



Municipality of the District of Argyle

Item: Appointment of investigator
– Code of Conduct Legislation

Date: April 21, 2025

Vision statement

Argyle is the community of choice to invest, live and play.

Mission statement

Argyle invests time & talent in growth opportunities in fishing, tourism, and renewable energy sectors.

Argyle provides affordable taxation while providing safe and healthy communities and strives to engage and inform our residents on decisions that affect them most.

Argyle provides high class, accessible recreational and cultural facilities and helps celebrate its unique heritage and culture and welcomes new residents to our region.

CAO's Recommendation:

The Province of Nova Scotia has mandated that all municipal councils appoint a third-party investigator in support of the newly legislated Code of Conduct Legislation.

All 10 investigators on the attached qualifications list are deemed qualified to assist municipalities in support of this legislation. The CAO focused on firms that were primarily rural based, not associated with our work in the past or potentially could be associated through relationships with our regional municipal partners.

Charles Thompson from Burchell MacDougall LLP fit the criteria and was contacted to confirm availability for this work. He has confirmed a willingness to be our independent investigator, and through his proposal, has demonstrated good experience in this field.

Suggested motion:

Move that Burchell MacDougall Lawyers LLP be appointed as the third-party investigator for the Municipality of Argyle for complaints under the Code of Conduct Legislation, Section 520 of the Municipal Government Act.

MGA considerations:

The Code of Conduct Legislation shall be passed into municipal policy this Spring and already has been endorsed via motion in December of 2024. The legislation is mandated by the province.

Financial considerations:

Hourly rate shall be \$275 per hour, \$1,500 daily and \$1,500 for the completion of a report. Cost per complaint would be on a case-by-case basis.

No retainer fee is paid.

Background:

The legislated Code of Conduct is the culmination of years of work on the part of both the provincial and municipal representatives to improve the accountability of municipal councillors. For the first time, there are legislated consequences for breaches of the code which varies based on the type and volume of breaches. All municipal councillors are mandated to take a 2-hour course on the legislation. Staff supporting Council is also taking the course or will take the course in the coming weeks. The Code regulations is attached as a link here [Code of Conduct for Municipal Elected Officials Regulations - Municipal Government Act \(Nova Scotia\)](#).

The Act explains the process of complaint, and how it is handled by the third party. The investigator must have proven experience in this area of investigation. The Association of Municipal Administrators led the request for qualified firms, and the list is attached. From this list of 10 firms, staff eliminated those with HR experience only, and those that we would have used in the past or may be associated with in the future. A rural based practice was a preference applied in this case.

Burchell Macdougall LLP in Truro has no such connections to Argyle and has notable experience in municipal law. The municipality made contact and can confirm the firm is available to address future complaints if they exist. Any investigator on the list provided by AMANS has met their qualifications.