

Principles
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Integrity Commissioner's
Recommendation Report^(revised)
Regarding Complaint Against Councillor Robinson
Respecting Statements About Staff Corruption and
Statements About Residential School Mass Graves

June 15, 2026

Executive Summary:

- [1] This report results from a complaint filed against Councillor Robinson in relation to a video interview posted to YouTube on April 27, 2026 which contains statements about the veracity of claims about mass graves at a former residential school site in Kamloops, British Columbia; and which contains statements which disrespect and malign staff, and falsely accuse senior staff of corruption.
- [2] The complaint alleged that the Councillor's conduct breached her obligations under the Code of Conduct.
- [3] We find that the complaint in regard to challenging the veracity of claims about mass graves at a former residential school site, while hateful and offensive, is a matter of opinion. For reasons outlined below, we find that the jurisdiction to prohibit what could be characterized as residential school denialism lies with the Federal Government¹ and not with an Integrity Commissioner.
- [4] We find that the complaint in regard to maligning staff and alleging corruption is substantiated.
- [5] We find that this is repeat behaviour, which has previously been sanctioned as a breach of the Code.
- [6] We are recommending a 90-day suspension of pay.

Process

- [7] Given that the complaint arises entirely out of a video posted to YouTube, which remains available for review, and that the conduct complained of has previously

¹ Bill C-254 is proposed legislation which would provide appropriate recourse for such comments.

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been the subject of a full investigation and report to Council, an expedited complaint process approved by Council in August 2025 has been followed.

[8] As in that previous investigation, the disparaging and unsubstantiated remarks made toward staff are available to view on YouTube, and the nature of the Respondent's statements about staff are identical to the statements considered in that previous report.

[9] This process, which maintains procedural fairness for the Respondent, includes the following elements:

- a. Reviewing the complaint to determine whether it is within scope and jurisdiction and in the public interest to pursue;
- b. Reviewing the video posted to YouTube; and,
- c. Providing the Respondent with the opportunity to review and provide comments to the Integrity Commissioner's Preliminary Findings Report, prior to finalizing and submitting a Recommendation Report.

Code Provisions

[10] Relevant provisions of the Code are set out below:

Policy Objective:

2. Attaining an elected position within one's community is a privilege which carries significant responsibilities and obligations. Members of Council are held to a high standard as leaders of the community and are expected to become well informed on all aspects of municipal governance, administration, planning and operations. They are also expected to carry out their duties in a fair, impartial, transparent, professional, and respectful manner.

3. All Members of the Council of the City of Pickering are committed to protecting and promoting the well-being and best interests of the citizens of the City with the highest standards of integrity and ethical conduct. This Code is an affirmation of this commitment It recognizes and is based on the following key statements of principle:

- (a) Members are committed to performing their duties of office, and arranging private affairs, in a manner that promotes public confidence in the integrity of Member and respect for Council as a whole.
- (b) Members are committed to acting and being seen to act with integrity and impartiality that will bear the closest scrutiny.
- (c) Members are committed to serving their constituents in a conscientious and diligent manner.

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(d) Members are committed to working with City officials and staff in a conscientious and respectful manner.

[...]

05 Interaction with the Public, Other Members, and Council/Staff Relations

05.01 Members have a duty to treat members of the public, one another, and staff, with respect and dignity and without abuse, bullying, or intimidation.

05.02 Members have a duty to ensure that the City's work environment is safe, and free from discrimination and harassment.

05.06 Respect shall be shown at all times for the roles and responsibilities which Members of Council have in the decision-making process through elected office and which City Staff have in formulating and providing recommendations to Council.

05.09 Notwithstanding the provisions noted above, Members shall have regard for the following City Policies that outline further parameters pertaining to Council/Staff relations including:

b) Workplace Harassment

The Complaints

[11] This report results from a complaint filed against Councillor Robinson in relation to statements made in an interview posted to YouTube by Rebel News in which she disrespected, disparaged and harassed staff, and falsely accused specific identified staff of corruption.

Analysis

[12] On April 27, 2026 Rebel Media posted a video to YouTube of an interview with the Respondent. In that video, the Respondent:

- made statements clarifying a post she had made in early April questioning the veracity of claims of mass graves at the Kamloops residential school site.
- Made statements maligning staff, alleging staff corruption.

Statements about Mass Graves at Residential School Site:

[13] The Respondent's statements reference a post she had made in early April.

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- [14] In early April 2026 the Respondent posted a short 3-minute video in which she claimed that information regarding mass graves had been exaggerated and manipulated by politicians and the media, and that the most recent evidence, which in her view proved that these claims were false and unfounded, was not being sufficiently publicized.
- [15] In the video, the Respondent stated that the evidence showed there were no graves, no bodies, and no evidence of human remains. Therefore, “the nightmare was exaggerated, manipulated and unproven.”
- [16] In response, no doubt, to collective outrage at her statements, in the April 27, 2026 Rebel News interview, she clarified that she was not denouncing the existence of residential schools or that their survivors experienced real harm; only that the existence of mass graves was a lie.
- [17] The Respondent’s statements align with residential school denialism.
- [18] Residential school denialism has been defined by some as the “rejection, the twisting or the misrepresentation of basic facts about residential schooling”.
- [19] Agreeing that the residential school system existed, but denying some of the worst horrors (which mass graves point to) is tantamount to twisting the facts to reject what are well-established events.
- [20] It is similar to trends such as climate change denialism, where people use their platform to sow doubt about well-established events, by cherry-picking facts.
- [21] Bill C-254 (introduced in October 2025 to replace Bill C-413 which died before the start of the new Parliamentary session) would make it a criminal offence for anyone to willfully promote “hatred against Indigenous peoples by condoning, denying, downplaying or justifying the Indian residential school system in Canada or by misrepresenting facts relating to it”.
- [22] In other words, the legislation to prohibit an individual from misrepresenting facts about the residential school system – because it can be treated as willfully promoting hatred – has not yet been passed.
- [23] This proposed legislative is modelled on provisions recently added to the Criminal Code that makes it a crime to condone, downplay or deny the Holocaust, other than in private conversation.
- [24] The history of legal attempts in Canada to curtail offensive denialism touching on racism is long and storied. An excellent paper, written by Bruce P. Elman (former Law Professor at Windsor University, Chair for the Centre for Constitutional Studies at the University of Alberta, and Municipal Integrity Commissioner) entitled

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Combatting Racist Speech: The Canadian Experience, published in the Alberta Law Review, 1994 canvasses some of the challenges in attempts to eradicate racist speech.

[25] The clear and obvious solution lies in the enactment of targeted legislation such as Bill C-254.

[26] Just as the Criminal Code was eventually amended in 2022 to criminal Holocaust denial, so it would be appropriate for an amendment to criminalize the kind of denialism which the Respondent is engaging in.

[27] However, as repugnant and objectionable as the Respondent's statements are regarding her view that there is evidence to prove the the existence of mass graves was "a lie", a municipal council Code of Conduct is an ineffective and unsuitable instrument to reckon with such speech.

[28] For this reason, we will not be pursuing whether her position regarding the existence of residential mass graves is properly measured against the ethical framework of the Council Code of Conduct.

[29] In our view, the prohibition which Bill C-254 is intended to import into the Canadian Criminal Code would be the appropriate mechanism to address the Respondent's statements.

Statements about Staff:

[30] In regard to the statements pertaining to City staff, we find that the Councillor has repeated false claims (for example that staff are corrupt²) which are identical to the statements which have previously been found in breach the Code of Conduct and for which the Respondent has previously been sanctioned.

[31] We have previously investigated the Respondent's allegations of corruption and found find that her allegations, statements and claims against staff were entirely baseless and false.

[32] Further, we found that her allegations against staff were both disrespectful and harassing.

[33] When presented with our preliminary findings report, the Councillor did not deny her statements. Rather, she denied that her statements constituted harassment, abuse or any breach of the Code.

[34] The Councillor provided several justifications of her statements, beginning with her right to Freedom of Expression under s.2(b) of the Charter.

² We consider it unnecessarily inflammatory to repeat the actual statements here

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Charter Protections

[35] As we have explained in the past reports, the freedom of expression, while a fundamental freedom, is not unrestricted; indeed section 1 of the Charter qualifies its guarantee of rights and freedoms and specifically recognizes that the right to free expression is “subject to such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in free and democratic society.”

[36] For instance, laws against defamation in all its forms are an example of such a limitation, as are laws and rules against harassment in all its forms.

[37] City Council adopted a Code of Conduct to guide and demand a level of integrity, respect, ethics, and decorum necessary to allow efficient and effective governance and citizen representation.

[38] The Respondent has voluntarily taken on this role; so long as she is a member of Council, she is subject to the Code and is required to conform to the standards of behaviour required by Council.

[39] The standards of behaviour set out in the Code minimally impair a Councillor’s ability to comment on decisions and fully express themselves.

[40] In balancing the Member’s freedom of expression rights against the objectives of the Code of Conduct, we are satisfied that, on balance, the limits imposed by the Code of Conduct are proportionate and justifiable.

Context of Interview

[41] The Councillor submitted that in taking into consideration the full and proper context of her statements – made within the interview framework in a conversational and responsive nature - the statements were merely “generalized”, “not directed at specific individuals *in a personal capacity*”, and therefore their characterization as harassing or abusive is “inconsistent”.

[42] We find that the statements were most certainly directed at specific individuals in their professional capacity, and that the statements landed as harassing and abusive – which is not altered by them being uttered in the course of a conversational interview.

Good Faith and Public Interest

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[43] The Councillor submitted that her statements were made in good faith and in the public interest, grounded in matters of public concern and directed at ensuring accountability within municipal governance.

[44] We find that the statements, identical statement for which she has previously been sanctioned for breaching the Code of Conduct, do not reflect statements in the public interest or statement made in good faith. If indeed the Councillor were acting in good faith, she would not be making statements which she knows breach the Code of Conduct and therefore attract negative consequences.

Evidence and Disclosure

[45] The Councillor claims a lack of evidentiary disclosure.

[46] We note that the interview on which the complaint is based was an interview between the Councillor and Rebel News, and posted publicly to YouTube, where (at the time of writing this report) it remains.

[47] We further note that the reference to earlier reports, recommendations, sanctions and Council directions all were before Council while the Councillor was present, and remain publicly posted to the City's website.

Scope creep, irrelevant considerations

[48] The Councillor submitted that in making our findings, we rely on "unrelated commentary, prior complaints and/or broader ideological positions".

[49] As detailed in this report, we rely on a review of the Councillor's statements contained in the video posted to YouTube and on the Recommendation Report regarding identical statements, previously found to breach the Code and attract a sanction.

[50] These are entirely relevant to the complaint in this report.

Repetitive Sanctioning, Lack of Finality

[51] The Councillor submitted that our report purports to sanction her for "prior statements and matters for which she has already been sanctioned".

[52] In fact, this report does not purport to sanction the Councillor for matters which have already been the subject of a report and sanction.

[53] Rather, we find that the Councillor has repeated statements, knowing that they constitute harassment, abuse and breach the Code of Conduct.

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Procedural Fairness

[54] The Councillor submitted that the process undertaken in this complaint investigation is procedurally unfair.

[55] As detailed in paragraphs [7], [8] and [9], the Councillor has been accorded procedural fairness throughout.

Timing

[56] The Councillor submitted that this complaint investigation, having been initiated after May 1, 2026, contravenes the “restrictions” of the *Municipal Act* applicable during an election year.

[57] The Councillor is in error.

[58] The *Municipal Act* allows integrity commissioners to continue to investigate and report on complaints filed during an election year up until nomination day which, for the 2026 municipal election, is August 21, 2026.

[59] The relevant provisions of the *Municipal Act* are as follows:

Termination of inquiry when regular election begins
s. 223.4

(7) If the Commissioner has not completed an inquiry before nomination day for a regular election, as set out in section 31 of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, the Commissioner shall terminate the inquiry on that day.

Other rules that apply during regular election

(9) The following rules apply during the period of time starting on nomination day for a regular election, as set out in section 31 of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, and ending on voting day in a regular election, as set out in section 5 of that Act:

1. There shall be no requests for an inquiry about whether a member of council or of a local board has contravened the code of conduct applicable to the member.
2. The Commissioner shall not report to the municipality or local board about whether, in his or her opinion, a member of council or of a local board has contravened the code of conduct applicable to the member.
3. The municipality or local board shall not consider whether to impose the penalties referred to in subsection (5) on a member of council or of a local board.

[60] The relevant provision of the *Municipal Elections Act* is as follows:

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Nomination day

s. 31 Nomination day for a regular election is the third Friday in August in the year of the election.

[61] The complaint investigation in this matter is compliant with the Municipal Act.

Findings:

[62] Given all the foregoing, we find that the Councillor's conduct as outlined above violated the Code of Conduct, specifically the duty set out at 5.01 to treat members of staff with respect and dignity and without abuse, bullying, or intimidation.

[63] We find that the complaint filed by the CAO in this instance is substantiated, and the conduct of the Respondent in making the statements maligning staff breached the Code.

[64] We find that she is intentionally maligning and impugning the reputation of the CAO, the City Solicitor and City staff.

[65] We find that she has disrespected staff, falsely and maliciously harassed them, and accused senior staff of corruption.

[66] The Councillor's conduct constitutes a pattern of disrespect and harassment.

[67] We find that she has breached the Code of Conduct, in particular, Policy Objective 2 and 3, and Rules 5.01, 5.02, 5.09 and 26.04.

[68] We find that the Councillor's statements which might be considered residential school denialism are beyond the scope of a municipal Code of Conduct, but would likely fall under proposed amendments to the Criminal Code contained in Bill C-254.

Recommendations and Concluding Remarks:

[69] We are of the view that the Respondent's conduct represents a continued pattern of blatantly, intentionally and wilfully defying the provisions of the Code of Conduct.

[70] In our view, a significant change in behaviour is necessary. As such, we believe that a significant sanction is warranted.

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[71] Under the *Municipal Act*, upon receipt of a recommendation report from the integrity commissioner, Council may impose a reprimand or a suspension of pay for a period of up to 90 days.³

[72] We note that this is the ninth time that we have had to report publicly in regard to conduct of Councillor Robinson that has been found to breach the Code of Conduct and on each occasion, a further suspension of pay has been imposed.

[73] More to the point, it is repeat behaviour, which has previously been sanctioned as a breach of the Code.

[74] We are recommending a 90-day suspension of pay.

[75] We therefore recommend:

- 1) That the remuneration paid to Councillor Robinson be suspended for a total of 90 days.

[76] We will be available to introduce this report and respond to questions during the Council meeting at which this report is considered.

³ For information, the circumstances giving rise to this report occurred prior to the enactment of “Bill 9”, the *Municipal Accountability Act, 2025*, the schedules of which have not yet been brought into force. Accordingly no consideration of the processes or penalties provided for in Bill 9 were relevant to the formulation of this report.

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About Principles Integrity and the Complaint Process

Principles Integrity was appointed the Integrity Commissioner for the City of Pickering on November 15, 2022. We are also privileged to serve as Integrity Commissioner for a number of other Ontario municipalities. The operating philosophy which guides us in our work with all of our client municipalities is this:

The perception that a community's elected representatives are operating with integrity is the glue which sustains local democracy. We live in a time when citizens are skeptical of their elected representatives at all levels. The overarching objective in appointing an integrity commissioner is to ensure the existence of robust and effective policies, procedures, and mechanisms that enhance the citizen's perception that their Council (and local boards) meet established ethical standards and where they do not, there exists a review mechanism that serves the public interest.

The City has as part of its ethical framework a Code of Conduct which is the policy touchstone underlying the assessments conducted in this report. It represents the standard of conduct against which all members of Council are to be measured when there is an allegation of breach of the ethical responsibilities established under the Code of Conduct. The review mechanism contemplated by the Code, one which is required in all Ontario municipalities, is an inquiry/complaints process administered by an integrity commissioner.

Integrity commissioners carry out a range of functions for municipalities (and their local boards). They assist in the development of the ethical framework, for example by suggesting content or commentary for codes of conduct. They conduct education and training for members of council and outreach for members of the community. One of the most important functions is the provision of advice and guidance to members to help sort out ethical grey areas or to confirm activities that support compliance. And finally, but not principally, they investigate allegations that a person has fallen short of compliance with the municipality's ethical framework and where appropriate they submit public reports on their findings, and make recommendations, including recommending sanctions, that council for the municipality may consider imposing in giving consideration to that report.

It is important that this broad range of functions be mentioned in this investigation report. Our goal, as stated in our operating philosophy, is to help members of the Pickering community, indeed the broader municipal sector and the public, to appreciate that elected and appointed representatives generally carry out their functions with integrity. In cases where they do not, there is a proper process in place to fairly assess the facts and, if necessary, recommend appropriate sanctions. In every case, including this one, the highest objective is to make recommendations that serve the public interest, if there are recommendations to be made.

Our role differs from other 'adjudicators' whose responsibilities generally focus, to state it colloquially, on making findings of fact and fault. While that is a necessary component when allegations are made, it is not the only component.

Our operating philosophy dictates the format of this report. The tenets of procedural fairness require us to provide reasons for our conclusions and recommendations, and we have done that. Procedural fairness also requires us to conduct a process where parties can participate in the review and resolution of a complaint.