

Board Policy Chamber Relationship to Elected Public Officials

Background

The Executive has decided that the Hamilton Chamber requires a written board policy concerning its relationship to elected officials. It will be written to support and guide members and staff in meeting the Chamber's commitment to being and to being perceived as the "ethical voice of business".

Customary practice does not permit those holding elected public office to sit as voting members on the Board of Directors, to serve as Committee &/or Division Chairs, or to even participate on a regular or voting basis in the Government Affairs Committee. Our Chamber, however, has no existing written board policy statement. Additionally, guidelines addressing the issue of a Director's status while running for elected office are non-existent. Finally, there are no written policy guidelines for how the Chamber leadership team and employees are to relate to candidates for public office.

Further to the above-mentioned, because one of the Chamber's functions is to represent members to government, some members periodically infer that the 'Chamber' should be either critical or supportive of certain elected officials. In order for the Chamber to truly maintain its integrity in this area of accountability, we need to ensure that board members and staff separate their personal political beliefs and activities from the Chamber and its resources.

Recommended Policy Statement – Board Relationship with Public Officials

- 1. No person shall be eligible for election to any position on the Board of Directors unless he or she shall: Be a representative of a member business in good standing and not be an elected official at the municipal, provincial or federal level of government.**
- 2. Any member of the Board of Directors, or any Committee Chair, who subsequently seeks a nomination to any of the above political offices, shall be:**
 - a) granted a leave of absence from the Board of Directors during the course of their campaign, and have their directorship reinstated should they be unsuccessful in winning public office,**
 - b) excused from the Board or a committee chair position if successful.**
- 3. Under no circumstances may members of the Chamber board and staff use Chamber resources and communication systems for partisan political purposes.**
- 4. The Board of the Chamber may not endorse any political official to assist in his / her election.**