

# Staff Report to Council

**Title:** Electronic Signatures Policy

**Report Number:** Legislative Services-2024-04

**Director:** Corporate Services

**Manager:** Legislative Services

**Meeting Date:**  
Wednesday, March 6, 2024

**Date to be considered by Council:**  
Wednesday, March 6, 2024

---

## Recommendation:

That Council approve the updated Electronic Signatures Policy and repeal Policy GG.3.17 Electronic Signatures.

---

## Executive Summary:

The initial Electronic Signatures Policy was passed in 2018. Due to the increase in remote communications and work-from-home across all sectors, electronic signatures were adopted by both provincial and federal legislation to be legally binding in Canada, with limited exceptions.

The new draft Electronic Signature Policy provides for an updated framework for the use and acceptance of electronic signatures.

## Strategic Priorities:

D.17-Improve organization efficiency and be more innovative

## Financial Considerations:

The Municipality uses Solutions Notarius Inc. as our digital signature service. The cost is \$4,000 per year which is included in the Legislative Service's Operating Budget.

## Policy:

Policy GG.3.17 Electronic Signatures

## Context and Background Information:

The *Electronic Commerce Act, 2000* permits the use of electronic signatures but does not require acceptance of them.

In 2018 Council passed GG. 3.17 Electronic Signatures Policy to formalize the use of electronic signatures which had become more prevalent with societal changes and technological advancements. The Policy created a prescriptive list of where the signatures could be used.

The update to this Policy was required to broaden the scope of where the municipality would formally permit the use of electronic signatures and to provide flexibility to include additional uses. It removes the prescriptive list and provides more details on electronic signature software and the method.

This update was required with the dramatic increase during and post the COVID-19 Pandemic in the call for and usage of electronic signatures to expedite finalization of documents across all areas of the municipality. Electronic signatures have enhanced the provision of customer service and led to more efficient business operations.

The Policy allows for transactions using Wet Signatures and recognizes that there are still various pieces of legislation that require the use of Wet Signatures on specific documents.

Electronic Signatures can include, but are not limited to, a typed name at the end of an email, a typed name on an electronic form or document, an image of handwritten signature on an Electronic Submission, a personal identification number (PIN), clicking “agree” or “disagree”, a handwritten but digitally captured signature made on a touch device or a digital signature.

**Consultation Overview:**

All Municipal departments were consulted on the update to this Policy.

**Origin:**

Policy GG.3.17 Electronic Signatures

**Implementation Considerations:**

If there is a greater uptake of the use of electronic signatures there may be a need to increase the amount budgeted for the digital signature service. This increase would be incorporated into the Legislative Service’s Operating Budget.

**Risk Analysis:**

Legal requirements for the use of electronic signatures are that the Municipality has consented to their use, the signature is reliable for the purposes of identifying the person and the association of the electronic signature with the document is also reliable. It must also meet the information technology standards and requirements of the Municipality. The use of Solutions Notarius Inc. provides a legally reliable digital signature platform that meets all these requirements.

---

**Attachments:** Draft Electronic Signature Policy & Policy GG.3.17 Electronic Signature

**Prepared by:** Jennifer Lawrie, Manager of Legislative Services/Clerk

**Submitted by:** Jennifer Lawrie, Manager of Legislative Services/Clerk