

The Corporation of the Township of Gillies



Complaints Policy #67

Created June 12, 2023

Last revision: June 12, 2023

Department: Administration

Review Frequency: As required

1.0 Purpose

This policy is intended to enable the Corporation of the Township of Gillies (hereinafter referred to as the “Municipality”) to promptly and effectively address program and service delivery concerns raised by members of the public. This policy will assist the Municipality in providing excellent service to the public, and it will contribute to continuous improvement of Municipal operations and service standards.

The Municipality strives to:

- providing a timely and accurate response to complaints; and
- using complaints as an opportunity for continuous improvement of program and service delivery

2.0 Definition

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction related to a Municipal program, service, or staff member, where a member of the public believes that the Municipality has not provided a service experience to the complainant’s satisfaction at the point of service delivery, and where a response or resolution is expected.

The Municipality’s definition of a complaint does not include those complaints that are anonymous in nature. To resolve an issue, the Municipality requires the complainant’s contact information. Personal information shall be maintained as required under the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

All complainants will be treated with respect and will not receive adverse treatment or any form of reprisal. The identity (or any identifying information) of the complainant will be made known only to those who need to know in order to consider the complaint.

A complaint is distinct from:

- A request for service made on behalf of a citizen for a specific service;
- A general inquiry or specific request for information regarding a municipal service;
- A suggestion or idea submitted by a member of the public with the aim of improving services, programs, products, or processes; or
- An expression of approval or compliment for a municipal staff, program, product or process.

A request for service is a request made to the Municipality for a specific service or to notify the Municipality that a service was not provided on time. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Requesting that the Municipality fix, rehabilitate, repair a road surface or culvert;
- Reporting a malfunctioning streetlight, or culvert;
- Reporting a by-law infraction.

It should be noted that while a request for service is not a complaint, the issue may become a complaint if not responded to in a reasonable timeframe.

This policy is not for complaints regarding:

- Complaints about Members of Council;
- Complaints from Municipal staff about other Municipal staff or working conditions;
- Compliments;
- Decisions made by Municipal Council or one of its Committees;
- Inquiries;
- Issues that have statutory review and appeal processes including but not limited to Freedom of Information Requests, land use planning, by-law notices, orders and appeals;
- Outside boards and agencies including, for example, the Thunder Bay District Health Unit and the OPP;
- Requests for Service;
- Requests to change a by-law;
- Suggestions;
- Civil matters.

See Schedule "A" attached – Gillies Township complaints simplified flow chart.

3.0 Step 1 - Frontline resolution

The first step is for the complainant to attempt to resolve concerns by dealing with the Clerk directly. These communications may be written or verbal in nature. Where appropriate the Clerk will forward the concerns to the correct Manager for the purposes of gathering

information, providing follow-up information or action, or other reasons necessary to seek information related to the concern.

It is the responsibility of all Municipal employees to attempt to resolve issues or concerns before they become complaints and to identify opportunities to improve Municipal services where deficiencies are noted.

4.0 Step 2 - Process for filing a formal complaint

4.1 Filing the Complaint

Where a frontline resolution cannot be achieved in a reasonable timeframe, complaints may be submitted to the Clerk on the form attached hereto as Schedule 'B' or through the Municipal Website at www.gilliestownship.com. All information on the form must be completed. The Municipality will not accept an incomplete form.

The Municipality shall make all reasonable efforts to assist the complainant in completing the form wherever necessary and requested. However, the complainant must attest to the accuracy of the information on the form as written.

Complaints can be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **confidential**:

By Mail: The Corporation of the Township of Gillies
 1092 Highway 595,
 Kakabeka Falls, ON P0T 1W0
 Attention: Clerk

In person: 1092 Highway 595
 Municipal Office located at Whitefish Valley School – side entrance.

Email: gillies@gilliestownship.com

Website: www.gilliestownship.com

4.2 Receipt and Acknowledgement

The complaint shall be logged and, within fourteen (14) calendar days of receipt of the complaint, the Clerk shall acknowledge to the complainant that the complaint was received.

If the Clerk has determined that a reasonable timeframe/effort has not occurred for a frontline resolution, the Clerk shall notify the complainant of this in the acknowledgment letter and forward a copy to the responsible Manager for a resolution. The letter will indicate a date

deemed reasonable given the nature of the issue and circumstances involved, understanding that the goal is to resolve issues as quickly as possible.

4.3 Investigation

The Clerk shall conduct an investigation into the nature of the complaint by reviewing the issues identified by the complainant, and in so doing they may:

- Review relevant Municipal and provincial legislation;
- Review relevant Municipal policies and procedures and any existing file documents;
- Interview employees or members of the public involved in the issue;
- Identify actions that may be taken to address the complaint or to improve municipal operations; and
- Provide a resolution report.

In extenuating circumstances, the Clerk may designate an impartial third party (e.g. Deputy Clerk) to receive, investigate and respond to formal complaints in accordance with this process and Policy.

If a complaint is made against the Clerk, then the Reeve shall investigate and fulfill all other duties identified as the Clerk's under this Policy.

4.4 Verdict

A decision Within thirty-five (35) calendar days of receipt of a complaint the Clerk shall provide a response in writing to the complainant, which shall include:

- Whether or not the complaint was substantiated;
- If the complaint is not substantiated, the reason for the decision;
- Any actions that the Municipality has or will take as a result of the complaint.

If the Clerk is unable to provide a full response within 35 days due to extenuating circumstances, they shall notify the complainant of the delay and provide an estimate of when a response shall be provided.

5.0 Record

The Clerk shall file a copy of the complaint and response. Such record will be maintained in accordance with the Municipal Record Retention By-law.

6.0 Semi-Annual report

The Clerk shall provide a report to Council outlining, in broad terms, the complaints received, and the resolutions reached. The purposes of this report are;

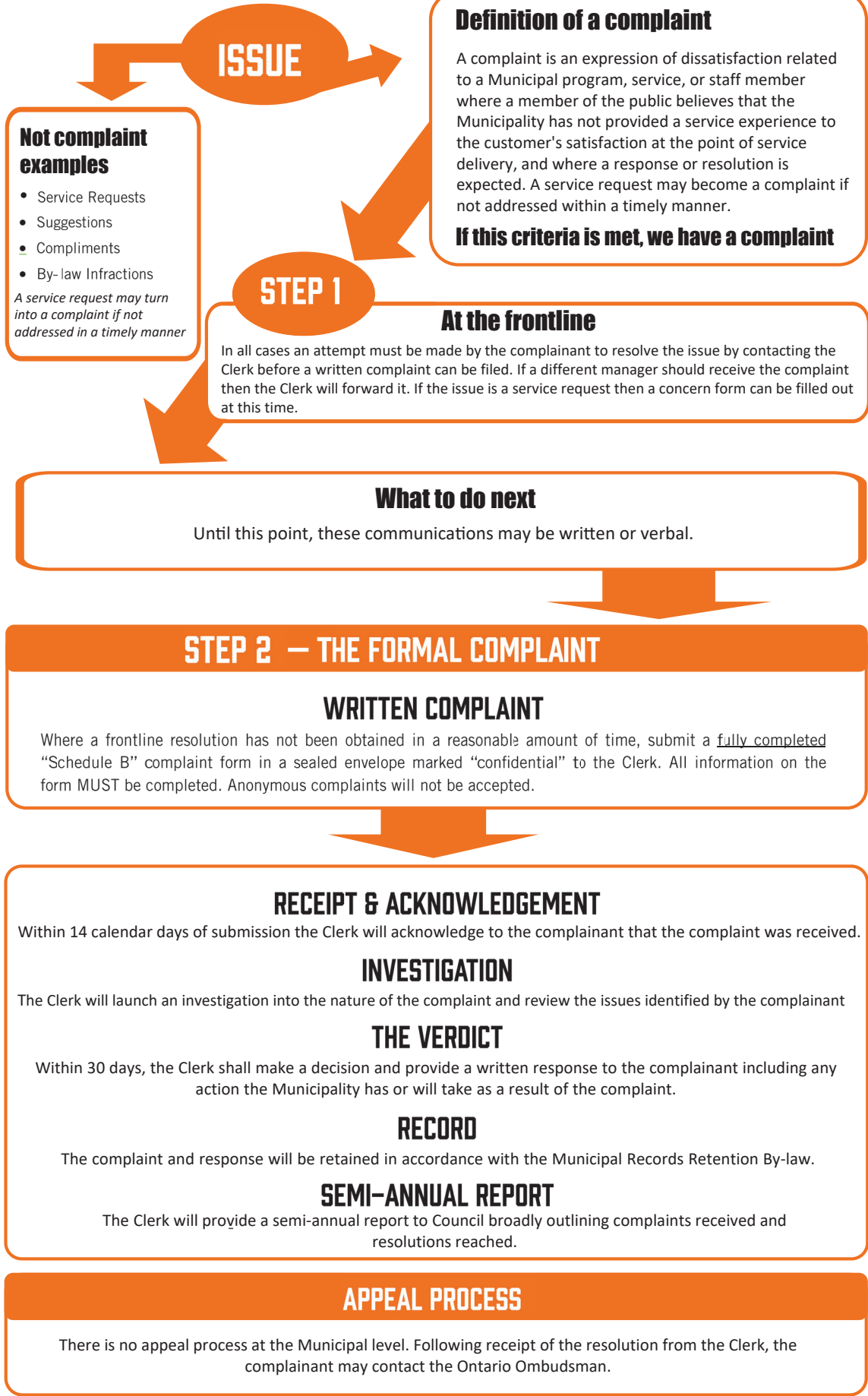
- To ensure adherence to the policy in terms of timelines,
- To identify potential policy issues/service that need to be identified (i.e. do investments need to be made in increasing snow removal service, etc.)

No personal identifying information will be included in this report.

A disagreement with the Clerk's finding under this Policy does not constitute a complaint (see below for next step.)

7.0 Appeal process

There is no appeal process at the Municipal level. Following receipt of the resolution from the Clerk, the complainant may contact the Ontario Ombudsman 1-800-263-1830.





Complaint Form
Schedule "B" to Policy #67

Complaints can be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **confidential:**

By Mail: The Corporation of the Township of Gillies
1092 Highway 595,
Kakabeka Falls, ON P0T 1W0
Attention: Clerk

In person: 1092 Highway 595
Municipal Office located at Whitefish Valley School – side entrance.

Email: gillies@gilliestownship.com

Website: www.gilliestownship.com/complaints

Please provide us with your contact information: (All fields are mandatory unless marked optional)

First Name:

Last Name:

Mailing Address:

Phone Number:

Email address (optional):

Have you read the Policy #67 Complaints Procedures:

Yes No

Have you reached out to the Clerk as outlined in the first step of this policy:

Yes No

What is your complaint? Please include relevant date(s), location, and background information, including municipal employees you have contacted regarding this matter.

How could the situation be improved?

Please refer to the policy to determine what is not considered a valid complaint.

Note: Personal Information on this form is being collected under the authority of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act R. S.O c.f.31,s.39(2) for the purposes of improving Complainant Service.

By signing this form, I am attesting to the accuracy of my complaint.

(Signature)

(Date Year/Month/Day)