

Vuntut Gwitchin Government Governance Handbook

Approved by Council of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation at
a duly convened Council meeting on June 12, 2023.



Introduction

The Vuntut Gwitchin Government is committed to strong governance practices that reflect our commitment to open communications and transparent decision-making in partnership with our Citizens.

This handbook includes key policies that will guide how the Council of Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation make decisions, how these decisions are communicated to Citizens, and how we will work collaboratively with the Vuntut Gwitchin Government administration.

This *Vuntut Gwitchin Government Governance Handbook* compiles the following key policies established by the Vuntut Gwitchin Government and associated appendices thereof:

- Vuntut Gwitchin Government Council Rules and Procedures Policy, which details policy, rules, and procedures of Council;
- *Vuntut Gwitchin Government Conflict of Interest Policy* which establishes rules of conduct to maintain fairness and the integrity of the Vuntut Gwitchin Government by limiting situations where a real or perceived conflict of interest could occur; and
- *Vuntut Gwitchin Government Council Communications Policy*, which provides guidance on Council's internal and external communications.

The Vuntut Gwitchin Government belongs to the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation Citizens. The goal of these policies is to support Council to work for Citizens in a respectful, transparent way that is representative of Gwich'in values.

The policies compiled in this Governance Handbook should be considered living documents and will be updated regularly in accordance with Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation Laws as we strive, among other things, to better reflect our Gwich'in language, culture and values.

Table of Contents

Vuntut Gwitchin Government Council Rules and Procedures Policy	3
Vuntut Gwitchin Government Council Conflict of Interest Policy	22
Vuntut Gwitchin Government Communications Policy	31

Vuntut Gwitchin Government Council Rules and Procedures Policy

I. Introduction: Council Rules and Procedures Policy

1. Title

- 1.1 The title of this policy is the Vuntut Gwitchin Government Council Rules and Procedures Policy, hereafter referred to as the 'Council Rules and Procedures Policy.'

2. Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of this VGG Policy is to detail policy guidelines, rules and procedures of the Council.
- 2.2 These policy guidelines, rules and procedures are intended to support VGFN self-governance in accordance with Vuntut Gwitchin Laws and to guide Council in fulfilling their duties and responsibilities.

3. Scope

- 3.1 The Council Rules and Procedures Policy applies to the Council.

4. Definitions

- 4.1 The following definitions apply in this policy:

'Chief' means the leader of Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation chosen as a result of a duly held election;

'Citizen' means a person whose name is on the First Nation Citizenship List maintained by the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation;

'Constitution' refers to the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation Constitution ratified and amended from time to time by the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation General Assembly;

'Council' means the Council of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation as chosen as a result of a duly held election and includes one Chief and four Councillors;

'Council Meeting' means both a Regular Council Meeting and Special or Emergency Council Meeting;

'Councillor' means either the Deputy Chief or Councillor as chosen as a result of a duly held election;

'Director of Finance' means the person appointed to that position by Council;

'Elders Council' means the council comprised of Citizens who are sixty years of age or older and who choose to be a member;

'Executive Director' means the person appointed to that position by Council;

'General Assembly' means a governing body composed of eligible Citizens that provides direction to Chief and Council;

'Meeting Minutes' refers to the official record of the proceedings of a sitting quorum of Council;

'Quorum' means the quorum of the Council required, in accordance with the Constitution, for decision making and is three (3) Council members, including the Chief (or in the absence of the Chief, the Deputy Chief) acting in consultation with the other Councillors, to the extent that is practical;

'Regular Council Meeting' refers to a duly convened meeting called by Council;

'Resolution' refers to a resolution of Council;

'Special or Emergency Council Meeting' refers to a special meeting called by the Chief or a quorum of Council that is not a Regular Council Meeting;

'Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation' hereafter referred to as **'VGFN'** means the collectivity of Citizens who share the language, culture, and laws of the Vuntut Gwitchin and their descendants;

'Vuntut Gwitchin Government' hereafter referred to as **'VGG'** means, for the purposes of this policy the Council and administration forming the government of VGFN but does not include the Elders Council or General Assembly, which exist as separate branches of the government of VGFN who determine their own rules and procedures in accordance with the Constitution;

'Vuntut Gwitchin Law Registry' means the registry of written Vuntut Gwitchin Laws, containing authentic copies of the Constitution, all Vuntut Gwitchin Laws, Resolutions passed by Council and the General Assembly, and all agreements with other governments.

'Vuntut Gwitchin Laws' hereafter referred to as **'VGFN Laws'** includes the Constitution and any law passed in accordance with the procedure set out in the Vuntut Gwitchin Governance Act or relevant legislation;

'Vuntut Gwitchin Government Policies' hereafter referred to as **'VGG Policies'** includes the Council Rules and Procedures Policy and any policy passed by Resolution in accordance with the Constitution.

II. I Policy

5. Council Policy

- 5.1** The Chief and all Councillors will abide by the following in the fulfillment of their duties and exercise of their powers:
- a. VGFN Laws, including the Constitution;
 - b. VGG Policies, including the Council Rules and Procedures Policy; and
 - c. Vuntut Gwitchin Code of Conduct established pursuant to the Constitution.

6. Council Accountability

- 6.1** Council is accountable to the Citizens and responsible for the general welfare and good government of the VGFN.
- 6.2** Council is accountable for setting the strategic objectives of the VGG through consideration of direction provided by the General Assembly.

7. Council Duties and Responsibilities

- 7.1** Council duties and powers are set out in the Constitution (Article IX).
- 7.2** In accordance with the Constitution and the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation Self-Government Agreement, Council duties and responsibilities can be grouped into four key areas:
- a. As law-makers;
 - b. As fiduciary;
 - c. As executive officers; and
 - d. As public representatives.
- 7.3** As law-maker, Council has the following duties and responsibilities:
- a. To ensure any new VGFN Law or amendment(s) to an existing VGFN Law is consistent with the Constitution and any other applicable law;
 - b. To ensure that any advice or recommendation(s) of the General Assembly and the Elders Council is considered in the development and enactment of VGFN Laws; and
 - c. To be informed on the subject matter of all Vuntut Gwitchin Laws.
- 7.4** As fiduciary, Council has the following duties and responsibilities:
- a. To act in the best interest of Citizens;

- b. To protect VGFN rights and assets;
- c. To establish any trust for the benefit of the VGFN (Constitution, Article IX, s.3g);
- d. To set clear policies and guidelines and ensure good management and reporting for VGG;
- e. To approve and monitor VGG budget and operational plan;
- f. To represent the Council by speaking with one voice when final decisions have been made by Council;
- g. To ensure transparency in decision-making in accordance with VGFN Laws and VGG Policies;
- h. To be aware of and act according to all VGFN Laws;
- i. To take reasonable care and to make informed decisions;
- j. To avoid participating in decisions when a conflict of interest exists.

7.5 As executive officers, Council has the following duties and responsibilities:

- a. In accordance with the Vuntut Gwitchin Governance Act, to provide direction and guidance to the only two (2) employees of VGG appointed by the Council: The Executive Director and the Director of Finance;
- b. To set broad strategic goals for VGG, clearly communicating to the VGG administration the goals of Council; and
- c. To respect the chain of command for all VGG employees and contractors, while balancing the need for communication between Council and the VGG administration.

7.6 As a representative body, Council has the following duties and responsibilities:

- a. To represent the views and interests of Citizens with regard to the overall interests of the VGFN, while ensuring no favouritism of any specific group or individual;
- b. To consider direction of the General Assembly through Resolutions;
- c. To act in a manner that protects the credibility and reputation of VGFN;
- d. To maintain regular and respectful communication with all Citizens; and
- e. To participate in public meetings and community events of the VGFN.

- 7.7** In addition to attending and participating at all Council Meetings, the Council, by way of a motion or Resolution, or the Chief can assign other duties and responsibilities to a Councillor, including responsibility for the following:
- a. Engaging with the Executive Director or the VGG administration on a specific issue or a specific directive of Council; and
 - b. Carrying out implementation activities of all or part of a VGFN Law or VGG Policy.

8. Chief Duties and Responsibilities

- 8.1** In accordance with the Constitution, the Chief has specific duties and responsibilities in addition to those of a Councillor, including the following:
- a. To fulfill the role of the chief executive of VGG;
 - b. To represent VGFN, as the general spokesperson;
 - c. To chair all Council Meetings as presiding officer of the Council;
 - d. To establish committees of the Council and appoint members to subcommittees;
 - e. To ensure that Resolutions and VGFN Laws are implemented; and
 - f. To undertake any other activities that may be required of the office of the Chief from time to time.

9. Deputy Chief Duties and Responsibilities

- 9.1** In accordance with the Constitution, the Deputy Chief has specific duties and responsibilities in addition to those as a Councillor.
- 9.2** The Deputy Chief, in the absence or incapacity of the Chief, will serve as acting Chief, chairing Council Meetings, and representing the VGFN, as the general spokesperson.

III. Procedures

10. Council Rules and Procedures

- 10.1** In carrying out their duties and responsibilities, the Chief and all Councillors must conduct themselves according to the rules and procedures in this policy.

11. Council Composition

- 11.1** In accordance with the Constitution, Council consists of the Chief and four Councillors.

12. First Council Meeting Following a VGFN Election

- 12.1** The first Council Meeting will be called within fourteen (14) days following the beginning of each

term of office of Council.

- 12.2** The Council will be given notice (day, hour, and place) by the Executive Director or their designate.
- 12.3** At the first Council Meeting following an election or by-election, a Councillor orientation including the responsibilities, duties and authorities of each Councillor will be put on the agenda for discussion.

13. Orientation of Council

- 13.1** Orientation of the Council will begin within fourteen (14) days of the first Council Meeting following an election or by-election of the Chief and/or Councillor(s).
- 13.2** The Executive Director or their designate will plan to set aside a budget and provide coordination for the orientation of Council following each election or by-election.
- 13.3** Each orientation session will be planned to focus on relevant topics to re-orient incumbent Councillors and to introduce new Councillors to VGFN Laws and VGG Policies.
- 13.4** At the first meeting of the Council following an election or by-election of the Chief and/or Councillor(s), orientation materials will be provided or made accessible to the Chief and all Councillors and will include, but not be limited to:
 - a. Relevant VGFN Laws and VGG Policies;
 - b. Any existing Council strategic plan or strategic planning documents;and
 - d. All recent resolutions of the General Assembly.
- 13.5** The Chief and each Councillor must complete the orientation session, swear or affirm the Oath of Office (Schedule II of the Constitution), sign to acknowledge understanding of the Vuntut Gwitchin Code of Conduct, and complete a Vuntut Gwitchin Government Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form (see Vuntut Gwitchin Government Conflict of Interest Policy) before officially taking office as Chief, Deputy Chief or Councillor.

14. Indemnities and Benefits for Members of Council

- 14.1** In accordance with the Vuntut Gwitchin Governance Act, the Chief and all Councillors will be paid an annual indemnity.
- 14.2** The compensation of the Chief and all Councillors will be consistent with the rates established through the Vuntut Gwitchin Governance Act.

15. Regular Council Meetings

- 15.1** Council will convene Regular Council Meetings on a bi-weekly basis.
- 15.2** The Executive Director will support Council in creating a twelve-month calendar of Regular Council Meetings following a VGFN Election.
- 15.3** Council will convene all Regular Council Meetings in accordance with the following established procedures:
 - a. The Executive Director shall notify the Chief and each Councillor of the day, hour, and place of the meeting at least two (2) business days prior to the Regular Council Meeting;
 - b. The Executive Assistant will serve as official minute taker; and
 - c. An agenda and accompanying materials shall be provided within at least one (1) business days of a Regular Council Meeting.
- 15.4** The Chief will chair all Regular Council Meetings, except in circumstances where the Chief is unable to chair, in which case the Deputy Chief or their designate will chair the Regular Council Meeting.
- 15.5** Preparation of Regular Council Meeting agendas will be overseen by the Chief, with assistance from the Executive Director or their designate, and will be adopted by Council on the day of the Regular Council Meeting by motion of a quorum of Council.
- 15.6** Any Councillor may submit an agenda item to the Executive Director or Chief for consideration on the agenda but must do so within two (2) business days of a Regular Council Meeting.
- 15.7** The Executive Director, in consultation with the Chief, has the ability to defer additional items to the agenda submitted after two (2) business days prior to the Regular Council Meeting.
- 15.8** Regular Council Meetings are conducted on a confidential basis. From time-to-time Council will hold public meetings to provide updates on Council work and seek feedback from the community.

16. Special or Emergency Council Meetings

- 16.1** The Chief or a quorum of Council may summon a Special or Emergency Council Meeting.
- 16.2** Councillors shall be given notice (day, hour, and place) as soon as possible by the Executive Director or the Chief.

17. Quorum

- 17.1** Quorum must exist to hold a Council Meeting in which there are decisions made.
- 17.2** If there is not a Quorum, the Council Meeting may proceed for discussion and information purposes only, but there can be no Council motions, Resolutions, or decisions.
- 17.3** If, at the time of the Council Meeting, the chair finds that there is not a Quorum, the chair may postpone the beginning of the meeting by 30 minutes or another practical time.
- 17.4** If, after 30 minutes or another practical time there is still no Quorum, the Council Meeting will not proceed that day and will reconvene on the next scheduled Regular Council Meeting.
- 17.5** If there is no Quorum, the chair must record the names of all Councillors present and the time for the record in the Meeting Minutes.

18. Attendance at Council Meetings

- 18.1** The Chief and all Councillors must be present, either physically, by teleconference, or by other electronic means, at all Council Meetings, unless there are compelling reasons why the Chief or a Councillor cannot attend.
- 18.2** The Chief and all Councillors attending a Council Meeting electronically will be counted when determining Quorum, provided they have received an electronic copy of the agenda and any meeting materials.
- 18.3** Whether attending a Council Meeting physically or by teleconference, or other electronic media, the Chief or Councillor will make best efforts at all Council Meetings to ensure they are in compliance with the Oath of Office with respect to the treatment of confidential information.
- 18.4** The Chief and all Councillors are expected to attend annual audit meetings in person.

19. Absences and Rules Regarding Non-Attendance

- 19.1** A Chief or Councillor may not be absent from meetings of the Council for three (3) consecutive meetings without receiving authorization by the Council to do so.
- 19.2** In the event the Chief or a Councillor is unable to attend a scheduled meeting, the Chief or Councillor must provide just cause.
- 19.3** Rules regarding non-attendance will apply if a Chief or Councillor misses three (3) consecutive regularly scheduled Council Meetings without just cause.
- 19.4** Rules regarding non-attendance, including the possible consequence of reducing the salary payable to the Chief or a Councillor by a specified amount, and removal from Council, are to be outlined in Vuntut Gwitchin Law or Vuntut Gwitchin Policy.
- 19.5** The Chief or a Councillor may not be penalized for absences if:
- a. The Council Meeting date was changed within five (5) business days of the originally scheduled meeting;
 - b. The Chief or Councillor is otherwise disposed on official VGG business upon approval of the Council;
 - c. The Chief or Councillor is required to attend a family emergency; or
 - d. The Chief or Councillor is ill.

20. Council Meeting Agenda

- 20.1** Prior to each Regular Council Meeting, the Executive Director will work with the Chief to prepare an agenda of all business to be brought before Council for consideration.
- 20.2** In accordance with VGFN Law and VGG Policies, the order of business at each regular Council Meeting shall include the Chief and/or Councillors disclosing any Conflicts of Interest as they relate to the agenda items.
- 20.3** Meeting agendas will contain the following standing agenda items in accordance with the VGG Council Meeting Agenda – Template (Appendix 3), in addition to any other items:
- a. Adoption of the agenda items;
 - b. Disclosure of any Conflicts of Interest;
 - c. Review of Meeting Minutes from the previous Council Meeting for discussion, revisions and adoption;
 - d. Business arising from Meeting Minutes, including any progress and identified outstanding actions;

- e. Correspondence submitted to Council by any Citizen in accordance with any applicable VGFN Laws or VGG Policies;
- f. New Council business;
- g. The date of the next Regular Council Meetings will be confirmed and recorded by the Executive Director or their designate; and
- h. Meeting adjournment.

21. Order and Proceedings

- 21.1** The Chief will act as the chair for Council Meetings.
- 21.2** In the absence of the Chief, the Deputy Chief or another designate shall be chosen from among the Councillors.
- 21.3** Upon Quorum being present, the chair shall call the duly convened Council Meeting to order.
- 21.4** When any Councillor desires to speak, they will address their remarks to the chair.
- 21.5** In the event of more than one Councillor desiring to speak at one time, the chair shall determine who shall speak first.

22. Meeting Minutes

- 22.1** The Executive Director or their designate is responsible for keeping the Meeting Minutes of each Council Meeting.
- 22.2** The Meeting Minutes will be recorded by the Executive Director or their designate in a consistent format, as stipulated in the Vuntut Gwitchin Government Council Meeting Record of Decision Template (Appendix 4.) or in another acceptable format.
- 22.3** A record of attendance will be appended to the Meeting Minutes and will record any absence of the Chief or Councillors.
- 22.4** Council is responsible for ensuring that Meeting Minutes are:
 - a. Recorded for each Council Meeting;
 - b. Reviewed for accuracy at each Regular Council Meeting;
 - c. Accepted through a Council motion upon review and revisions; and
 - d. Logged with the office of the Executive Director.

- 22.5 The Executive Director will work together with Council to ensure that Meeting Minutes are available for review by Council within 5 business days.

23. Confidentiality of Council Meetings

- 23.1 In accordance with the Oath of Office (Schedule II of Constitution) and Vuntut Gwitchin Code of Conduct, which is taken by the Chief and each Councillor before taking office, the Chief or Councillors will not directly or indirectly communicate or reveal confidential matters considered by VGG or made known to the Chief or Councillors.
- 23.2 Council Meeting documents are confidential.
- 23.3 To facilitate open discussion of agenda items, Regular Council Meetings are closed to the public.

24. Consensus Decision Making at Council Meetings

- 24.1 In accordance with the Constitution, Council will strive to make all decisions by consensus and in the event a consensus decision cannot be reached, Council will make the decision by simple majority vote unless consensus decision is specified for a particular decision of Council under any applicable VGFN Law.
- 24.2 The Chief and each Councillor is expected to contribute to the decision-making of Council by:
- a. Preparing for and actively participating in Council Meetings;
 - b. Sharing opinions in an open, respectful and constructive manner; and
 - c. Showing respect and support for the final decisions of Council, even when a final decision is not consistent with their individual views.
- 24.3 Decisions of the Council will be made by a motion or Resolution.
- 24.4 Decisions at Council Meetings made by motion will be achieved in accordance with the following set procedures:
- a. A motion must be brought forward by the Chief or a Councillor present at the Council Meeting;
 - b. The motion must be moved and seconded by the Chief or a Councillor present at the Council Meeting;
 - c. A quorum is required in order to pass a motion;
 - d. At the discretion of the chair, a vote on a motion may be called by voice, show of hands or secret ballot;
 - e. The Chief or a Councillor may abstain from voting, but they must give reasons for abstaining, and these shall be recorded in the Meeting Minutes; and
 - f. For any Chief or Councillor who abstains from voting on a motion, their abstention will be recorded as agreement with the majority.

- 24.5** Resolutions are required in order for a decision of the Council to be effective outside of a Council Meeting.
- 24.6** All Resolutions are required to follow set procedures, which are as follows:
- a. Resolutions will be presented and signed at a Regular Council Meeting or signed as soon as practical following the meeting;
 - b. Council may in special circumstances consider a Resolution at a Special or Emergency Council Meeting;
 - c. A Resolution will be presented in a consistent format specified in the Vuntut Gwitchin Government Council Resolution – Template (Appendix 4);
 - d. A Resolution will be presented by the Chief or a Councillor present at the Council Meeting;
 - e. In order for a Resolution to proceed, the Resolution must be moved and seconded by the Chief or a Councillor present at the Council Meeting;
 - f. When a Resolution is presented at a Council Meeting, Council may, by way of a motion, do any of the following:
 - i. Request an amendment to the Resolution;
 - ii. Approve and sign the Resolution as presented;
 - iii. Table the Resolution until the next Council Meeting;
 - iv. Request more information regarding the Resolution;
 - v. Withdraw the Resolution; or,
 - vi. Reject the Resolution.
- 24.7** The Chief or a Councillor may introduce a Resolution at a time during the Council Meeting when the agenda provides for Resolutions to be tabled for consideration.
- 24.8** Each Resolution will be presented or read by the chair or a designate at the Council Meeting and must be moved and seconded before the chair initiates discussion.
- 24.9** All Resolutions must be approved by a quorum vote of Council present.
- 24.10** When a vote is called on a Resolution, the Chief and all Councillors present must vote unless they abstain or are excluded due to a conflict of interest (see Vuntut Gwitchin Government Council Conflict of Interest Policy).
- 24.11** When the Chief or a Councillor is excluded from voting on a Resolution based on a conflict of interest, that Chief or Councillor will not be included in quorum for that vote.

25. Voting at Council Meetings

- 25.1** In accordance with section 24 of the policy, when a consensus decision is not reached and when Vuntut Gwitchin Government Governance Handbook

voting is permissible under VGFN Law, the Chief and all Councillors will vote by raising their hand or by verbally signaling their voting intentions in the event they are attending electronically.

- 25.2** A Chief or Councillor may abstain from voting, but they must give reasons for abstaining.
- 25.3** In the event that a Chief or Councillor abstains, his or her reasons for abstaining shall be recorded in the Meeting Minutes.

26. Vuntut Gwitchin Laws and Policies

- 26.1** Council may develop new VGFN Laws or revise existing VGFN Laws provided that they are not inconsistent with the Constitution.
- 26.2** Council will follow the legislative process detailed in the Vuntut Gwitchin Governance Act when considering new VGFN Laws or amendments to existing VGFN Laws.
- 26.3** In some instances, in accordance with the Vuntut Gwitchin Governance Act and other VGFN Laws, the approval of new VGFN Laws or VGG policies or amendments to existing VGFN Laws or VGG Policies will require the engagement and ratification of Citizens.
- 26.4** The Constitution provides that Council may determine their own rules and procedures.
- 26.5** In accordance with the Vuntut Gwitchin Governance Act, Council will document all VGFN Laws and VGG Policies and deposit copies to the Executive Director for filing in a Vuntut Gwitchin Law Registry.
- 26.6** The Vuntut Gwitchin Law Registry is established as a centralized document management and control system.

27. Role of Council in Strategy Planning

- 27.1** Council has a key role in strategic planning for VGG and will undertake to do the following:
 - a. Establish, regularly review, and when needed revise a Council strategic plan;
 - b. Develop and regularly review, in cooperation with VGG administration, any existing strategic plans for VGFN, such as comprehensive community plans, which should include a review of any VGG vision, as well as any long and short-term goals, objectives, VGFN Laws and VGG Policies;
 - c. Develop, review and revise a communication strategy to help ensure Citizens are well informed and involved in Council's strategic planning activities; and
 - d. Define or revise specific goals and objectives for VGG programs, services and departments, in cooperation with the VGG administration.

Appendix 1.

Vuntut Gwitchin Government Council Oath of Office

Each person who is elected to the position of Chief or Councillor is required by this Constitution to swear or affirm loyalty to the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and obedience to this Constitution, and must answer the following questions asked by an Elder accordingly:

Question: “Will you accept from the people the sacred responsibility of government? Will you be loyal to the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, uphold its values, and protect and obey its Constitution?”

Answer: “I will.”

Question: “Will you seek the guidance of the Elders and respect their wisdom? Will you be faithful to your role and to those who seek your advice, and will you keep secret all matters entrusted to your confidence?”

Answer: “I will.”

Question: “Will you work to preserve the peace and unity of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, to secure the well-being of the people, and to provide good, effective, and accountable government for the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation?”

Answer: “I will, and may I have the wisdom to continue to protect our land and our people.”

Appendix 2. Vuntut Gwitchin Government Council Draft Agenda

Time:

Date:

Location:

1. Call to Order
2. Attendance
3. Adoption of the Meeting Agenda
4. Disclosure of any Conflicts of Interest
5. Review/Adoption of Previous Council Meeting Minutes
 - a. [Insert date of previous Council Meeting Minutes]
6. Business arising from Council Meeting Minutes
 - a. Progress
 - b. Outstanding Actions
7. Correspondence/Petition Submissions by Citizens
8. New Business
 - a. Including any correspondence
9. Council Resolutions
 - a. Identification and review of Council decisions requiring action
 - b. Assignment of responsibility in relation to follow up for each action
 - VGCR #2021-XXX-XX-XX
10. Scheduling of next Council Meeting
 - [Insert date of next Council Meeting]
11. Adjournment

Appendix 3. Vuntut Gwitchin Government Council Meeting Record of Decision Template

Time:

Date:

Location:

1. Call to Order [insert time]
2. Attendance
 - i. Attendance sheet circulated for signatures of all those Council Members in attendance (See Attachment A – Attendance Sheet Template)
3. Adoption of the Meeting Agenda
 - i. Changes:
 - ii. Additions:
 - iii. Adoption: That the Agenda of [insert date] be adopted as amended. Moved and seconded.
4. Disclosure of any Conflicts of Interest
 - i. Disclosures: Having reviewed the Meeting Agenda, do any of the Council Members wish to disclose a conflict of interest pertaining to any of the scheduled agenda items?]
5. Review/Adoption of Previous Council Meeting Minutes
 - i. [Insert date of previous Council Meeting Minutes]
 - ii. Business arising from Council Meeting Minutes

Item	Discussion on progress	Action/timeline/responsibility
b. [insert item]	[insert discussion]	[insert action/timeline/responsibility]

6. Correspondence/Petition Submissions by Citizens
7. New Business

Item	Discussion on progress	Action/timeline/responsibility
b. [insert item]	[insert discussion]	[insert action/timeline/responsibility]

8. Vuntut Gwitchin Council Resolutions

- Identification and review of Council decisions requiring action
- Assignment of responsibility in relation to follow up for each action
- VGCR 20XX-XXX-XX-XX (Note: VGC Resolutions need to be read into Council Meeting Minutes and signed)

Council Resolution #	Name of Resolution
Moved	
Second:	
Question:	
Carried:	
Who does it go to:	

9. Scheduling of next Council Meeting

- [Insert date of next scheduled Council Meeting]

10. Adjournment

Appendix 4. Vuntut Gwitchin Government Council Resolution

MMDDYYYY – #

RE: [RESOLUTION TITLE]

WHEREAS:

A. On [MONTH] [DAY], 2023, Council passed Council resolution MMDDYYYY – # which made a:

THEREFORE, THE COUNCIL OF THE VUNTUT GWITCHIN FIRST NATION RESOLVES THAT:

The ****

THIS RESOLUTION being duly approved by a quorum of the Council at a meeting duly convened on [MONTH][DAY], 20XX at Old Crow, Yukon.

Chief Name

Deputy Chief Name

Councillor Name

Councillor Name

Councillor Name

Vuntut Gwitchin Government Council Conflict of Interest Policy

I. Introduction

1. Title

- 1.1 The title of this policy is the Vuntut Gwitchin Government Council Conflict of Interest Policy hereafter referred to as the 'Council Conflict of Interest Policy.'

2. Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to maintain fairness and avoid the appearance of favouritism by limiting the involvement of the Chief or Councillors where they could be in a real or perceived conflict of interest.
- 2.2 Establishing clear rules of conduct respecting conflict of interest will help maintain the integrity of the Vuntut Gwitchin Government and good governance of the VGFN.

3. Scope

- 3.1 The Council Conflict of Interest Policy applies to the Council of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation.

4. Definitions

- 4.1 The following definitions apply in this policy:

'Chief' means the leader of Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation chosen as a result of a duly held election;

'Citizen' means a person whose name is on the First Nation Citizenship List maintained by the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation;

'Council' means the Council of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation as chosen as a result of a duly held election and includes one Chief and four Councillors;

'Councillor' means either the Deputy Chief or Councillor as chosen as a result of a duly held election;

'Executive Director' means the person appointed to that position by Council;

'Immediate Family' means father, mother, foster parent, brother, sister, spouse (including common-law spouse), child, stepchild, ward, father-in-law, mother-in-law, grandparents, grandparents-in-law,

grandchild, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, any relative or individual permanently residing in the household.

‘Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation’ hereafter referred to as **‘VGFN’** means the collectivity of Citizens who share the language, culture, and laws of the Vuntut Gwitchin and their descendants;

‘Vuntut Gwitchin Government’ hereafter referred to as **‘VGG’** means, for the purposes of this policy, the Council and administration forming the government of VGFN but does not include the Elders Council or General Assembly, which exist as separate branches of the government of VGFN who determine their own rules and procedures in accordance with the Constitution;

‘Vuntut Gwitchin Laws’ hereafter referred to as **‘VGFN Laws’** includes the Constitution and any law passed in accordance with the procedure set out in the Vuntut Gwitchin Governance Act or relevant legislation;

‘Vuntut Gwitchin Government Policies’ hereafter referred to as **‘VGG Policies’** includes the Council Rules and Procedures Policy and any policy passed by Resolution in accordance with applicable VGFN Laws and VGG Policies.

II. Conflict of Interest

5. Definition of Conflict of Interest

5.1 The Chief or a Councillor may be in a conflict of interest if:

- a. They exercise an official power or perform an official function knowing that in doing so there is potential opportunity to further their private interest; or
- b. They participate in making a decision that benefits or appears to benefit that Chief, Councillor and/or their Immediate Family.

5.2 Conflict of Interest includes, but is not limited to, situations where:

- a. The Chief or Councillor personally benefits from any transaction including pecuniary transactions involving VGG except for those benefits available to all Citizens;
- b. The Chief’s or Councillor’s private affairs or financial interests are in conflict with their duties, responsibilities and obligations, or could result in a public perception that a conflict exists;
- c. The Chief’s or Councillor’s position may be used to gain or grant an advantage to oneself, or a friend, Immediate Family member, business associate or partner, or other business relationship in which the Chief or Councillor has an interest;

- d. The Chief or Councillor uses information, resources, monies, property or an opportunity acquired through the Vuntut Gwitchin Government for personal benefit, including profit, political or personal gain;
- e. The Chief or Councillor has the potential to benefit financially or materially, either directly or indirectly, through an outside third party; and/or
- f. The Chief or Councillor uses their position of authority with an outside company or organization, or First Nation, and through their authority, assisting in making decisions that benefit the company, organization or First Nation at the expense of VGG.

6. Council Responsibilities

- 6.1** The Chief and each Councillor must, at all times, work in the best interest of VGG and VGFN.
- 6.2** The Chief and each Councillor will avoid putting themselves in a position in which their private or family interest and those of VGG might be perceived to be in conflict.
- 6.3** The Chief and each Councillor will avoid situations in which there is a real or apparent conflict of interest that could interfere, or could be perceived to interfere, with their judgement or ability to act in the best interest of VGG and VGFN.
- 6.4** The Chief and each Councillor will disclose any real or perceived Conflicts of Interest before taking any part in any discussion or decision in relation to a personal or financial interest, an Immediate Family Member or a business or organization in which they or a member of their Immediate Family has an interest in.
- 6.5** Failure of the Chief or Councillor to disclose a real or perceived conflict of interest will be understood as a breach of this policy and may be subject to disciplinary action.

III. Gifts and Personal Benefits

7. Gifts and personal benefits definition

- 7.1** The Chief or Councillor is in a conflict of interest if they accept a gift or personal benefit that might reasonably be seen to have been given to influence their decisions.

8. Accepting gifts or personal benefits

- 8.1** The Chief or Councillor may accept a gift or benefit if the gift or benefit is considered:
 - a. an exchange common in business relationships;
 - b. an exchange common at public and/or cultural events;
 - c. the normal protocol or way of business associated with the person's office or duties;

- d. to be of nominal value; or
- e. to be given by a friend or a relative solely as an element of that relationship.

8.2 If a Chief or Councillor accepts a gift or benefit while performing their duties and in accordance with subsection 8.1, the gift is the property of the Vuntut Gwitchin Government. The Chief or Councillor is required to disclose in writing the acceptance of that gift or benefit to the Executive Director who will review to ensure compliance with Vuntut Gwitchin Laws and Vuntut Gwitchin Policies. The Executive Director in consultation with Council will determine how to manage the gift, including adding it to VGG's assets, or divesting to the Chief or Councillor in the case of a small, nominal gift.

IV. Conflicts of Interest Procedures

9. Disclosure Statements

9.1 A Chief or Councillor must each submit a Vuntut Gwitchin Government Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement Form, hereafter 'Disclosure Statement' setting out the following:

- a. a list of any outside activities for which the Chief or Councillor is receiving remuneration;
- b. the names of all corporations in which they have an interest as shareholder, director, or officer; and
- c. the names of each proprietorship, partnership, or other business entity in which that have an interest.

9.2 The Disclosure Statement must be submitted by a new Chief or Councillor at the beginning of each term of office of Council.

9.3 The Executive Director or their designate must maintain a permanent record of all Disclosure Statements.

9.4 In the case that a Chief or Councillor becomes aware of a change in their affairs which would change the information provided in the Disclosure Statement, a new Disclosure Statement will be submitted and appended to the original Disclosure Statement.

10. Reporting a Conflict of Interest

10.1 A Councillor who has knowledge of a real or perceived conflict of interest will disclose the circumstances of the conflict to the Chief, who will bring the matter to the attention of the Council.

10.2 In the case that it is the Chief who may be in a real or perceived conflict, the matter will be disclosed to the Deputy Chief, who will bring the matter to the attention of the Council.

11. Review of Reported Conflicts of Interest

11.1 All disclosures of potential or actual conflicts of interest shall be reviewed immediately and with due diligence by the Chief, or Deputy Chief, so as to determine an appropriate course of action, and where appropriate, to determine any necessary disciplinary course of action.

12. Disclosing a Conflict of Interest

12.1 A Chief or Councillor who is in a real or perceived conflict of interest will disclose that he or she is in a real or perceived conflict of interest and any steps they may be taken to address the conflict at or before the Council Meeting in which the matter that is the subject of the real or perceived conflict is being discussed.

12.2 After making a disclosure, the Chief or Councillor who is in a real or perceived conflict of interest will not take part in discussion or voting on Council business that the matter of the conflict is related to and will not be counted towards the quorum.

12.3 A Chief or Councillor will not be found to have breached this policy if he or she discloses the information relating to the real or perceived conflict of interest and recuses themselves from any discussion or decision-making process in relation to the matter.

12.4 A Chief or Councillor may be found to not be in a conflict of interest if, after having disclosed the real or perceived conflict of interest, the remaining Councillors pass a motion to confirm that no conflict of interest exists.

V. Employment and Contracts

13. Employment and contract conflicts with the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation

13.1 In accordance with VGFN Law, the Chief may not directly or indirectly enter into a contract with VGG while they are the Chief.

13.2 A Councillor may not directly or indirectly enter into a contract with VGG while they are acting as Councillor unless:

- a. the contract is awarded fairly and in accordance with the procurement policies and procedures of VGG; and
- b. the interest is disclosed.

13.3 The Chief or a Councillor may engage in remunerative employment within VGG or outside of VGG and/or participate in off-duty activities outside the position provided that:

- a. they do not interfere with the Chief's or Councillor's duties and/or performance on Council;
- b. they do not bring the reputation of VGG in disrepute;
- c. they are not perceived as an official act of VGG or to represent the Council's policy or opinion;

- d. they do not involve the use of time intended to be used towards the Chief's or Councillor's duties;
- e. they do not involve the unauthorized use of the work time of VGG employees;
- f. they do not involve the unauthorized use of VGG premises, services, equipment, or supplies; and
- g. the Chief or Councillor does not receive an unfair advantage due to their position on Council.

Appendix 1. Council Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement Form

Note: Please note when a question is “not applicable”.

Name: _____

This statement discloses information as of: _____

1. I have read and understood the Vuntut Gwitchin Government Council Conflict of Interest Policy.
2. I have listed on the attached page(s) details of:
 - a. Any corporation or other legal entity of which I beneficially own, directly or indirectly, more than 10% of the voting rights;
 - b. Any trust or estate in which I have a substantial beneficial interest or for which I serve as a trustee; and
 - c. Any real property I own within the traditional territory of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation or that may be impacted by any decision by the Vuntut Gwitchin Government.
3. I hold the following offices, directorships, and employment position(s) in addition to my role as Chief, Deputy Chief, or Councillor:
4. An actual, potential or apparent conflict of interest with my role as Chief, Deputy Chief or Councillor may arise because:
5. Other than as disclosed above, I do not have any relationship or interest that could compromise, or be perceived to compromise, my ability to exercise judgment with a view to the best interest of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation.
6. I agree to provide an updated Disclosure Statement Form annually or as may be required by changed circumstances.

Relations information

- i. Names of spouse, dependents and immediate family members: (children, siblings, parents, grandparents, grandchildren)
- ii. Employer of spouse, and any other offices and directorships held by spouse:
- iii. Employer of dependents and any other offices and directorships held by dependents (if any):

iv. Corporations or other legal entity of which I and/or my spouse/dependents beneficially own, directly or indirectly, more than 10% of the voting rights:

v. Any trust or estate in which I and/or my spouse/dependents have a substantial beneficial interest or for which I serve as a trustee:

vi. Any real property I and/or my spouse and dependents own within the traditional territory of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, or that may be impacted by any decision by the VGG:

Appendix 2. Vuntut Gwitchin Government Council Gift Disclosure Form

Name: _____

This statement discloses information as of: _____

- 1. I have read and understood the Vuntut Gwitchin Government Council Conflict of Interest Policy.
- 2. I have listed below details (item, from whom it was received, etc.) of a gift(s) that I, my spouse or dependent received since my last disclosure as a result of my position as an elected official of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation:

3. What is the approximate value of the gift?

4. The gift(s) described above has become property of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation:
YES / NO (circle one)

5. If NO, please provide the reasons it has not become the property of Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation:

Signature

Date

Print Name

Witness/Executive Director Signature

Date

Print Name

Vuntut Gwitchin Government Communications Policy

I. Introduction

1. Title

- 1.1 The title of this policy is the Vuntut Gwitchin Government Council Communications Policy hereafter referred to as the 'Council Communications Policy'.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on communication for Council both internally (among Council and with the Vuntut Gwitchin Government administration) and externally (with Citizens, partners, other governments or other parties including the general public).

3. Definitions

- 3.1 The following definitions apply in this policy:

'Chief' means the leader of Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation chosen as a result of a duly held election;

'Citizen' means a person whose name is on the First Nation Citizenship List maintained by the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation;

'Council' means the Council of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation as chosen as a result of a duly held election and includes one Chief and four Councillors;

'Councillor' means either the Deputy Chief or Councillor as chosen as a result of a duly held election;

'Executive Director' means the person appointed to that position by Council;

'Public Interest Information' means information that is essential to the welfare of the public including, but not limited to changes in VGFN Law and VGG Policy, implementation of new laws and policies, changes to budgets, major decisions of the Council concerning Vuntut Gwitchin rights, title, lands resources and matters of public safety.

'Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation' hereafter referred to as **'VGFN'** means the collectivity of Citizens who share the language, culture, and laws of the Vuntut Gwitchin, and their descendants;

'Vuntut Gwitchin Government' hereafter referred to as **'VGG'** means, for the purposes of this policy, the Council and administration forming the government of VGFN but does not include the

Elders Council or General Assembly which exist as separate branches of the government of VGFN who determine their own rules and procedures in accordance with the Constitution;

‘Vuntut Gwitchin Government Policies’ hereafter referred to as **‘VGG Policies’** includes the Council Rules and Procedures Policy and any policy passed by Resolution in accordance with applicable VGFN Laws and VGG Policies;

‘Vuntut Gwitchin Laws’ hereafter referred to as **‘VGFN Laws’** includes the Constitution and any law passed in accordance with the procedure set out in the Vuntut Gwitchin Governance Act or relevant legislation.

4. Principles of Council Communications

- 4.1** Council will govern in a manner that acknowledges that, at the highest level, Council communication is about developing good governance relations with Citizens and building trust.
- 4.2** The Chief and all Councillors will speak with “one voice” in communicating final decisions and direction of the Council.
- 4.3** Council is committed to open communications both with Council members, VGG staff, and externally.
- 4.4** Council communications will demonstrate respect for one another, VGG staff, Citizens and all external audiences.

5. Confidentiality

- 5.1** Confidential information includes but is not limited to information regarding personal issues such as illness or medical information, grievances, personal legal proceedings, discrimination issues, salaries, addresses, phone numbers and non-factual or unproven information.
- 5.2** Confidential information received by Council will not be shared externally with anyone outside of VGG unless directed by the Executive Director, in collaboration with Council.
- 5.3** In cases where the distinction is not clear, the Executive Director will make the final decision on what may be released, with advice from Council, and legal counsel.
- 5.4** The Chief and all Councillors have a duty to respect the confidentiality of Council during their elected tenure and after their tenure has ended, in accordance with VGFN Laws and VGG Policies.

II. Internal Communications

6. Guidelines for Council Internal Communications Accountabilities

- 6.1 The Chief and all Councillors are expected to communicate with one another through official VGG communications tools (e.g., VGG email addresses) and in accordance with VGG communications policy.
- 6.2 The Chief and all Councillors are expected to respond to all inquiries in a timely manner, whether by addressing the issue at hand or providing an introduction to the appropriate VGG staff.
- 6.3 When possible, any direction to VGG staff should be communicated through the Executive Director or the Director of Finance.
- 6.4 Should the Chief or a Councillor need to communicate directly with a member of VGG staff, the Executive Director must be copied on all correspondence or made aware of any communications.

7. Communicating Council Decisions

- 7.1 The Executive Director or their designate is responsible for communicating Council decisions to VGG staff in a timely manner, through one or more of the following communications channels:
 - a. Staff email;
 - b. Director and Managers meetings;
 - c. All staff meetings; and/or
 - d. VGG staff bulletin board.

III. External Communication

8. Roles and Responsibilities

- 8.1 Council is collectively responsible to:
 - a. Collaborate with the Executive Director to ensure the communications policy is in place internally and externally;
 - b. Collaborate with the Executive Director and Communications Manager to ensure effective communications processes are in place to engage with and report to Citizens; and

- c. Ensure that all communications with Citizens, other governments, partners, the media or other parties is professional and courteous.

8.2 In accordance with the Vuntut Gwitchin (Discrimination and Harassment Policy), the Chief and all Councillors have a right to a safe working environment and are empowered to leave any interaction that is derogatory, offensive or threatening in any way.

- a. Any derogatory, offensive or threatening interactions should be reported to Council via email or at the next regularly scheduled Council meeting, to be recorded in the Council Meeting Minutes.

9. The Chief will be the official spokesperson for the VGFN, in accordance with VGFN Laws. Public Interest Information Disclosure

9.1 Council will use the following guidelines when disclosing Public Interest Information:

- a. Public Interest Information will be shared using a variety of tools and means to make it accessible to all Citizens regardless of age and place of residence;
- b. Disclosure of Public Interest Information will be timely, accurate, clear, and complete;
- c. Public Interest Information will be distinct, recognizable and consistent;
- d. The Chief, with advice from Councillors, will determine if the information is deemed Public Interest Information;
- e. The Executive Director will be responsible for working with the Communications Manager or individual VGG Departments to coordinate communications materials such as press releases, website posts, social media posts, emails in line with VGG strategic communications document; and
- f. Public Interest Information will be shared with other governments, partners, and the general public at the discretion of Council.

10. Communicating with Media

10.1 All media relations activities will be coordinated by the Communications Manager.

10.2 Media inquiries must be responded to in a timely manner; wherever possible, this should mean within one (1) business day.

10.3 The Chief is the spokesperson for VGFN, unless the Chief delegates that responsibility to a Councillor, VGG staff member or technical expert on a specific topic or issue.

10.4 As spokesperson for VGFN, the Chief is responsible for ensuring that every effort is made to provide Council with details of major communications activities of the spokesperson, including but not limited to the following:

- a. Notifying Council of public appearances and live interviews as spokesperson; and
- b. Notifying Council of interviews, quotes, news articles or other representation of the spokesperson in print, online, or other media.

10.5 Delegation of authority as spokesperson must be done in writing in the following manner:

- a. Via official VGG email, if delegating the authority in a temporary manner (e.g., for a specific media request); or
- b. Via official Council motion, if delegating the authority in a permanent manner (e.g., naming a spokesperson for an entire project or issue).

10.6 The Executive Director and the Communications Manager are responsible for ensuring that every effort is made to provide Council with details of major communications activities before the communications materials are made public, through one of the following means:

- a. Sharing all VGG communications such as VGG press releases prior to issuing;
- b. Sending a briefing note of upcoming communications campaigns (e.g., for an ongoing event or issue); or
- c. Attending and sharing a verbal update at a Council Meeting, to be reflected in Council Meeting Minutes.

11. Communications Partnerships

11.1 Council may decide to enter into a communications partnership with an external party (e.g., industry proponent, government, or NGO) through a Council Resolution.

11.2 No third-party should at any time speak on behalf of VGG or Council.

11.3 Any communications materials prepared for an external partnership must be reviewed by the Executive Director and VGG communications staff and approved by Council.

11.4 Any quotes attributed to the Chief or a Councillor or VGG staff must be approved in writing by the attributed person.

IV. Vuntut Gwitchin Government Council Communication Tools

12. Email Usage

- 12.1 The Chief and all Councillors will be given an official VGG email address that will be used for VGG-related business.
- 12.2 VGG emails will be used to communicate with the Chief, Councillors, Citizens, or businesses and stakeholders for Council-related purposes without limitations.
- 12.3 Email communications should at all times be professional and in accordance with the Vuntut Gwitchin Government Code of Conduct.
- 12.4 The Chief and all Councillors will share their VGG email addresses with people they meet at business events, or gatherings, as appropriate.
- 12.5 The Chief and all Councillors will register for newsletters, platforms and other online services that will help them in their role.
- 12.6 The Chief and all Councillors will not register for illegal, unreliable, disreputable or suspect websites or services.
- 12.7 The Chief and all Councillors will not distribute insulting or discriminatory messages and content.
- 12.8 A Chief or Councillor will not intentionally send spam to emails of other people, the Chief, or Councillors.
- 12.9 The Chief and all Councillors should avoid using their Council emails for personal use.
- 12.10 Email signatures should be professional and represent Council.
- 12.11 A template email signature will be provided to Council and updated regularly to reflect, among other things, out-of-office notifications, and/or the use of greetings in the Gwich'in language.
- 12.12 The Chief and Council acknowledge that the emails sent and received during their appointment is the property of the VGFN and, upon termination of appointment, will remain the property of VGFN.

13. Email Security and Privacy

- 13.1 The Chief and all Councillors are provided with a password and log in information from the VGG administration.
- 13.2 The Chief and all Councillors must not share their passwords with other Councillors or people outside of Council.

- 13.3** The Chief and all Councillors should avoid opening attachments and clicking on links when the content is suspicious.

14. Social Media Usage

- 14.1** When using their personal accounts, the Chief and all Councillors will ensure others know that the personal account statements do not represent VGG.
- 14.2** The Chief and all Councillors should not state or imply that their personal opinions are authorized or endorsed by Council.
- 14.3** When sharing information about VGG, the Chief or Councillor must make reasonable effort to ensure they are not sharing information that will later be announced in an official capacity by VGFN.
- 14.4** All social media posts made by the Chief or Councillor during their entire term of office must be made in accordance with the Vuntut Gwitchin Government Code of Conduct, and should not be derogatory, threatening, or offensive in any way.
- 14.5** If the Chief or a Councillor wishes to post information to official VGG social media accounts, the request must be directed through the Communications Manager, who may consult with the Executive Director, at their discretion.