

**From:** Ron Voss Rvoss@lightspeed.ca  
**Subject:** Commentary on Cochrane Mayor Jeff Genung's Nomination for Alberta Municipalities 2023  
**Date:** August 2, 2023 at 2:09 PM  
**To:** awards@abmunis.ca  
**Cc:** hello@abmunis.ca

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To whom it may concern,

At the June 12, 2023 meeting of Cochrane's Town Council our Council passed a resolution to nominate Cochrane's mayor Jeff Genung for the Alberta Municipalities 2023 Award of Excellence. I understand that the purpose of this award is to recognize outstanding civic leadership by past and present municipal elected officials.

On January 5th, 2023, I sent an email to Mayor Genung, "Violation of Section 4.2 (c) of procedural bylaw", with a copy to the other Town Council members pointing out that the mayor was violating a rule in the town's Procedural Bylaw 19-2019, namely, according to clause 4.2 (c) of a section dealing with the Conduct of Meetings in the Town's Procedural Bylaw, "When the Presiding Officer wishes to participate in the debate on a question or motion properly before the Meeting, the Presiding Officer shall vacate the Chair and request the Deputy Mayor to assume the Chair". Shockingly, the mayor tried to brush me off by telling me that clause that 4.2(c) said something totally different, namely, "That section of the bylaw is specific to the mayor making motions within the meeting, not the ability to provide comments on any item on the agenda", basically clear misinformation put forward in an attempt to escape his obligation to comply with 4.2 (c) of the Procedural Bylaw.

As only councillors could lodge a complaint against the mayor according to the Complaint Process described in the Town's Code of Conduct Bylaw 12/2018, I tried to get the councillors to do so, but, disappointingly, not one of them agreed to do so, despite pursuant to section 153 of the Municipal Government Act, Councillors have a duty to adhere to the Code of Conduct established by the Council. Noteworthy, according to clause 19.2. of the Council Code of Conduct Bylaw, "Members are expected to co-operate in every way possible in securing compliance with the application and enforcement of this Bylaw".

Disappointingly, the mayor, seemingly with the support of the Town's Administration, continues to flaunt the Town's Procedural Bylaw to this day.

A protest preceded the Mayor's State of Cochrane address that occurred at the Town's RancheHouse, the evening of February 9, 2023. The mayor waited four days until the February 13, 2023 Town Council meeting to announce under the Councillors' Reports segment of the meeting agenda that during the protest somebody spat on his wife. While this expectedly generated a narrative to smear those who had participated in the protest, he offered no evidence to support his claim. More surprising, while he ran about town expressing his outrage about how he and his family had been mistreated, no effort was made to get the local RCMP to investigate the supposed incident, despite spitting in somebody's face is an assault, a criminal offence according to Canada's criminal code. As his response to his failure to comply with clause 4.2 (c) of the Town's Procedural Bylaw showed, he is quite capable of spinning a good yarn.

A recent scandal has come to light through our local media that Cochrane's CAO, Mike Derricott, held a second form of employment with his wife's consulting business, despite holding a second form of employment being disallowed according to his employment contract with the Town of Cochrane. Apparently, the CAO could be allowed to do so through a motion of Council. While some sort of meeting between the CAO and the Council did take place, most likely an in-camera meeting, there is no record of the CAO having been given formal approval by Council to hold a second job. And, according to the Town's Procedural Bylaw, "When a Meeting is closed to the public pursuant to this Section (*that is, In-Camera Sessions*), no resolution...may be passed at the Meeting." As reported by the local media, Mayor Genung had no qualms about the CAO holding a second job and supposedly made a strong case to that effect at that informal meeting between the CAO and Council.

While Mr. Derricott in light of this controversy having come to light has subsequently stepped away

While Mr. Bennett, in light of the controversy, having come to light, has subsequently stepped away from any involvement in his wife's consulting business Isokarhu Strategies, one wonders if he would have done so were it not for the fact that a social media post by a Cochrane resident had revealed his association with his wife's company. According to the Town's Code of Conduct, "the establishment of a code of conduct for members of council is consistent with the principles of transparent and accountable government". I see little evidence of transparency in the way this matter was handled by the mayor and the Town.

Cochrane's mayor and the other elected Councillors as well have a disrespectful attitude towards residents, particularly those residents who they may not agree with or like. I have sent many emails to the mayor and Council which they have simply chosen to ignore, tantamount, in my view, to passive aggressive behavior. According to Town of Cochrane's Council Code of Conduct, "the public is entitled to expect the highest standards of conduct from the members that it elects to council for the Town of Cochrane", and "the establishment of a code of conduct for members of council is consistent with the principles of transparent and accountable government". Choosing to ignore a resident's emails is hardly indicative of a "transparent and accountable government" and the expectations as per Section 8 of the Code of Conduct of Conduct of "Respectful Interactions with Council Members, Staff, the Public and Others". Disappointing, in that there is no recourse for a citizen in the face of such violation of the Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct does include sections explaining a "Complaint Process". However, since according to the Code of Conduct only the councillors themselves can initiate a complaint process and they are all equally culpable, that gets one nowhere, so there is an absence of accountability.

Appropriately, even the nomination process itself was flawed as a Councillor brought forward such a motion during the Councillors' Reports segment of the June 12, 2023 Town Council meeting agenda. There is nothing in the Town's Procedural Bylaw, that was unanimously passed by the very same Council on March 25, 2019, with limited debated and discussion, that permits a motion to be made in such a way. The only option as per section of 7.2 of the Procedural Bylaw is through a Notice of Motion. How appropriate that a flawed nomination in terms of merit should be brought forward through a flawed process. Considering that the completed award nominations for 2023 were to be submitted by June 16, 2023, perhaps that explains how the council along with support from the Town's Manager, Legislative Services, in a rush, thought it appropriate to bend the rules.

According to Town of Cochrane's Council Code of Conduct Bylaw, "pursuant to section 153 of the *Municipal Government Act*, councillors have a duty to adhere to the code of conduct established by the council" and "the public is entitled to expect the highest standards of conduct from the members that it elects to council for the Town of Cochrane". In particular, according to clause 7.1., under Section 7., Adherence to Policies, Procedures and Bylaws, "Members shall uphold the law established by the Parliament of Canada and the Legislature of Alberta and the bylaws, policies and procedures adopted by Council." I would emphasize "Members shall uphold...the bylaws, policies and procedures adopted by Council", and that the word "shall" in this case means "must"; not "may". Our Town Council has to govern in accordance with the bylaws, policies, and procedures that they make. There is a word for if they do otherwise, namely, "corrupt".

To conclude, our Town and particularly our mayor Jeff Genung does not deserve to be put up on a pedestal.

Sincerely,

Ron Voss, Ph.D.,  
Concerned resident of Cochrane

