

March 19th, 2024

VIA EMAIL

Acting Reeve Mike Garside and Members of Council
Township of Hilton

Dear Acting Reeve Garside and Township Council Members:

Re: Preliminary Information Report Relating to Code of Conduct Investigation

The Integrity Commissioner of the Township, Antoinette Blunt of Ironside Consulting Services Inc., has a conflict of interest in respect of this matter and accordingly, has asked that I assume the role of Acting Integrity Commissioner for the Township. I have accepted that role and wish to provide you with my preliminary information report in accordance with the provisions of Appendix "A" to the Code of Conduct of the Township, which is identified at Schedule "A" to By-law 1234-19.

A request for an investigation has been delivered on March 8th, 2024 in which an individual member of Council is alleged to have contravened the Township's Code of Conduct by contravening Subsection D of its Purpose section and the Influence on Staff section.

The Complainant herein has alleged that a member of Council has taken steps that affected such Complainant, without the authority of Council.

The Complainant has also alleged that the Member of Council conducted themselves in an inappropriate manner through the improper use of influence.

In support of the requested inquiry, I am in receipt of the following documents:

1. Request for information sworn by the Complainant on March 8th, 2024;
2. Letter dated February 5th, 2024, directed to the Complainant by the individual Member of Council;
3. Letter dated February 21st, 2024, to the Complainant from the individual Member of Council;
4. Various text messages from another Member of Council dated February 4th, 2024.

As I am required to provide an initial assessment, set out below is same:

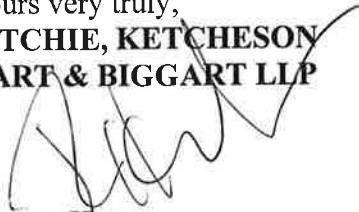
1. I am of the opinion that the complaint or inquiries are within the jurisdiction of the Integrity Commissioner and can be conducted within the law applicable to such inquiry;
2. If determined necessary, the Integrity Commissioner may conduct this inquiry under Sections 33 and 34 of the *Public Inquiries Act*;
3. Assistance from Township staff may be required to access file documents at the Municipal Office which are not available on the Township webpage.
4. The estimated cost of the inquiry will be \$7,500.00, exclusive of HST. This estimate is based on (i) conducting interviews of at least three parties, (ii) reviewing the evidence submitted, (iii) preparing a report and (iv) submitting such report, together with any recommendations, to Township Council. This estimate may be revised from time to time as the inquiry is in process based on information not now available, including, but not limited to, the complexity of the matter and the facts surrounding same.

Subject to the availability of witnesses, it is expected that the completion of the inquiry and submission of final report will be occur before the end of June, 2024.

We shall attend before Township Council for the purpose of presenting this preliminary report.

Yours very truly,

**RITCHIE, KETCHESON
HART & BIGGART LLP**


John R. Hart
JRH/dc