

BY EMAIL

October 20, 2020

Brent Larmer

Clerk and Manager of Legislative Services
Town of Cobourg
55 King Street West
Cobourg, ON K9A 2M2

Dear Mr. Larmer:

Re: Your Inquiry to our Office about the Town of Cobourg

Further to your request, I am pleased to provide you with an overview of the two complaints the Ontario Ombudsman received about the Town of Cobourg between April 1, 2019 and March 31, 2020, as reported in the Ombudsman's 2019-2020 Annual Report.

The Ombudsman's role and function

The Ontario Ombudsman is an independent and impartial officer of the Ontario Legislature. He has the authority to review and investigate complaints about the administration of public sector bodies, including the provincial government, school boards, universities, and municipalities, as well as services provided by children's aid societies and residential licensees, and the provision of French language services.

The Ombudsman is intended to be an Office of last resort. This means that complainants are first expected to raise their concerns using existing complaint processes and appeal mechanisms before our Office will intervene. Many complaints we receive are resolved quickly and efficiently by providing information and referrals, or by reaching out to the public sector body to obtain more information or clarification. In many cases, we are able to assist a complainant without contacting the organization involved.

Depending on the circumstances, Ombudsman staff may share best practices with the organization to address the concerns raised or to improve local administrative processes going forward. If the Ombudsman determines that a formal investigation is necessary, a written notice of investigation is always provided to the organization.

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Complaints about the Town of Cobourg

Our Office received two complaints about the Town of Cobourg between April 1, 2019 and March 31, 2020. While I am not able to provide specific details about these complaints for reasons of complainant confidentiality, I am happy to share some general information about the types of issues complained about by members of the public. During this fiscal year, we received two complaints about the Town of Cobourg. One was about public transit, and the other about appointed accountability officers. The complaints reflected in our Office's 2019-2020 annual report have all been closed.

As we are an Office of last resort, complainants who had not already raised their concerns with the municipality were referred to do so. In cases where an issue should be raised with another body outside of the municipality, complainants were provided with information about where to turn next.

You can read more about how we work collaboratively to resolve administrative issues at www.ombudsman.on.ca. If you are interested in receiving our e-newsletter, you can subscribe to it by emailing thewatchdog@ombudsman.on.ca.

I trust that this information will be of assistance. If you have any questions about the contents of this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me at cmckeich@ombudsman.on.ca.

Sincerely,

Cameron McKeich
Cameron McKeich
Counsel