



<b>Title:</b>	<b><i>Flag Raising and Half-Masting Policy</i></b>		
<b>Policy Owner:</b>	<i>Administration</i>	<b>Approved By:</b>	<i>CAO</i>
<b>Effective Date:</b>	<i>September 22, 2025</i>	<b>Approval Date:</b>	<i>September 22, 2025</i>
<b>Revision Date:</b>	<i>N/A</i>	<b>Next Review:</b>	<i>September 22, 2029</i>
<b>Revision #:</b>	<i>1</i>	<b>No. of Pages:</b>	<i>7</i>

## 1.0 DIRECTIVE STATEMENT

The Town of Grimsby (the “Town”) recognizes that flags are important symbols of honour and pride and must be treated in a respectful and consistent manner. The Town supports lowering flags to half-mast as a symbol of collective mourning or commemoration. To celebrate together the strength of Town’s diversity and inclusivity, the Town offers the opportunity for the raising of community flags on the Town’s community flagpole.

## 2.0 DIRECTIVE PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide a standard for which flag raising requests are received by the Town, processed and issued in recognition of individuals, events, organizations, or community groups of significance in Grimsby, in a consistent, respectful, inclusive and appropriate manner.

## 3.0 SCOPE

The aspects of this policy pertaining to Community Flag Raisings only applies to the flagpole at Town Hall. The elements of this policy regarding general flag etiquette and half-masting apply to all flag poles at Town Hall. Flagpoles at fire department facilities are governed by a separate policy. Flagpoles and flags at other Town facilities are exempt from this policy.

## 4.0 DEFINITIONS

**Half-Masting** – The position of a flag, approximately halfway up the post or pole. This is done as a symbol of respect or mourning or to commemorate significant dates.

**Town Facilities** – Properties, buildings and parks managed or owned by the Town.

**Community Flagpole** – The flagpole at Town hall designated for flying community flags.



**Flag** – A piece of cloth of distinctive colour, design, emblem, or symbol to represent nations, provinces, states, municipalities. It is also used to describe a banner, which looks like a flag bearing a symbol, logo, slogan to represent a charitable or non-profit organization, but does not have a flag status.

**Order of Precedence** – The positioning of flags in priority of importance, order or rank.

**Town** – The Corporation of the Town of Grimsby.

**Town Clerk** – The Clerk appointed by the Council pursuant to requirements of section 228 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, as amended, or their designate.

**Council** – The Council of the Town.

**Mayor** – The person who has been elected as mayor of the Town, or the person who is acting in that capacity at the Town, in accordance with the Town's Procedural By-law.

**CAO** – The Chief Administrative Officer of the Town.

## 5.0 APPLICATION

The display of flags in Canada is not governed by legislation but established practice. This policy adheres to the Government of Canada "Rules for Flying the National Flag of Canada". The federal guidelines' etiquette is an adaptation of international usage and of customs the federal government has been observing for many years.

### General Flag Etiquette

The Town will fly the flags of:

- Canada;
- Province of Ontario; and,
- Various (Community Flagpole).

These flags are flown on the three (3) outdoor flagpoles at Town Hall. The third flagpole flies community flags as requested and approved.

The location of the position of honour depends on the number of flags flown and the chosen configuration. When three flags are flown, the position of honour is in the centre. The Canadian flag should be placed in the centre, the Provincial flag on the left, and the



community flag on the right. The National Flag of Canada should always be flown on its own flagpole, hoisted first, and lowered last.

Where there is more than one flagpole and the personal standard of a visiting member of the Royal Family, the Governor General, or the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario is flown, every other flag in the hierarchy moves down one position.

There are exceptional circumstances when flags from other nations may be flown, specifically when foreign dignitaries visit, and are solely at the discretion of the CAO or Mayor. In these instances, the order of the flags is:

- Canada;
- The flag of the other sovereign nation; and,
- Province of Ontario.

Flags should be retired and replaced when the condition is such that it is no longer a fitting emblem for display. The retirement and replacement of flags will be completed by facilities staff at the direction of the CAO or designate.

Federal protocol dictates that a flag is worn when the colour has faded, it has developed a hole or the outermost seam (fly) of the flag has become frayed. When a flag becomes tattered and is no longer in a suitable condition for use, it should be disposed of in a dignified manner.

The disposal of a flag may be handled in the following manner:

- Flags made of natural fibres (wool, cotton, linen) should be burned in a dignified manner, privately.
- Flags made of synthetic material (nylon or polyester) should be respectfully torn into strips, with each element of the flag reduced to a single colour, so that the remaining pieces do not resemble a flag. The individual pieces should then be placed in a bag for disposal.

### **Half-Masting**

The Town recognizes flags are a symbol of honour and pride and must be treated in a respectful and consistent manner, while providing opportunities to bestow an honour, or express a collective sense of mourning and loss shared by the residents of Grimsby through the process of half-masting.



Flags are flown at half-mast in the event of the death of the current:

- Monarch;
- Immediate relatives of the Monarch;
- Governor General;
- Prime Minister;
- Lieutenant Governor;
- Premier;
- local MP or MPP;
- Mayor;
- Members of Town Council;
- Town employees;
- Town firefighters;
- Line of duty police officers in Grimsby and surrounding municipalities;

Additionally, the flags at Town Hall may be flown at half-mast to honour any person or event at the discretion of the CAO or Mayor, including but not limited to former public office holders, former Town staff, or former members of Town Council.

National or provincial mourning periods will be observed in their entirety; other mourning periods will be set for 5 days, or immediately following the funeral, whichever comes first. When the funeral is to be held outside of this period of time, the flags will be lowered to half-mast for a period of five days and lowered again on the date of the funeral or memorial service or for a different duration as advised by the appropriate federal or provincial protocol offices.

### **Community Flag Raisings**

The Town offers the opportunity for the public to raise community flags to enhance public awareness of local activities, significant events, and multi-cultural occasions.

Flag raising requests must be submitted to the Town either via the Town website or by email to the Office of the CAO. A flag raising request must include the following elements to be considered:

- The applicant organization's official letterhead, or official website link, or the organization's social media;
- The proposed date and time for the flag raising;
- The purpose of the flag raising;
- A list of potential attendees at the flag raising;
- The name of the flag; and,
- A photo of the flag.



The CAO, in consultation with the Mayor, has the authority to approve or deny community flag raising requests. A community flag raising request must meet all of the following criteria to be considered for approval:

- It must be submitted by a representative of a recognized charity or not-for profit organization with ties to the community;
- It must be regarding activities, events or organizations that support residents of the Town or related events taking place in the Town;
- The applicant must be able to provide the flag for the flag raising one week in advance of the requested flag raising date;
- It must demonstrate respect and tolerance for all residents;
- It must foster a sense of community;
- It must support a public awareness campaign or honours important institutions, or organizations;
- It must be submitted at least 7 days in advance of the start date of the requested flag raising period, but no more than 30 days in advance;
- The applicant must provide sufficient background information about what the flag represents, symbolizes, etc; and,
- It is the only flag raising from the applicant within the calendar year.

Additionally, Community Flag Raising Requests will be denied if they exhibit any of the following criteria:

- The flag relates to a political party, organization, or movement;
- The request was submitted by a third party on behalf of an organization or individual;
- The flag promotes a religious belief or event;
- The flag relates to a matter of political divisiveness, controversy or individual conviction;
- The flag relates to something that is contrary to the Town's policies or by-laws;
- The flag relates to a campaign intended for business promotion;
- Flags of groups determined to be discriminatory, hateful, violent, or racist;
- Flags of nations without active diplomatic relations with Canada;
- The flag relates to a campaign intended for influencing government policy; or,
- The flag relates to a campaign intended to defame the integrity of the Town.

If the request meets the requirements laid out in this policy, then it will be deliberated by the CAO, with consultation from the Mayor.

Once approved, notification will be provided to the applicant. The flag raising event will take place during normal operating hours of the Town (Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to



4:30 p.m.). Additionally, an invitation to the flag raising will be sent out to Members of Council by the Executive Assistant to the CAO. Following the event, a photo may be posted on the Town's social media channels at the discretion of the Communications Department. Advertising of the flag raising is the responsibility of the applicant.

The flag may be flown for an amount of time that is commensurate to the request. For instance, a flag raising request to recognize a month-long observance may be permitted to be flown for a month, while a flag meant to recognize a specific community event will only be flown at maximum for the length of the event, and so on. Multiple requests for a community flag raising during the same time will be granted on a first-come first-served basis, as only one flag will be flown on the community flagpole at a time. This is determined at the discretion of the CAO and may be subject to change. Following the flag raising period, the flag must be picked up by the applicant within 7 days from when it is taken down.

Prospective applicants must also be aware of the following information:

- Requests for annually recurring flag raisings must be re-submitted each year;
- Flag raisings are not to be interpreted as a civic or personal endorsement by the Town, nor should the absence of a raised flag be construed as an indication of the Town's position on any nation, organization, event, or day of significance; and,
- The CAO, in consultation with the Mayor, shall have complete discretionary authority related to flag raisings.

## **6.0 COMPLIANCE**

This policy will be communicated to staff via e-mail. It will also be available for members of the public to view on the Town website.

This policy will be reviewed and updated at minimum once per term of Council by the Clerk or their designate. The Clerk will also interpret the provisions of this policy and ensure compliance both internally and amongst applicants.