c) Coordinate recognition at the first Council or Committee of Council meeting following the Member's death;
- d) Establish a book of condolences;
- e) A token expressing sympathy from the City;
- f) A letter or card from the Mayor and/or CAO sent to the family on behalf of the City;
- g) Loan City of Brampton flag(s) to the family;

- h) Arrange for a corporate representative from Senior Leadership Team and/or Council to attend a public funeral or memorial service; and
- i) Provide protocol support to the family.

5.9 Condolence Upon the Death of an Elected Official or Dignitary

- 5.9.1 At the discretion of the Mayor, in consultation with the CAO and the Protocol Office, the City may express sympathy upon the passing of an elected official or dignitary who has represented the City of Brampton in Provincial legislature or Federal Parliament and has made significant contributions to public life.
- 5.9.2 The City, in discussion with the family, where possible may offer the following commemorative activities upon the death of an elected official or dignitary:
 - a) Lower flags in accordance with the Flag Policy GOV-150;
 - b) Coordinate public statements, internal and external messaging including recognition during committee or Council meetings.
 - c) Establish a book of condolences;
 - d) A token expressing sympathy from the City and;
 - e) A letter or card from the Mayor and/or CAO sent to the family on behalf of the City;
 - f) Arrangements for a corporate representative to attend a public funeral or memorial service where possible

5.10 Condolence Upon the Death of a Current City Staff

- 5.10.1 The City, in discussion with the family, where possible may offer the following commemorative activities upon the death of a current City staff:
 - a) Internal communication to all staff including details of a commemorative service;
 - b) A token expressing sympathy from the City;
 - c) A letter or card from the Mayor and/or CAO sent to the family on behalf of the City;
 - d) Arrange for a corporate representative from Senior Leadership Team and/or Council to attend a public funeral or memorial service.
- 5.10.2 If a current City of Brampton employee dies in the line of duty or by reason of the position occupied, in discussion with the family, the City will offer the additional commemorative activities:
 - a) Half-masting of flags, consistent with the Flag Policy GOV-150;
 - b) Communications and media relations support to the family.

5.11 Commemorative Activities for Community Gatherings of Remembrance:

At the discretion of the Mayor, and in consultation with the CAO and the Protocol Office, the City may express sympathy during periods of mourning for significant international, national, or local tragic events including the death of a significant community member. The City may offer the following:

- a) Lower flags in accordance with the Flag Policy GOV-150;
- b) Establish a book of condolences
- c) Coordinate public statements, internal and external messaging.
- d) Arrangements for a corporate representative to attend a commemorative service where possible

Corporate support may be provided for a program for community vigils with the approval from the CAO. This could include space and event support with no fee at City Hall for a community gathering to express sympathy.

Refer to the Council Event Protocol for information on Member of Council hosted events. Event support will be provided as outlined in the Vigil and Expression of Sympathy SOP.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 Mayor

- Consult with the CAO and Protocol Office for advice on expressing sympathy during periods of mourning for significant international, national, or local tragic events including the death of a significant community member.
- Seek approval of CAO for corporate support for Community Gatherings for collective mourning which are “Mayor and Council hosted.”

6.2 Chief Administrative Officer or designate

- Comply with this Policy.
- Determine whether lying in state and the public hours for visitation are appropriate, and where appropriate, approve.
- Consult with the Protocol Office for advice on expressing sympathy during periods of mourning for significant international, national, or local tragic events including the death of a significant community member.
- Approve exceptions to this Policy.
- Review and approve requests for corporate support for a community gathering program hosted by “Mayor and Council”.

6.3 Protocol Office

- Provide advice and support to ensure appropriateness of expressions of sympathy under this Policy.

- Receive and disseminates notification of death.
- Liaises with the family of the deceased and offer services consistent with this Policy.
- Gather information that may be of interest to the City with respect to the commemorative service.
- Liase with Members of Council offices, CAO's office, SLT, Strategic Communication and business units as required to implement services.
- Maintain records of the City's acknowledgements provided to the family consistent with the Records Retention Bylaw and MFIPPA.

7. Monitoring and Compliance

- 7.1 The Protocol Office within the City Clerk's Department will administer this Policy and coordinate the payment of all expenses incurred through implementation. The Protocol Office will maintain detailed procedures and guidelines to accompany this Policy.
- 7.2 Where exceptions to this Policy may be warranted, the Protocol Office will provide a recommendation to the Mayor's Office and CAO's Office for approval, and communicate the proposed services in accordance with section 6 of this Policy. Consequences of non-compliance.
- 7.3 Failure to follow this Policy may result in reputational harm to the City.

8. Definitions

- 8.1 'Family' means the surviving immediate relatives of the deceased, or a representative. This could include a spouse, common-law partner, parents, parents-in-law, children, or siblings.
- 8.2 'Lying in state' means the coffin of a deceased official which rests in City Hall so that people can view it and show respect.
- 8.3 'Member of Council' means any member of the legislative body of the City, including Mayors and Councillors, past and present.
- 8.4 'Protocol' generally refers to the official procedure or rules of governing city-wide events and other official functions, and the official liasing with and between dignitaries.
- 8.5 'Token of sympathy' could include a floral arrangement or donation of equivalent value to a registered charity, if requested by the family.

9. References and Resources

This Policy should be read and applied in conjunction with the following references and resources as updated from time to time. Please note that some of the following documents may not be publically available.

External references

- [Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 1990](#)

References to related bylaws, Council policies, and administrative directives

- [Asset Naming Policy](#) PND - 110
- [Council Event Protocol](#) GOV-160
- [Flag Policy](#) GOV-150
- [Records Retention Bylaw](#) 272-2014 as amended

References to related corporate-wide procedures, forms, and resources

- Expression of Sympathy SOP
- Vigil and Expression of Sympathy SOP

Revision History

Date	Description
2019/09/25	New. Approved by Council Resolution C354-2019 GC035-2019.
2022/09/25	Next Scheduled Review.