

**Annual Report
of the
Integrity Commissioner
for
The Corporation of the City of Sault Ste. Marie
(Covering the period from 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2025)**

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Background

On May 1, 2018, the Council of the Corporation of the City of Sault Ste. Marie, appointed Antoinette Blunt, President, Ironside Consulting Services Inc. as the City's first Integrity Commissioner. The period of appointment was from May 1, 2018, until December 31, 2020. This appointment was extended by mutual agreement of the parties, on December 14, 2020, until March 31, 2023. This appointment was further extended by mutual agreement of the parties, on March 20, 2023, until July 31, 2023.

On May 1, 2023, responded to RFP, File: 2023CRP-CLK-01-P, for a five-year term, commencing August 1, 2023, and was the successful proponent. As such, the contract was extended until July 31, 2028.

This report represents the services provided from January 1, 2025, to December 31, 2025.

This report is being submitted in accordance with section 223.6 of the Municipal Act.

Request for Investigation by Councillor Kinach – Preliminary Report

A request for an investigation was made by Councillor Kinach, regarding potential violation of the provisions involving conflict of interest by Councillor Vezeau-Allen, of the purpose of the Code of Conduct. A preliminary report was provided to Council dated February 13, 2025. It was noted the complaint was frivolous, vexatious or not made in good faith or that there were no grounds or insufficient grounds for an inquiry.

Request for Review of Decision by Councillor Kinach – Ombudsman's Matter

A request for a review of the Integrity Commissioner's process involving the request for investigation was made by Councillor Kinach to the Ombudsman's Office. A telephone discussion occurred on May 26, 2025, with Meredith Nelson, Early Resolution Officer, Office of the Ombudsman of Ontario. There were no findings of inappropriate processes, and the matter was closed without an investigation occurring.

Request for Investigation by Member of Public – Preliminary Report

A request for an investigation was made by a member of the public regarding the conduct of Mayor Shoemaker. This matter required a legal review, and it was found there were no connections whatsoever between the actions of Mr. Shoemaker as a lawyer vis-à-vis the municipality and the complainant was directed to the Law Society of Ontario.

Request for Investigation by Member of Public – Preliminary Report

A request for an investigation was made by a member of the public regarding Mayor Shoemaker and Councillor Sonny Spina, alleging various violations of the Code of Conduct. It was concluded that there was no evidence to support the allegations and that both the Mayor and the Councillor have fundamental rights to freedom of discussion and freedom of expression, and to provide their personal opinions and perspectives when debating matters before Council in a validly called and constituted Council meeting.

Request for Investigation by Four Members of Public – Councillor Caputo

A request for an investigation was made by four members of the public alleging violations of various sections of the Code related to Conduct and Improper Use of Influence in relation to a “Facebook Post” by the Councillor, and as a result an investigation was undertaken. It was concluded that based upon review of all allegations contained in each of the Complaints, the Facebook postings, relevant articles, and the law considering the Councillor’s right to freedom of discussion, and freedom of expression, that the Councillor did not violate any sections of the Code of Conduct.

Expenditures During Period and Total Since Appointment

The cost for services rendered for the period from January 1, 2025, to December 31, 2025, was \$22,284.49.

The total cost for services rendered since date of initial appointment in 2018 is \$44,183.49.