

**Ministry of
Municipal Affairs
and Housing**

Office of the Minister

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234-2022-2058

April 25, 2022

Your Worship
Joanne Savage
Maire/Mayor
Municipality of West Nipissing
jsavage@municipality.westnipissing.on.ca

Dear Mayor and Council:

I am writing in response to recent correspondence, including from your Chief Administrative Officer and Mayor, expressing serious concerns about the function and conduct of the workplace and of council in the Municipality of West Nipissing.

Further, I wish to express my deep and continued disappointment that council has not filled the Ward 7 council seat that was declared vacant on July 21, 2020.

The *Municipal Act, 2001* required council to take action to fill the vacancy within 60 days. I am notifying you that council is not in compliance with that requirement. In my January 4, 2022, letter I stated my expectation that you fulfill that requirement and fill the vacancy as soon as possible. Council has not done so.

Accordingly, I will be making an order using my authority under section 14 of the *Municipal Affairs Act* to require the Municipality of West Nipissing to take steps towards appointing someone to fill the vacancy by June 30, 2022. I will select a facilitator to assist council with this.

It is an offence under the *Municipal Affairs Act* to willfully breach a section 14 order, and a council member convicted of such an offence is subject to a fine of up to \$5,000 and is disqualified from holding any municipal office for a period of two years.

After careful consideration, to address the workplace function and council conduct concerns, I have directed ministry staff to undertake a review of the administrative practices, policies, and procedures of the municipality, and to report back on any recommendations to council for improvements. This report will be made available to council and the public once completed.

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In addition to the review, I have also instructed staff to attend the municipality's public council meetings as an observer for the remainder of this council's term.

Staff in the Ministry's Northern Municipal Services Office will be in touch to arrange for a meeting with you and council to explain the process and timeline for the review. If you have any questions, please contact Kathy Horgan, Manager, Local Government and Housing by phone at 705-677-8167 or by email at kathy.horgan@ontario.ca.

I expect that council and staff will provide their full cooperation and assistance to Ministry staff and the facilitator.

Sincerely,



Steve Clark
Minister

- c. The Honourable Monte McNaughton, Minister of Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development monte.mcnaughton@ontario.ca
Honourable Victor Fedeli, MPP Nipissing victor.fedeli@ontario.ca
Jean-Pierre (Jay) Barbeau, Chief Administrative Officer
jbarbeau@municipality.westnipissing.on.ca