

**PROVINCE DE QUÉBEC
COMTÉ DE GATINEAU
MUNICIPALITÉ DU CANTON DE LOW**

BY-LAW NUMBER 2026-001

TO REPEAL AND REPLACE BYLAW NUMBER 2022 -008 CODE OF ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT FOR MUNICIPAL ELECTED OFFICIALS OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF THE TOWNSHIP OF LOW

WHEREAS on May 2, 2022, the Municipal Council adopted Bylaw No. 2022-008 enacting a Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct for Municipal Elected Officials;

WHEREAS, pursuant to section 13 of the Act respecting ethics and professional conduct in municipal matters (RLRQ, c. E-15.1.0.1, hereinafter: the “LEDMM”), every municipality must, before March 1 following any general election, adopt a revised code of ethics and professional conduct to replace the one in force, with or without amendments;

WHEREAS a general election was held on November 2, 2025;

WHEREAS the council deemed it appropriate to strengthen prevention, reporting, and management mechanisms, in accordance with the recommendations of the guides published by the Ministère des Affaires municipales et de l’Habitation (MAMH) and the Commission municipale du Québec (CMQ);

WHEREAS Section 15 of the LEDMM requires mandatory training on ethics and professional conduct for council members;

WHEREAS the current code can be improved for better committee governance and increased compliance with provincial best practices;

WHEREAS the formalities set out in the LEDMM for the adoption of such a revised code have been complied with;

WHEREAS the mayor states that the purpose of this bylaw is to set out the Municipality's core ethical values and the rules of professional conduct that must guide the conduct of a person as a member of the council, a committee or a commission of the Municipality or, in their capacity as a member of the council of the Municipality, of another body;

WHEREAS ethics and professional conduct in municipal matters are essential to maintaining the bond of trust between the Municipality and its citizens;

WHEREAS conduct that complies with municipal ethics and professional conduct must remain a constant concern for council members in order to ensure transparent, prudent, diligent, and honest management of the Municipality, including its public funds, for citizens;

WHEREAS any breach of the Code may have serious consequences for the Municipality and council members;

WHEREAS it is the responsibility of each council member to comply with this Code to ensure that high standards of ethics and professional conduct in municipal matters are met;

WHEREAS a notice of motion was given at a regular meeting of this Municipal Council on January 19, 2026, to the effect that this bylaw would be submitted for adoption;

WHEREAS this bylaw was tabled at a regular meeting of this Municipal Council on January 19, 2026;

THEREFORE, IT IS, it is ordained and decreed by the Municipal Council of the Municipality of the Township of Low and the said Council hereby ordains and decrees as follows, namely :

ARTICLE 1 – PREAMBLE

The preamble to the present by-law forms an integral part thereof.

ARTICLE 2 – SCOPE OF APPLICATION

Unless otherwise specified, the rules set out in these regulations shall guide the conduct of an elected official as a member of the Municipal Council, a Committee, a Commission, or another body when sitting in their capacity as a member of the Council of the Municipality of Low.

ARTICLE 3 – DEFINITIONS

Unless otherwise stated, either expressly or as a result of the context of the provision, the following expressions, terms and words have the meaning and application attributed to them in the present by-law:

3.1	Benefit :	Whether pecuniary or not, includes in particular any gift, donation, favour, reward, service, gratuity, mark of hospitality, remuneration, compensation, gain, indemnity, privilege, preference, compensation, benefit, profit, advance, loan, reduction, discount, etc
3.2	Code:	The present Regulation number 2026-001 enacting the Code of ethics and professional conduct for elected officials for the Municipality of the township of Low.
3.3	Committee – Commission – Body:	A committee or commission of the Municipal Council of the Municipality of Low Township, as established by municipal resolution or bylaw and pursuant to section 82 of the Municipal Code of Quebec, or an authorized agency.
3.4	Council:	The municipal council of the Municipality of Canton de Low.
3.5	Professional conduct:	Refers to all the rules and duties governing the function of council members, their conduct, relations among themselves as well as relations with municipal employees and the general public.
3.6	Ethics:	Refers to all the moral principles underlying the conduct of council members. Ethics takes into account the values of the Municipality.
3.7	Personal interest:	Such an interest is linked to the person of the elected official themselves and is distinct from that of the community they represent.
3.8	Immediate Family Member:	The spouse as defined in the Labor Standards Act, ascendants, descendants, brothers or sisters and their spouses, or a related entity.
3.9	Council member:	Elected official of the Municipality, a member of a committee or commission of the Municipality or member of the council of another municipal body, when sitting in their capacity as a member of the council of the Municipality. The rules of this Code extend, in an adapted manner, to all members (including appointed citizens) of municipal committees or commissions.
3.10	Municipality:	The Municipality of the township of Low.
3.11	Municipal body:	The council, any committee or any commission: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Of a body that the law declares to be a mandatory or agent of the Municipality;2. Of a body whose council is composed mostly of council members, whose budget is adopted by the Municipality or whose funding is provided more than half by the Municipality;3. Of a public body whose council is composed mostly of members from the councils of several municipalities;4. Of any other body determined by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

ARTICLE 4 - APPLICATION OF THE CODE

- 4.1 This Code, and more particularly the rules set out therein, guide the conduct of every council member.
- 4.2 Certain rules provided in this Code also apply after the term of office of any person who has been a council member.
- 4.3 Each council member must annually submit to the clerk-treasurer a written declaration of significant personal interests likely to influence the exercise of their functions (in accordance with the recommendations of the MAMH and CMQ). This declaration is recorded in a register accessible to the public upon request.
- 4.4 Municipal committees and commissions are governed by minimum governance rules: transparent appointment (public call for applications where appropriate), clear mandates, quorum and respect for decorum (see Appendix 1).

ARTICLE 5 – VALUES

5.1 Main values of the Municipality in matters of ethics:

- 5.1.1 Integrity of council members. Integrity requires demonstrating honesty and probity beyond reproach.
- 5.1.2 Honour attached to the functions of council member. Honour requires remaining worthy of the functions entrusted by citizens.
- 5.1.3 Prudence in pursuing the public interest. Prudence requires every council member to assume their responsibilities in relation to the public interest mission entrusted to them in an objective manner and with discernment. Prudence involves gathering sufficient information, reflecting on the consequences of actions and examining alternative solutions. The public interest involves making decisions for the greatest good of the community and not to the advantage of private or personal interests to the detriment of the public interest.
- 5.1.4 Respect and civility towards other council members of the municipality, its employees and citizens. In general, respect requires treating all persons with regard and consideration. Civility involves demonstrating courtesy, politeness and good manners.
- 5.1.5 Loyalty towards the Municipality. Loyalty requires fulfilling one's functions in the best interest of the Municipality, with objectivity and independence of mind. It involves setting aside personal interests and disclosing them transparently, in accordance with applicable rules. Moreover, loyalty involves respecting decisions made by the council.
- 5.1.6 Pursuit of equity. Equity involves demonstrating impartiality, i.e., objective and independent conduct, and considering everyone's rights. Equity requires that no discrimination take place.

- 5.2 These values must guide the Municipality's council members in assessing the deontological rules applicable to them.
- 5.3 Where values are incorporated into Article 5 of this Code, they must, in addition to guiding the conduct of the council member, be respected and applied by them.

ARTICLE 6- RULES OF CONDUCT AND PROHIBITIONS

6.1 The rules of conduct aim in particular to prevent:

- 6.1.1 Any situation where the personal interest of a council member may influence their independence of judgment in the exercise of their functions.
- 6.1.2 Favouritism, embezzlement, breach of trust or other misconduct.

6.1.3 Any misconduct harming the honour and dignity of the office of municipal elected official.

6.2 Rules of conduct and prohibitions.

6.2.1 Council members must conduct themselves with respect and civility.

No council member shall behave in a disrespectful or uncivil manner toward other municipal council members, municipal employees, or citizens by using, in particular, vexatious, disparaging, or intimidating words, writings, or gestures, or any form of incivility of a vexatious nature.

More specifically, all council members must:

- a) Demonstrate civility and courtesy in their exchanges and communications, including those on the Web and social media;
- b) Respect the dignity and honor of other council members, municipal employees, and citizens.

All council members must engage in frank and honest dialogue with other council members in order to reach an informed decision.

All council members must maintain decorum during public or private municipal council meetings. In particular, council members must follow the instructions of the chair of the meeting.

In their communications with municipal employees, the Municipality's partners, citizens, the media, and the general public, council members may not use their position or title to suggest that they are acting on behalf of the Municipality, except in cases where a resolution to that effect has been duly adopted by the municipal council. However, this last prohibition does not apply to the mayor acting within the scope of their duties.

6.2.2 Council members must conduct themselves with honor.

No council member may engage in conduct that undermines the honor and dignity of the office of municipal elected official.

All council members must take reasonable steps to attend public and private meetings of the municipal council. The same applies when representing the municipality at various meetings or events.

No council member may incur an expense that contravenes the Act respecting the remuneration of elected municipal officials (RLRQ, c. T-11.001) or attempt to have such an expense reimbursed.

When traveling and incurring expenses that involve reimbursement by the Municipality, all council members must, as much as possible, limit their costs to what is reasonable under the circumstances.

6.2.3 Conflicts of interest

6.2.3.1 No member of the council shall act, attempt to act, or fail to act in such a way as to promote, in the performance of his or her duties, his or her personal interests, those of any other person.

6.2.3.2 No member of the council shall use his or her position to influence or attempt to influence the decision of another person in a manner that promotes his or her personal interests or those of any other person.

6.2.3.3 No member of the council shall contravene sections 304 and 361 of the Act respecting elections and referendums in municipalities. (RLRQ, c. E-2.2), subject to the exceptions provided for in sections 305 and 362 of that Act.

6.2.3.4 All council members must avoid knowingly placing themselves in a situation where they may have to choose between their personal interests or those of another person and those of the Municipality or another organization when acting in their capacity as council members.

- 6.2.3.5 All council members must demonstrate impartiality and fairness. They must not show favoritism, particularly toward the municipality's suppliers.
- 6.2.3.6 All council members must be independent-minded and exercise objective judgment without personal interest in order to make the best decisions for the municipality.
- 6.2.3.7 A council member who becomes aware of a conflict of interest must take steps to resolve it as soon as possible after becoming aware of it.
- 6.2.3.8 All council members must prevent and avoid situations in which they may be subject to undue influence with regard to a decision that could favor their personal interests or those of any other person.
- 6.2.3.9 All council members must ensure, at all times, that their activities other than those related to their elected office do not conflict with the performance of their duties as municipal elected officials.
- 6.2.3.10 Strict procedure for managing conflicts of interest: Any member of the council or a committee who becomes aware of a conflict of interest concerning them must make a mandatory verbal declaration at the beginning of each meeting concerned. They must abstain from any deliberation or vote on the matter in question and physically leave the room while it is being discussed (in order to avoid any appearance of undue influence, in accordance with CMQ guidelines). This declaration and withdrawal shall be recorded in the minutes.

6.2.4 Receiving or soliciting benefits

- 6.2.4.1 No member of the council shall solicit, induce, accept, or receive, for himself or herself or for another person, any advantage whatsoever in exchange for taking a position on a matter that may be referred to the council, a committee, or a commission of which he or she is a member.
- 6.2.4.2 No member of the council shall accept any gift, hospitality or other benefit, regardless of its value, that is offered by a supplier of goods or services or that may influence their independence of judgment in the performance of their duties or that may compromise their integrity.
- 6.2.4.3 Any gift, hospitality or other benefit received by a member of the municipal council that is not of a purely private nature or covered by section 5.2.4.2 must, when its value exceeds \$200, be reported in writing by that member to the clerk-treasurer of the municipality within 30 days of its receipt.

This declaration must contain an adequate description of the gift, hospitality or benefit received, and specify the name of the donor as well as the date and circumstances of its receipt.

When a council member represents the Municipality at an event and receives a door prize or any other benefit without having to pay a personal fee to receive it, the council member must return it to the Municipality, which will decide how to use or dispose of it.

6.2.5 Council members shall not use municipal resources

- 6.2.5.1 No council member shall use the resources of the Municipality or any other municipal body within the meaning of this Code for personal purposes or for purposes other than activities related to the performance of their duties. However, this prohibition does not apply when a council member uses, on non-preferential terms, a resource that is generally available to citizens.

A council member may not allow a municipal employee or third party to use the resources of the Municipality or any other municipal body related to the Municipality for personal purposes unless it is a service or activity that is generally offered by the Municipality.

A member is prohibited from misappropriating property or money belonging to the municipality for their own benefit or for the benefit of a third party.

6.2.6 Inside Information

6.2.6.1 No member of the council shall, during or after their term of office, use, disclose, or attempt to use or disclose any information obtained in the course of or in connection with the performance of their duties that is not generally available to the public for the purpose of promoting their personal interests or those of any other person.

No member of the council shall use or disclose, for their own benefit or for the benefit of a third party, privileged information or information in their possession that is not otherwise available or that the municipal council has not yet disclosed.

A council member may not disclose in any way, directly or indirectly, the opinion expressed in a private meeting by another council member or any other person participating in the meeting.

All council members must exercise caution in their communications, particularly on the Web and social media, to avoid directly or indirectly disclosing privileged information or information that is not public in nature.

For the purposes of this section, and without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the following, among other things, are considered privileged information and information that is not public in nature: documents and information that cannot be disclosed or whose confidentiality must be ensured under the Act respecting Access to documents held by public bodies and the Protection of personal information (CQLR, c. A-2.1), discussions held during private meetings, and anything protected by professional secrecy, as long as the Municipality has not waived the latter.

6.2.7 Post-mandate

6.2.7.1 No member of the council shall, within twelve (12) months after the end of his or her term of office, hold any position as director or officer of a legal person, or any employment or other function, such that he or she or any other person derives undue advantage from his or her former duties as a member of the council of the Municipality.

6.2.8 Announcement

6.2.8.1 No member of the council may announce, the completion of a project, the conclusion of a contract, or the awarding of a grant by the municipality, unless a final decision regarding the project, contract, or grant has already been made by the competent municipal authority.

6.2.9 Interference

6.2.9.1 A council member may not interfere in the day-to-day administration of the Municipality or give instructions to municipal employees, except when making a decision in a public meeting of the municipal council. In such cases, the instructions are implemented with regard to municipal employees by the general management.

It is understood that a council member who is a member of a committee or commission formed by the municipal council or who is mandated by the municipal council to represent the Municipality in a particular matter may, however, be required to collaborate with senior management and municipal employees. Such collaboration is limited to the mandate assigned to the council member by the municipal council.

Under no circumstances may this provision be applied or interpreted in such a way as to limit the mayor's right of supervision, investigation, and control vested in him or her by law.

6.2.9.2 All council members must forward any complaints they receive to the municipality's director general, who will take appropriate action. If the complaints concern the chief administrative officer, he or she will refer them to the mayor.

6.3 Mandatory training in accordance with section 15 of the LEDMM, each council member must complete training on ethics and professional conduct in municipal matters within the prescribed time limits.

ARTICLE 7 – MECHANISM FOR APPLICATION, MONITORING AND SANCTIONS

- 7.1 The mechanisms for applying and monitoring this Code are those provided for in the LEDMM;
- 7.2 A breach of a rule set out in this Code by a member of the Municipal Council may result in the imposition of the penalties provided for in the LEDMM, namely:
 - 7.2.1 a reprimand;
 - 7.2.2 participation in training on ethics and professional conduct in municipal matters, at the council member's expense, within the time limit prescribed by the Commission municipale du Québec.
 - 7.2.3 the return to the Municipality, within 30 days of the decision of the Commission municipale du Québec:
 - a) of the gift, hospitality or benefit received or the value thereof;
 - b) of any profit made in contravention of a rule set out in this code.
 - 7.2.4 reimbursement of any remuneration, allowance, or other sum received, for the period determined by the Commission, as a member of a council, committee, or commission of the Municipality or an organization
 - 7.2.5 a penalty of up to \$4,000, payable to the Municipality
 - 7.2.6 suspension of the council member for a period not exceeding 90 days, which suspension may extend beyond the day on which his term of office ends if he is re-elected in an election held during his suspension and the suspension has not ended on the day on which his new term of office begins.

When a council member is suspended, he or she may not perform any duties related to his or her office as mayor or councillor and, in particular, may not sit on any council, committee, or commission of the Municipality or, in his or her capacity as a member of the council of the Municipality, of any other body, nor receive any remuneration, allowance, or other sum from the Municipality or such body.

ARTICLE 8 – REPEAL OF BY-LAWS

- 8.1 This bylaw repeals and replaces bylaw number 2022-008 enacting a code of ethics and professional conduct for elected officials, adopted on May 2, 2022, with resolution number 2022-05-117, for all legal purposes, any code of ethics prior to the adoption of this bylaw or any provisions of any bylaw or policy that are inconsistent with those enacted above.
- 8.2 Any mention or reference to a code of ethics and professional conduct for elected officials, whether in a bylaw, resolution, policy, contract, etc., is deemed to refer to this bylaw.

ARTICLE 9 – INTERPRETATIVE AND DECLARATORY PROVISIONS

- 9.1 The masculine and singular genders are used in these rules without discrimination and include the feminine and plural to avoid excessive text.
- 9.2 The title of this bylaw is: Bylaw No. 2026-001 enacting the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct for Elected Officials of the Municipality of Low Township.
- 9.3 The Code does not replace the laws and bylaws in force that govern the Municipality and, more generally, the municipal domain. Rather, it is supplementary and complements the various obligations and general duties applicable to municipal elected officials that are provided for in applicable laws and other regulations.

Thus, the Code shall not be interpreted as allowing any derogation from the provisions contained in the laws and regulations in force that govern the Municipality, municipal elected officials and, more generally, the municipal domain.

- 9.4 This Code shall be interpreted in accordance with the principles and objectives contained in the LEDMM. The rules set forth in that Act are deemed to be an integral part of this Code and prevail over any inconsistent rule set forth in this Code.

9.5 PARTIAL INVALIDITY OF THE BY-LAWS

Should any part or clause of this by-law be declared invalid by a recognized court, the validity of all other parts or clauses shall not be questioned. The Municipal council hereby declares that it adopts the by-law part by part, regardless of the fact that one or more of these parts may be declared null and void by the Court.

ARTICLE 10 - EFFECTIVE DATE

The present by-law will come into force once the formalities required by law have been completed.

Myrian Nadon
Director general and
Clerk-treasurer

Patrick Beaudry
Mayor

Notice of motion:
Adoption of by-law:
Publication (posting) :
Coming into force:

January 19, 2026
February 2, 2026
February 11, 2026
February 11, 2026

Appendix 1

Minimum Governance Rules for Municipal Committees and Commissions

Municipal committees and commissions, including those composed of citizen members, are governed by the following minimum rules, inspired by the practices applicable to the municipal council and the recommendations of the Ministère des Affaires municipales et de l'Habitation (MAMH):

- a) **Transparent Appointment:** Citizen members are appointed by council resolution, preferably following a public call for applications posted on the Municipality's website and by any other appropriate means, to ensure diverse and equitable representation.
- b) **Clear Mandates:** Each committee receives a precise mandate defined by council resolution, including its objectives, powers (advisory or recommendatory), the term of office of members (generally 2 years, renewable) and the subjects to be addressed.
- c) **Convening and Frequency of Meetings:** Meetings are convened by the committee chair or designated secretary, with a minimum notice of 5 days (except in emergencies). Frequency is determined based on needs, but at least once per quarter if the committee is active.
- d) **Quorum:** Quorum is set at a majority of members in office (50% + 1).
- e) **Conduct of Meetings and Decorum:** Meetings follow a prior agenda. Members must demonstrate respect, civility and decorum, in accordance with the values of this Code. The chair ensures good order and may expel a disruptive member.
- f) **Voting and Casting Vote:** Recommendations are made by a simple majority of members present. In the event of a tie, the chair has a casting vote.
- g) **Minutes:** Minutes are prepared for each meeting, including attendance, essential deliberations, declarations of conflicts of interest and recommendations. They are approved at the next meeting and share with all council members.
- h) **Application of the Code of Ethics:** All committee members (elected officials and citizens) are required to comply with the rules of this Code, particularly regarding conflicts of interest, confidentiality and civility.

These rules may be supplemented by a specific regulation for a particular committee (e.g., constitutive regulation for the CCU, advisory committee). The committee may, with council approval, adopt additional internal rules not contrary to this Code.