

THIS DOCUMENT PROVIDES EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE MOTIONS, RESOLUTIONS AND POLICY INITIATIVES
INTRODUCED DURING THE 2022-2023 LEGISLATIVE TERM. IT IS BEING RELEASED TO PROMOTE
TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY AND INFORMED PUBLIC DIALOGUE.

Governance, Accountability and Institutional Integrity

Community Engagement Committee

Status: Established and actively operating

What was brought forward

The Community Engagement Committee was created to provide residents with a formal, accessible way to move community ideas from conversation to action. I brought this forward to ensure there was a clear, transparent structure where residents could collaborate, propose initiatives, and engage meaningfully with the municipality.

Council approved the committee's mandate and structure, including dedicated focus areas for community events and volunteer mobilization, environmental action and education, and youth engagement.

Why it mattered for Casselman

Many residents shared that they felt disconnected from municipal decision-making and unsure how to participate beyond elections. Without a clear engagement mechanism, valuable ideas and energy were being lost.

This committee addressed that gap by lowering barriers to participation and creating an inclusive space where residents could contribute regardless of background or political experience. It reinforced the principle that strong local democracy depends on accessible and respectful engagement.

Outcome

The committee has enabled multiple resident-led initiatives, including the Knitting and Crochet Club, the Horticulture Club, and community events and environmental projects. These initiatives have strengthened social connection, increased volunteer participation, and delivered tangible benefits to the community.

The committee continues to operate as an ongoing structure supporting collaboration between residents, staff, and Council.

What this demonstrates about my leadership

This work reflects a leadership approach grounded in trust, participation, and shared responsibility. Rather than centralizing decisions, I focused on building systems that empower residents to lead. It demonstrates a commitment to meaningful community engagement, where participation leads to action and residents play an active role in shaping their municipality.

Professional Development and Leadership Development

Status: The motion has been presented and approved by the council.

What was presented

In 2023, I submitted a request to the city council to formally review and authorize professional development expenditures as an eligible and appropriate investment in the ability of elected officials to lead effectively. This request marked the beginning of a deliberate and long-term commitment to professional development, focused on strengthening leadership, governance, and conflict resolution skills in service to the community. It was submitted transparently and reviewed through an administrative report, in accordance with the applicable municipal expenditure bylaw.

Why this was important to Casselman

Municipal leadership requires the ability to manage complex issues, resolve conflicts, and make decisions that affect residents, staff, and the long-term health of the municipality. I firmly believed that elected officials should be encouraged to continuously develop their skills, especially in areas that promote effective governance and collaboration.

The training offered included post-secondary courses in negotiation, conflict resolution, and group management, specifically chosen for their relevance to the role of mayor and the realities of municipal leadership. Investing in professional development helps ensure that decisions are informed, ethical, and based on best practices.

Result

The council voted in favour of the request, officially authorising training expenses leading to certifications or diplomas from recognized post-secondary institutions as eligible expenses for council members.

This decision set an important precedent by recognizing professional development as a legitimate and valuable component of effective municipal governance.

Resolution supporting Bill 5 – Strengthening the accountability standards of municipal leaders

Status: The council did not approve this initiative.

What was presented

In 2023, I introduced a resolution calling on the province of Ontario to adopt Bill 5, the Ending Harassment and Abuse by Local Leaders Act. This bill aimed to strengthen accountability mechanisms for municipal elected officials in cases of harassment, abuse, and violence in the workplace.

This resolution aims to address a well-known gap in municipal governance frameworks, where elected officials are not subject to the same standards of workplace conduct as municipal staff or employees in other sectors. Under current legislation, even substantiated findings of serious misconduct may result in only limited consequences, thus allowing those involved to remain in office and run for re-election.

Why this was important to Casselman

Municipal councils are not only decision-making bodies, but also workplaces. I believe that elected officials must be subject to clear and enforceable standards of conduct, particularly given their authority over staff, budgets, and public trust.

Supporting Bill 5 aimed to ensure safer workplaces, strengthen professional standards, and demonstrate that municipal leaders are held accountable to the same principles as those required of employees and organizations across Ontario. For Casselman, it was an opportunity to lead by example and affirm his commitment to ethical governance and public trust.

Result

The council chose not to adopt the resolution. The discussions highlighted differing views on the scope of municipal responsibility and underscored the limitations municipalities face when their legislative tools are restricted at the provincial level.

Although the resolution was not adopted, it drew crucial attention to the issue of the accountability of elected officials and the need for more robust governance mechanisms.

What this demonstrates about my leadership

This initiative demonstrates a leadership approach based on integrity, workplace safety, and ethics. It marks the beginning of a sustained advocacy for higher conduct standards within the board and reaffirms my commitment to strengthening governance, transparency, and public trust, even when it means challenging the status quo.

Governance and financial oversight of the CRCVC partnership

Progress report: Concerns raised; governance reforms recommended; unresolved issues

What was presented

From the beginning of my term, I raised concerns about the governance structure and operational relationship between the Municipality of Casselman and the Casselman Downtown Revitalization Centre (CRCVC), a company created by the municipality but independent.

I initiated discussions at City Council to clarify roles, powers, and responsibilities after observing that municipal staff were being directed and solicited by the CRCVC without formal council approval, a clear contractual framework, or defined limits. I emphasized the need for a formal partnership agreement to govern financial transactions, staff involvement, decision-making authority, and reporting mechanisms.

I also raised objections to proposals that treated municipal staff time as a "contribution in kind" or a financial advance to society without guarantees, contracts or protections in place.

Why this was important to Casselman

The CRCVC plays an important role in community development, but in the absence of a clear governance framework, the municipality has been exposed to financial risks, staff burnout, and a lack of clarity regarding responsibilities. As mayor, I felt it was my responsibility to protect municipal resources, ensure staff work within a predictable framework, and uphold the principles of financial accountability and good governance.

A company can dissolve, change management, or incur debt at any time. Without a formal agreement, the municipality could have faced financial losses or a disruption of its operations. Strong partnerships require clear rules, not informal expectations.

Result

Despite my repeated requests for a formal partnership policy and a clearer governance framework, the board refused to prioritize the development of such an agreement. I was the only board member to consistently raise concerns about financial advances, in-kind staff agreements, and the lack of contractual protections.

In 2026, a comprehensive partnership policy governing relations between the municipality and the CRCVC was not yet finalized. This document recounts the efforts made to strengthen governance, protect staff, and ensure accountability in municipal partnerships, despite the resistance encountered.

What this demonstrates about my leadership

This initiative reflects a leadership approach based on responsible financial management, staff protection, and institutional integrity. It demonstrates a willingness to address difficult issues promptly, advocate for structural reforms, and prioritize long-term responsibility over immediate gains or political expediency.

Procedural Integrity and Council Governance Reform

Progress status: Direction approved; reforms initiated and implemented

What was presented

Since taking office, I have raised concerns about the adequacy of the municipality's rules of procedure, which govern how council meetings are conducted, debates are managed, and decisions are made.

I consistently advocated internally for a review and modernization of these rules, highlighting the shortcomings that hindered respectful debate, transparency, and accountability. Strengthening governance processes was a commitment I made to residents, and I firmly believed that clear and modern procedures were essential to restoring public confidence in council decisions.

As part of this work, I also questioned the city council's previous practice of not holding meetings during the summer. I expressed my concerns that suspending meetings for extended periods was inappropriate and incompatible with the responsibilities of an elected official, particularly during a time of growth, development pressures, and operational complexity.

Why this was important to Casselman

Procedural rules are not mere technical formalities. They directly determine the effectiveness with which the municipal council deliberates, collaborates, and represents residents. Outdated or unclear procedures lead to inconsistencies, confusion, and a loss of trust.

For Casselman, improving the clarity of procedures aimed to ensure fairness, predictability, and professionalism within the board. Reinstating summer meetings was part of a continuity of governance approach and ensured that the board remained accessible, responsive, and accountable throughout the year.

Municipal problems don't stop for two months, and residents deserve leaders who remain committed and available.
Result

The council approved the directive to undertake the revision and updating of the rules of procedure. In addition, the council's regular summer meetings have been reinstated, which will allow for timely decision-making and maintain residents' access to their elected officials.

These changes were important steps towards strengthening governance practices and aligning the board's operations with modern standards of accountability and responsiveness.

What this demonstrates about my leadership

This initiative reflects a leadership approach focused on institutional integrity, accountability, and continuous governance. It demonstrates my commitment to ensuring that City Council consistently fulfills its role, pursues the implementation of municipal priorities, and is accountable to citizens at all times.

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