



Business Advocacy Committee

Committee Handbook

Helping to shape policy on a local, provincial and federal level to ensure Drumheller and district is a healthy business environment conducive to fostering growth and prosperity for a wide range of industries within our region.

Approved by DDCC Board of Directors: December 9, 2014

1.0 About the Drumheller & District Chamber of Commerce

For 100 years, the Drumheller & District Chamber of Commerce has been our Town's main business association representing the interests of the business community to all levels of government. The Chamber of Commerce is a membership-based organization comprised of businesses, organizations and individuals. Our vision is to support and engage businesses in making the Drumheller area a vibrant and diverse community.

Our programs are developed to promote and strengthen our local economy and foster opportunities for growth in a wide range of industries. The Chamber works with business and government to develop and implement policies to ensure the Drumheller and district provides an atmosphere that is conducive to business and sustainable community growth.

The Chamber represents over 230 businesses locally, over 23,000 businesses provincially and over 200,000 businesses federally through our partnerships with the Alberta Chambers of Commerce and the Canadian Chamber of Commerce respectively. What does this mean for our community? It means the Chamber is the largest and most influential business association in our country and that our policy efforts do make a difference to our business climate.

The Business Advocacy Committee largely contributes to the Chamber profile and effectiveness. Through our policy and advocacy approach we develop and advocate for new and innovative solutions to improve the business climate on behalf of our members. The Business Advocacy Committee provides opportunities for our members to become involved in the organization by contributing to the Chamber's policy development and advocacy efforts. If you are interested in making a difference within the business community the Business Advocacy Committee may be the right fit for you.

2.0 Chamber Policy Process

2.1 Criteria

Issues must:

- Be of significance to the Chamber's membership
- Be timely
- Be specific and actionable
- Have a direct relationship to the Chamber's vision, mission, goals and priorities
- Be clear and understandable

2.2 Environmental Scan and Issue Identification

Emerging policy issues are identified by an environmental scan, which is a constant process that involves but is not limited to member input, media monitoring, board input, annual surveys, input from partner organizations, strategic planning sessions and dialogue with government and business.

2.3 Initial Assessment and Prioritization

Identified issues are constantly assessed by board and staff for their relevance to the business interest. If a clear connection cannot be made to the business community, the issue is not addressed further. The issue may be monitored or referred to other organizations but the Chamber will not pursue policy development. The Chamber prioritizes and develops policy positions based on a number of factors including membership priorities, strategic opportunities such as government priorities or consultation, issue leadership to capitalize on expertise and department resources.

2.4 Initial Research

In the event an issue does affect business, initial research is conducted. This initial research normally involves contacting the party who drew attention to the issue and determining the scope of business affected. The complexity of the issue is estimated and a review of the issue is conducted.

2.5 Secondary Assessment

The information gathered during the initial research is discussed and the following criteria are used to determine if further policy work should be conducted and resources committed to significant policy research. The criteria include considerations such as:

- Fit with Chamber priorities
- Fit with existing Chamber policy
- Fit with business principles
- Scope of businesses affected
- Evaluation as to partner activity
- Is the Chamber the best organization to take on this issue?
- Complexity of the issue
- What resources are required to research a policy solution?
- The likelihood of success

2.6 Policy Research and Drafting

The creation of a policy document requires considerable research and consultation with involved members, stakeholders and identifying possible solutions. The solutions are assessed and collateral effects of each solution considered. The Chamber policy

will be focused on the best solution for the business community. Development of policy positions is led by staff and supported by ad hoc task forces and committees, as well as external subject matter experts. Often committee meetings are used to host experts to educate members and staff about policy issues and potential recommendations and solutions.

2.7 Policy Review & Board Approval

Policy review is conducted by the policy committee and the Board of Directors. The policy is amended until it is approved or rejected by the Board of Directors. Policies approved by the Board are kept in the electronic policy binder and posted to the Chamber website. The approval of policies will be listed as a motion in the board minutes. The policy remains in effect until rescinded by the Board of Directors.

2.8 Advocacy

Once policy is approved, Chamber Board and staff advocates that policy on behalf of the membership. The process of advocacy will depend on the specifics of a policy and will relate to:

- Who the decision making authority is
- Who the affected stakeholders are
- The publicity value of the policy
- Partners in support of our position

These factors are considered by staff and the policy included in Chamber communication activities. These activities include but are not limited to:

- Meetings with stakeholders and decision makers
- Media releases
- News articles
- Letter writing
- Public/member information sessions
- Political candidates forums
- Media appearances

2.9 Monitoring and Impact Assessment

The Chambers' effectiveness to move policy positions forward is constantly monitored through issue tracking and strategies are adjusted based on external feedback. Once the initial communication process is conducted the situation is evaluated. In particular the response from the decision-making authority is considered as compared to the scope of business affected. The Chamber must manage its time and advocacy efforts, so the Board of Directors determines which priorities will undergo active advocacy. The circumstances regarding policies are monitored and if circumstances change, active advocacy may be reinitiated. A policy will continue to

be part of the Chamber's policy portfolio until success is achieved or the policy is rescinded by the Board of Directors.

2.10 Reactivation of Process

In order for the Chamber to meet the needs of its members in a dynamic global economy the process must be capable of adapting quickly to changing circumstances. The time period involved in many of these steps can be reduced to a very short turnaround. The time from environmental scan to board approval can be measured in days. Dependent on changing circumstances an inactive policy can move to active lobbying very quickly if circumstances warrant.

2.11 Lobbying

The active advocacy of an issue includes lobbying government to take particular action. The Provincial Lobbyists Act requires that someone who annually spends more than 100 hours of their time actually lobbying must register under the Act. The Drumheller & District Chamber of Commerce is a registered lobbyist. Lobbying by persons who are not employees of the Chamber falls under different sections of the Act and should be considered on an individual basis. It is essential that the Executive Director be informed of lobbying that takes place on behalf of the Chamber of Commerce.

Summary: The advocacy process is designed to identify issues of concern to the business community and allow for informed review and decision making by the Board of Directors. Once the Board has decided to adopt a policy the Chamber advocates for changes to be made.

3.0 Business Advocacy Committee

3.1 Process for joining the Business Advocacy Committee

The following guidelines must be met to be considered for the Business Advocacy Committee:

- The applicant must be a Chamber member in good standing
- The applicant can provide meaningful contribution to the committee
- The applicant should represent a beneficial skill/industry/expertise combination in order to contribute to the committee and/or subcommittees
- Only one representative per organization is permitted on the committee

The process for joining the committee is as follows:

1. The interested individual is encouraged to contact Chamber staff to review current committee openings. Staff will provide the

individual with information and materials which should be reviewed.

2. Applicants are then asked to send an email, expressing their interest in joining the committee, to the Chamber staff person assigned to the committee.
3. On receipt of each application, the Chamber staff person will forward on to the Committee Chair for consideration. The Committee Chair or Chamber staff will then issue a formal invitation to the join the committee.

3.2 Process for departure from the Business Advocacy Committee

A committee member can resign from the committee at any time. Members may also be removed from the committee, after a review from the Committee Chair, should the member be underperforming or not able to provide meaningful contribution to the committee.

3.3 Roles and Responsibilities of Committee members

- Contributes and remains engaged in committee work
- Acts as a steward of the Chamber in the community
- RSVPs regrets or attends all regularly scheduled meetings

3.4 Time Commitment

The committee meets once per month from September to June, on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 8:00am in the Chamber Board room. Committee meetings are typically 1-1 ½ hours in duration.

In addition to contribution at committee meetings, members may be asked to conduct research, provide input, meet with appropriate representatives and/or attend sub-committee meetings depending on their involvement with a certain policy topic. Volunteer hours with the Business Advocacy Committee may reach, but should not exceed, five (5) hours per month.

4.0 Business Advocacy Committee Chair

The committee Chair will be appointed by the President of the Chamber Board of Directors and ratified by the Chamber Board at its April meeting each year. The Business Advocacy Committee Chair will be an elected Chamber Board member. The committee Chair is responsible for the following:

- Works with Chamber staff to plan meeting agendas, including the overall implementation of the annual strategic direction and priorities set by the Board of Directors, and the guest speaker line-up
- Presides over monthly committee meetings and ensures they are conducted professionally

- Motivates, leads and acts as the committee spokesperson at meetings
- Reviews meeting minutes for accuracy
- Represents the committee at Chamber Board meetings, and external non-media events as opportunity and availability permits
- Screens and assists with the recruitment of potential new members to the committee in collaboration with Chamber staff
- Advises and provides expertise to Chamber staff on key issues related to the committee
- Acts as a positive advocate for the Chamber in the community

For the purposes of nomination, recommendation and ratification of appointments to the position of Business Advocacy Committee Chair, the Chamber Board of Directors should consider and evaluate each candidate against a set of established criteria that includes, but is not limited to:

- Strong interpersonal and communication skills
- Demonstrated leadership and strong performance at the committee level
- Commitment to the overall Chamber vision and strategic plan
- Ability to be flexible and receptive to the changing business climate
- Demonstrated positive promotion of the Chamber
- Ability to delegate tasks and work cooperatively and effectively with Chamber staff
- Well connected to the business community
- No apparent or actual conflicts of interest

Appendix 1 – Definitions

1.1 Advocacy

Advocacy is a system of actions directed at changing attitudes, policies, positions, practices or programs in society. Advocacy refers to any activity that attempts to change mainly government policy, but also attitudes and perceptions within society.

1.2 Lobbying

Lobbying is a subset of advocacy that aims to influence specific legislation. Advocacy covers a much broader range of activities, which may or may not, include lobbying.

1.3 Policy

Policy refers to the positions that define business issues and propose solutions. These policies are approved by the Chamber Board and remain Chamber policy until amended or revoked by the Chamber Board. The majority of policy positions of the Chamber are available to the public. In rare circumstances the Chamber Board may create a policy in anticipation of events and those policies may not be made public unless the anticipated events materialize. Advocacy policy is distinctly separate from Chamber operational policies regarding the operation of the Chamber (ex. harassment policies, privacy policies, etc.)

1.4 Policy Development

The activity of developing policy generally involves problem definition, research, analysis, consultation and synthesis of information to produce recommendations. Chamber policy is designed to represent business interests and to that end the recommendations are largely outcome focused.

1.5 Consultation

Consultation refers to seeking input (ex. advice, reactions, clarifications, etc.) during the policy development process.

Appendix 2 – Policy Development Criteria

Scope

- Specific, complete, and relevant
- Reasonable and attainable
- Capable of being measured, assessed or evaluated, and
- Of municipal, provincial or national importance.

Basic Content Requirement

Proposed policy resolutions must be formatted in the following manner:

1. **Short title** that reflects the topic
2. A short introductory section titled **Issue**, which provides a concise summary of the issue, problem and/or concern the proposed policy addresses.
3. **Background** that provides context to the proposed policy and the arguments in favour of changing government policy/legislation.
 - a. Describe the problem requiring government action. Why is it an issue? How long has it been an issue? Who does it affect?
 - b. Explain the impact it has on business (ex. loss of new investment, loss of jobs, etc.)
 - c. Reference relevant research materials that support your arguments. Support statements with statistics and note the sources from which they are derived. It is preferable to incorporate source notes in the body of the proposed policy, rather than in footnotes or endnotes.
4. Clear, concise and specific **Recommendations** identifying the necessary government actions required to address the issue.
 - a. The recommendations should reflect the points in the background.
 - b. Because recommendations direct the government to take an action, they will begin with a verb, such as develop, implement, establish, initiate, assist, provide, introduce, improve, explore, commit, etc.
5. Policies should be no more than two pages.