

2021 General Municipal Election Nomination package



Contents

Nomination Package

Important Information & Dates	2
Form #4 Nomination Paper & Candidate Information	4
Form #5 Candidate Information	6
What Every Councillor Needs to Know	7
Pecuniary Interest	33
Council Roles and Responsibilities	40
Ward Populations & Council Boards and Committee List	45

Clear Hills County Contact Information

Address

Box 240, Worsley, AB
313 Alberta Avenue
T0H 3W0

Phone: 1-780-685-3925

Fax: 1-780-685-3960

Office Hours:

8:00 AM - 12:00 PM and 1:00 PM - 4:30 PM
Monday to Friday

Website: <https://clearhillscounty.ab.ca/>

Important Information and Dates!

Term of Office: four (4) years

Duties: Section 153 of the Municipal Government Act (MGA) General duties of Councillor, provides as follows:

Councillors have the following duties:

- (a) to consider the welfare and interests of the municipality as a whole and to bring to council's attention anything that would promote the welfare or interests of the municipality;
- (b) to participate generally in developing and evaluating the policies and programs of the municipality;
- (c) to participate in council meetings and council committee meetings and meetings of other bodies to which they are appointed by the council;
- (d) to obtain information about the operation or administration of the municipality from the chief administrative officer or a person designated by the chief administrative officer;
- (e) to keep in confidence matters discussed in private at a council or council committee meeting until discussed at a meeting held in public;
- (f) to perform any other duty or function imposed on Councillors by this or any other enactment or by the council.

A person may be nominated in any election under the LAEA if the person:

- is eligible to vote in the election.
- has resided in the municipality and the ward (if applicable) for 6 consecutive months immediately preceding nomination day; and
- is not otherwise ineligible.

A person is ineligible to be nominated as a candidate in any election under the LAEA if:

- the person is the auditor of the local jurisdiction.
- the person is an employee of the local jurisdiction for which the election is to be held unless the person has taken a leave of absence.
- the person is indebted to the municipality for taxes in default exceeding \$50 (excluding indebtedness on current taxes, and indebtedness for arrears of taxes for which the person has entered into a consolidation agreement with the municipality);
- the person is indebted to the local jurisdiction for any debt exceeding \$500 and is in default for more than 90 days.
- the person has, within the previous 10 years, been convicted of an offence under the LAEA, the Election Act, the Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act, or the Canada Elections Act (Canada).

Nominations

Nominations must be signed by a minimum of five electors. These electors must be residents of the local jurisdiction on the date they signed the form and must be eligible to vote in the election. The electors who sign the nomination form must also be a resident of the ward for which the candidate is being nominated.

Campaign Account

A candidate shall ensure that

- (a) a campaign account in the name of the candidate or the candidate's election campaign is opened at a financial institution for the purposes of the election campaign at the time of nomination or as soon as possible after the total amount of contributions first exceeds **\$1000** in the aggregate,
- (b) if a campaign account has been opened in accordance with clause (a), all contributions of money are deposited into the campaign account,
- (c) money in the campaign account shall only be used for the payment of campaign expenses,
- (d) contributions of real property, personal property and services are valued,
- (e) receipts are issued for every contribution and obtained for every expense,
- (f) records are kept of contributions and campaign expenses and are retained by the candidate for a period of 3 years following the date on which disclosure statements were required to be filed under section 147.4, and
- (g) proper direction is given to the candidate's official agent and any other person who is authorized to incur campaign expenses and accept or solicit contributions on behalf of the candidate.

Important Dates	Date
Nomination Period for the 2021 General Election Opens	Friday, January 1, 2021
Nomination Day -Until Noon (12:00p.m.)	Monday, September 20, 2021
Election Day	Monday, October 18, 2021
Checklist of Documents to Return	
Fill out form #4 Nomination Paper & Candidate Information	Bring in by Monday, September 20, 2021 at 12:00 p.m. Noon (no submissions past this will be accepted)
Fill out form #5 Candidate Information	
Important Contact Information	
Returning Officer – Allan Rowe	Office 780-685-3925 Cell 780-835-8097
EA- Bonnie Morgan	Office 780-685-3925 Cell 780-834-7171

Nomination Paper and Candidate's Acceptance

Local Authorities Election Act
(Sections 12, 21, 22, 23, 27, 28, 47,
68.1, 151, Part 5.1)
Education Act (Sections 4(4), 74)

Note: The personal information on this form is being collected to support the administrative requirements of the local authorities election process and is authorized under sections 21 and 27 of the *Local Authorities Election Act* and section 33(c) of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. The personal information will be managed in compliance with the privacy provisions of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. If you have any questions concerning the collection of this personal information, please contact

Allan Rowe, CAO

780-685-3925

Title of the Responsible Official

Business Phone Number

LOCAL JURISDICTION: Clear Hills County, PROVINCE OF ALBERTA

We, the undersigned electors of _____, nominate
Name of Local Jurisdiction and Ward (if applicable)

Candidate Surname Given Names of

Complete Address and postal code as a candidate at the election

about to be held for the office of _____
Office Nominated for

of _____
Name of Local Jurisdiction

Signatures of at least **5 ELECTORS ELIGIBLE TO VOTE** in this election in accordance with sections 27 and 47 of the *Local Authorities Election Act* and sections 4(4) and 74 of the *Education Act* (if applicable). If a city or a board of trustees under the *Education Act* passes a bylaw under section 27(2) of the *Local Authorities Election Act*, then the signatures of up to 100 electors eligible to vote may be required.

Printed Name of Elector	Complete Address and Postal Code of Elector	Signature of Elector

Candidate's Acceptance

I, the above named candidate, solemnly swear (affirm)

- THAT I am eligible under sections 21 and 47 (and section 12, in the case of summer villages) of the *Local Authorities Election Act* and sections 4(4) and 74 of the *Education Act* (if applicable) to be elected to the office;
- THAT I am not otherwise disqualified under section 22 or 23 of the *Local Authorities Election Act*;
- THAT I will accept the office if elected;
- THAT I have read sections 12, 21, 22, 23, 27, 28, 47, 68.1, and 151 and Part 5.1 of the *Local Authorities Election Act* and sections 4(4) and 74 of the *Education Act* (if applicable) and understand their contents;
- THAT I am appointing

Name, Contact Information or Complete Address and Postal Code and Telephone Number of Official Agent (if applicable)
as my official agent.

- THAT I will read and abide by the municipality's code of conduct if elected (if applicable); and
- THAT the electors who have signed this nomination paper are eligible to vote in accordance with the *Local Authorities Election Act* and the *Education Act* and resident in the local jurisdiction on the date of signing the nomination.

Print name as it should appear on the ballot

Candidate's Surname Given Names (may include nicknames, but not titles, i.e., Mr., Ms., Dr.)

SWORN (AFFIRMED) before me

at the _____ of _____,
in the Province of Alberta,
this _____ day of _____, 20 _____.



Candidate's Signature

Signature of Returning Officer or Commissioner for Oaths
or Notary Public in and for Alberta
(Also include printed or stamped name and expiry date)

Commissioner for Oaths Stamp



RETURNING OFFICER'S ACCEPTANCE

Returning Officer signals acceptance by signing this form:

Signature of Returning Officer

**IT IS AN OFFENCE TO SIGN A FALSE AFFIDAVIT OR A FORM THAT
CONTAINS A FALSE STATEMENT**

Candidate Information

Local Authorities Election Act
(Section 27)

Note: The personal information on this form is being collected to support the administrative requirements of the local authorities election process and is authorized under section 27 of the *Local Authorities Election Act* and section 33(c) of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. The personal information will be managed in compliance with the privacy provisions of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. If you have any questions concerning the collection of this personal information, please contact

Allan Rowe, CAO

Title of the Responsible Official

780-685-3925

Business Phone Number

Candidate's Full Name _____

Candidate's Address and Postal Code _____

Address of place(s) where candidate records are maintained _____

Name(s) and address(es) of financial institutions where campaign contributions will be deposited (if applicable)

Name(s) of signing authorities for each depository listed above (if applicable)

Where there is any change in the above mentioned information, the candidate shall notify the local jurisdiction in writing within 48 hours of such changes by submitting a completed information form.

What Every Councillor Needs To Know!

A Council Member Handbook



Government

Alberta Municipal Affairs

Municipal Capacity Building, Municipal Capacity and Sustainability Branch

What Every Councillor Needs To Know!

A Council Member Handbook

Alberta Municipal Affairs

©2017 Government of Alberta

www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca

ISBN 978-1-4601-3632-4 (PDF)

The contents of this publication are intended to provide general information. Readers should not rely on the contents herein to the exclusion of independent legal advice.

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Things to know!	2
Oath of Office	2
Your role	2
Be familiar with your legislation	4
<i>Municipal Government Act (MGA)</i>	4
<i>Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act.</i>	4
How you can help.....	4
Understand the financial implications of your decisions	5
Let employees do their jobs.....	5
Understand and avoid pecuniary interest and conflict of interest	5
Information is public.....	6
The municipality's lawyer is not your lawyer	6
Team Approach	6
Governance.....	8
Chief Elected Official	8
Code of Conduct for Elected Officials	8
Councillor Liability.....	8
Council Meetings.....	8
Organizational Meeting	8
Regular and Special Meetings.....	9
Meetings Closed To The Public.....	9
Council Committees	10
Procedural Bylaw	10
Policy-Making and Program Monitoring	10
Public Participation Policy	10
Voting	11
Administration	12
Chief Administrative Officer.....	12
Designated Officers.....	12
Policies	12
Staff Development	12
Finance.....	13
Operating and Capital Budgets	13
Procedure for Expenditure Authorization	13
Borrowing.....	14
Auditor	14

Property Assessment, Taxation, and Other Revenues	15
Assessment	15
Property Taxation.....	15
Education Tax and Equalized Assessment	16
Planning and Development	17
Intermunicipal Development Plan	17
Municipal Development Plan.....	18
Area Structure and Redevelopment Plans	18
Listing and Publishing of Policies	18
Land Use Bylaws and Development Decisions	18
Subdivision	18
Subdivision or Development Agreements	19
Subdivision and Development Appeal Board	19
Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework	19
Municipal Collaboration and Mediation	20
Economic Development.....	20
Provincial Legislation	21
Domestic Trade Agreements	22

Introduction

Congratulations! The electors of your municipality have put their trust in you to make decisions that are in their best interest. Elected office is one of the highest orders of public service. It offers the opportunity to significantly influence the quality of life in your community.

This booklet presents an overview of your responsibilities as a municipal councillor and is intended to help you to understand the powers and duties of a municipal council as a whole and you as an individual councillor. It also provides the context of the Chief Administrative Officer's (CAO) role in the municipality and helps you to understand how vital this relationship is.

The *Municipal Government Act (MGA)* provides the basic legislative framework for Alberta's municipalities. Council members must also grasp and comply with federal and provincial legislation and regulations affecting municipalities. In Alberta, cities, towns, villages, summer villages, municipal districts, specialized municipalities and improvement districts constitute municipalities. Councils have numerous powers, duties and responsibilities. You will benefit from your time on council as you meet new people and develop a greater understanding of the local government process and its role in your community. Your community will benefit from your leadership, vision, and service. Best wishes for your success, and for the success of your community.

This guide is an information summary only and has no legislative sanction. For certainty, refer to the *Municipal Government Act*, copies of which are available for purchase from Alberta Queen's Printer Bookstore. It is recommended that municipalities obtain legal advice for interpretation.

Note: Proposed amendments to the MGA that have not been proclaimed as of (publication date) are not reflected in this document. Additionally, as part of the *Municipal Government Act (MGA)* Review process, all MGA regulations related to property assessment and planning and development were reviewed to support the proposed amendments. The review has resulted in updates to a number of existing regulations and creation of new ones. To view and provide comments on these regulations, visit <http://mgareview.alberta.ca/get-involved/regulations-review/>.

Things to know!

Oath of Office [s. 156]

Before taking part in your first council meeting or performing any councillor duty, you will be required to make and subscribe to the official oath of office. By taking the oath, you swear or promise that you will diligently, faithfully, and to the best of your ability, fulfill the duties of the office to which you have been elected.

Your role

Council is the governing body of the municipal corporation. As a councillor, you will exercise the powers of the municipality through decisions passed by bylaw or resolution at a public meeting and define the policies and direction that your municipal administration will put into action.

Every councillor must understand the municipal purposes in section 3.

The purposes of a municipality are

- a) to provide good government,
 - a.1) to foster the well-being of the environment,
- b) to provide services, facilities or other things that, in the opinion of council, are necessary or desirable for all or a part of the municipality,
- c) to develop and maintain safe and viable communities.
- d) to work collaboratively with neighbouring municipalities to plan, deliver and fund intermunicipal services.

The MGA also provides municipal government with natural person powers for the purpose of exercising their authority. Natural person powers give municipality's similar flexibility to that of individuals and corporations in managing their organizational and administrative affairs. These powers may help a municipality – without the need for more specific legislative authority – enter into agreements or acquire land and equipment. For example, if a municipality has authority to establish a public transit system, it may use natural person powers to contract services and purchase buses. It is important to be aware that natural person powers are limited by legislation.

Council's principal role in the municipal organization:

A council is responsible for [s. 201(1)]

- a) Developing and evaluating the policies and programs of the municipality;
Council's primary role is to ensure that services are provided to citizens and property owners. This involves establishing policies about what programs and services are to be delivered, the level at which they are delivered, and the budgetary requirements. Council evaluates the policies and programs through information obtained from the CAO and feedback from the citizens.
- b) Carrying out the powers, duties and functions expressly given to council under the Act or any other legislation.
Council is responsible for ensuring that the municipality acts within its enabling legislation. A municipality can be taken to court by any person if it is perceived to be acting outside its legal

authority. As well, council is responsible for ensuring that the municipality meets all requirements established in legislation, such as the requirement to hold public hearings on certain matters, develop a budget and levy taxes, appoint an auditor, etc. The legislation establishes minimum requirements; however, council can go beyond these minimums, provided that they act within their legislative authority.

Section 201(2) states clearly that a council must not exercise a power or function or perform a duty that is by this or another enactment or bylaw specifically assigned to the chief administrative officer or a designated officer.

As indicated above, council develops and evaluates its policies and programs; it is the CAO that implements them.

To carry out these roles, the MGA provides the following:

General duties of councillors [s. 153]

Councillors have the following duties:

- a) to consider the welfare and interests of the municipality as a whole and to bring to council's attention anything that would promote the welfare or interests of the municipality;
 - a.1) to promote an integrated and strategic approach to intermunicipal land use planning and service delivery with neighbouring municipalities;
- b) to participate generally in developing and evaluating the policies and programs of the municipality;
- c) to participate in council meetings and council committee meetings and meetings of other bodies to which they are appointed by the council;
- d) to obtain information about the operation or administration of the municipality from the chief administrative officer or a person designated by the chief administrative officer;
- e) to keep in confidence matters discussed in private at a council or council committee meeting until discussed at a meeting held in public;
 - e.1) to adhere to the code of conduct established by the council under section 146.1(1);
- f) to perform any other duty or function imposed on councillors by the MGA or any other enactment or by the council.

Your job as a councillor is to work with other council members to set the overall direction of the municipality in your role as a policy-maker. The policies that council sets are the guidelines for administration to follow as it handles the operations of the municipality. Much of your time on council will be spent considering new policies and programs and reviewing the current ones to make sure they are working as they should. In the spirit of collaboration, a municipality may enter into an agreement respecting services with Indigenous peoples or a Métis settlement and is required to consult with Indigenous peoples or Métis settlement when developing certain land use plans.

General duties of chief elected official (CEO) [s. 154]

- a) to consider the welfare and interests of the municipality as a whole and to bring to council's attention anything that would promote the welfare or interests of the municipality;
 - a.1) to promote an integrated and strategic approach to intermunicipal land use planning and service delivery with neighbouring municipalities;

- b) to participate generally in developing and evaluating the policies and programs of the municipality;
- c) to participate in council meetings and council committee meetings and meetings of other bodies to which they are appointed by the council;
- d) to obtain information about the operation or administration of the municipality from the chief administrative officer or a person designated by the chief administrative officer;
- e) to keep in confidence matters discussed in private at a council or council committee meeting until discussed at a meeting held in public;
 - e.1) to adhere to the code of conduct established by the council under section 146.1(1);
- g) to perform any other duty or function imposed on councillors by the MGA or any other enactment or by the council.

In practice, the CEO is also generally the main spokesperson for the municipality, unless that duty is delegated to a councillor.

These legislated duties supersede any duty to any individual or group of residents.

Be familiar with your legislation

Municipalities are often described as “creatures of province”; the only powers that they have are those set out in provincial legislation and those implied or necessarily incidental to them. If you do not have a grasp of the basics, you will not understand what the municipality can, cannot, must and must not do. Although you can rely on the CAO to inform you of the legislated requirements of the MGA, it is recommended that you have a brief read through the legislation to understand why you are doing what you are doing.

The *Municipal Government Act (MGA)* is the most important Act a councillor should be familiar with. It lays the foundation for how municipalities operate, how municipal councils function, and how citizens can work with their municipalities. The MGA is the legislative framework in which all municipalities and municipal entities across the Province of Alberta operate.

The *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act* provides the Government of Alberta’s general policy on access to information and the protection of personal information in the public sector. It provides for public accountability through a right of access to records under the control of public bodies and mandates how a public body is to collect, use and disclose an individual’s personal information.

These are the two most important pieces of legislation that apply to municipalities. Some of the more common pieces of legislation that affects municipalities are listed at the end of this document.

How you can help

Orientation and Training Opportunities [s. 201.1]

Understanding the relationships, roles and the responsibilities of an elected official and the associated limitations, will be critical to your success in the position. Whether you are newly elected or a returning official, you should take every opportunity to learn about your municipality; key issues affecting the community; and governing processes and procedures. It is mandatory for each municipality to offer orientation training to each councillor, to be held within 90 days after the councillor takes the oath of office.

The orientation training must include:

- the role of municipalities in Alberta;
- municipal organization and functions;
- key municipal plans, policies and projects;
- roles and responsibilities of council and councillors;
 - the municipality's code of conduct;
- roles and responsibilities of the chief administrative officer and staff;
- budgeting and financial administration;
- public participation policy; and
- any other topic prescribed by the regulations.

Your associations, Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA) and the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMDC), jointly offer orientation sessions that cover some of these requirements. They also offer conferences throughout the year that will provide invaluable information and networking opportunities.

In addition, Alberta Municipal Affairs provides workshops on the roles and responsibilities of council, councillors and administration. These workshops are offered on a regional basis in the months following a municipal general election and on an 'as requested' basis through-out your term.

If you are newly elected, attending training, conferences and workshops is an excellent way to obtain the information you need to serve effectively. If you are a returning councillor, your knowledge and experience holds significant value for the new councillor.

Understand the financial implications of your decisions

Almost everything the municipality is engaged in will have a cost associated with it. You will spend a lot of time assessing the financial implications of council policy decisions. You will need to balance the desire for municipal services with the amount of property taxes and user fees that the local residents are willing to pay for those services.

Let employees do their jobs

The CAO is your only employee in most instances. You may have a bylaw which states that designated officers report directly to council. All other municipal employees report to the CAO. Staying out of the day-to-day operation of the municipality allows councillors to concentrate on policy-making and program monitoring. Councillors should work with the CAO to keep informed on what the municipality is doing and will depend on the administrator to provide information so that they can make sound decisions. Effective councils set policy; they do not micro-manage or perform any administrative duties. Refer to section 201(2).

Understand and avoid pecuniary interest and conflict of interest

As a public servant, you are responsible for upholding the public interest ahead of any private interests you may have. These rules are designed to protect the public interest while ensuring that your ability to work is not adversely affected by your election to council. In order that the public interest is served and seen to be served, it is important that you be open and honest about dealing

with the municipality. Be fair to yourself, your electors, and your municipality by keeping your private interests in harmony with the public interest.

Pecuniary interest is a matter which could monetarily affect the councillor or an employer of the councillor, or the councillor's family. Conflict of interest is a situation in which the concerns or aims of two different parties are incompatible or a situation in which a person is in a position to derive personal benefit from actions or decisions made in their official capacity.

The MGA provides the definition and application of pecuniary interest and the municipality's Code of Conduct for Elected Officials bylaw should define what constitutes a conflict of interest. Know how and when to report either, what to do in each case, and the consequences of not following the provincial legislation or local bylaw. Attempting to influence in any way, any decision in which you have a pecuniary interest is reason for disqualification from council. The municipal code of conduct will also have repercussions for conflict of interest that is not declared. If either is ignored, council decisions may be challenged.

For further information on pecuniary interest, please visit

www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/documents/Pecuniary_interest_%202017.pdf.

Information is public

All information received, sent, stored or collected by a municipality is public information unless it falls within the limited exceptions under the FOIP Act. Yes, this applies to email and electronic records too. Ask your duly appointed FOIP officer (often the CAO), what the rules are.

The municipality's lawyer is not your lawyer

The municipality's lawyer takes instructions from council as a whole through the CAO. Also, any legal advice received is privileged and is not to be shared outside of council. In a question of pecuniary interest, or if you are facing charges, you will be directed to seek your own counsel.

Municipalities and council members are subject to the laws in force in Alberta. For example, municipalities are subject to workplace safety laws, emergency management laws, environmental law, and employment laws, among many others. Council management decisions have legal consequences, and councils should be aware of legal risks in decision making. Councillors should be open to advice from the CAO and open to obtaining expert legal advice. You are responsible for your own words. Councillors should not make defamatory statements, whether inside or outside of council meetings. You need to be diligent to avoid putting the municipality or yourself at risk of committing an offence or being found liable for civil damages.

Team Approach

Working as a team with the rest of council and administration will contribute to making your time on council a success. It isn't always going to be easy. Your influence as a council member rests on your ability to persuade other members of council to consider your point of view. When an issue is being studied, be sure to express your views as part of the debate.

Disagreements among council members on specific issues are common. The respectful exchange of ideas and opinions leads to good decisions. While working through these debates, keep in mind that

you all share the same desire for your municipality to be strong, safe, and viable. You may have different views about how to get there, but you do share broader common goals.

Most votes on a council resolution do not require a consensus of all councillors. As a result, there will be many occasions where a decision is made that you did not support with your vote. However, once the resolution has been passed, it becomes the official direction of the municipality. The health and ongoing success of a municipality is largely dependent upon the ability of councillors to respect and support the decisions of council in principle, despite your personal views during the debate.

Some municipalities have a communications policy in place that directs media through prescribed channels. Becoming familiar with communications procedures will allow you, council, and administration to work as a team and deliver a cohesive message.

These are things that a councillor must know to do their job with integrity. The remainder of this booklet provides information on other aspects of the legislation that a councillor should be aware of to ensure your municipality is accountable to the taxpayer. As a councillor, you are elected to look after the interests of the entire municipality. Council's effectiveness depends on you providing input as a representative of the people who elected you.

Governance

Chief Elected Official (CEO) [s. 150, 154 and 155]

The title CEO may be changed to one that council believes is appropriate to the office, such as mayor or reeve.

The CEO of a city or town is elected by a vote of a municipality's electors, unless council passes a bylaw requiring council to appoint the CEO from among the councillors. In a village, summer village, or municipal district, council appoints the CEO from among the councillors unless it passes a bylaw providing that the official is to be elected by a vote of the municipality's electors.

Code of Conduct for Elected Officials [s. 146.1 and 153, Alberta Regulation]

A council must have a code of conduct bylaw which applies to each councillor equally. The bylaw must establish how council members will behave with each other, employees, and the public. It must also provide for a complaint and resolution process, and for sanctions as outlined in the regulation. This bylaw will help to ensure that all Albertans have effective and accountable representation, and set province-wide expectations for all elected officials. This bylaw must be reviewed every 4 years as councils are elected.

Councillor Liability [s. 249, 275 and 535]

The question of liability may arise as a result of councillors' actions. However, section 535 of the MGA was written to protect councillors from personal liability while acting in good faith for the municipality. This section does not apply in circumstances of defamation and does not protect the municipal corporation from any such liability.

There are several provisions in the MGA that could potentially create a liability on individual councillors. Section 249 deals with unauthorized expenditures and section 275 which deals with borrowings, loans, or guarantees that cause the municipality to exceed its debt limit.

While it is important to be aware of the potential for personal liabilities there is little precedent for the use of these provisions.

Council Meetings [Alberta Regulation]

A regulation defines a council meeting as, when used in reference to a council, a meeting under section 192, 193 or 194 of the Act, or a meeting under section 195 of the Act if a council committee meeting. These are an organizational meeting, a regular meeting, a special meeting or a committee of council meeting.

Organizational Meeting [s. 159 and 192]

The first meeting of council you attend will be the organizational meeting, held within two weeks of the election, or sooner if an election was not required. This marks the official commencement of the term of office and the completion of the previous council's term. This meeting allows council to address preliminary matters such as appointing a CEO if necessary, appointing a deputy CEO, and appointing people to the various committees and other bodies associated with council. If other regular business is to be conducted, the organizational meeting must be adjourned and the regular meeting convened and recorded as a separate meeting.

Regular and Special Meetings [s. 153, 181, 193, 194, 196, 197, 198, and 199]

It is up to council to decide how many meetings are needed to govern the affairs of the municipality. The decision to hold regular meetings must be made at a meeting with all councillors present, normally the organizational meeting. The time and place of a regular meeting can be changed. All councillors do not have to be at the meeting to change the time or place; but all councillors and public must be given 24 hours-notice of the change.

The timing of regular council meetings does not always align with urgent business that requires council attention. There will be times when a special meeting is required. Section 194 of the *MGA* states that a special meeting may be called if the CEO believes one is needed and must be called if a majority of councillors request one in writing.

Council and council committees can hold meetings by means of electronic or other communication facilities, (Section 199) rather than in person. Notice must be given to the public of such a meeting, including the way it will be conducted. The facilities must enable all the meeting's participants to watch or hear each other, and the public to watch or listen.

Meetings Closed To The Public (In-Camera Meetings)[s. 1(3), 197, Alberta Regulation]

There are times when council or a council committee must discuss something in private. A meeting or part of a meeting is considered to be closed to the public if:

- a) any members of the public are not permitted to attend the entire meeting or part of the meeting,
- b) the council, committee or other body holding the meeting instructs any member of the public to leave the meeting or part of the meeting, other than for improper conduct, or
- c) the council, committee or other body holding the meeting holds any discussions separate from the public during the meeting or part of the meeting.

The *MGA* and the *FOIP Act* set out some very limited exceptions in which meetings may be closed to the public. Personnel matters, where it would be unfair to the people involved to have the issue discussed in public, are a common example. In order to recognize specific circumstances that necessitate confidentiality of council discussions, section 197(2) of the *MGA* allows meetings that are closed to the public where the subject matter falls within one of the exceptions to disclosure in Division 2 Part 1 of the *FOIP Act*. The exceptions include matters where disclosures could be harmful to personal privacy, individual or public safety, law enforcement, intergovernmental relations, or economic or other interests; reveal confidential evaluations, local public confidences, or advice from officials; or disclose information that is subject to legal privilege.

Even then, before closing all or any part of a meeting to the public, a council or council committee must pass a resolution approving the part of the meeting that is to be closed, and indicate the exception to disclosure in Division 2 of Part 1 of the *FOIP Act*. All resolutions have to be made in a public session.

All public have the right to attend a council meeting except for someone who has been expelled due to improper conduct in that meeting. The provisions of the *MGA* regarding public presence at meetings are intended to promote public involvement and the accountability of the local government process.

Council Committees [s. 145 and 203]

If council creates council committees, it must be done by bylaw. The bylaw would establish the reason for the committee, the meeting procedures, and appoint committee members among other things. Council may decide to create a temporary committee to look at a specific issue. There may also be standing committees which run from year to year to deal with ongoing issues.

Council may delegate some of its power making to its committees. Any powers delegated would be outlined in the bylaw that created the committee. Some council decisions, such as passing bylaws or adopting the budget, cannot be delegated.

When council is part of an emergency services committee, it may have specific responsibilities in the case of a local emergency. Council should be aware of what those responsibilities are and how they are to be carried out. The emergency response framework is described in the *Emergency Management Act* and its regulations.

Procedural Bylaw [s. 145(b)]

A municipality may have a procedural bylaw to provide a standard format for council meetings and make it easier for members of council, staff, media, and public to understand the decision-making process. A procedural bylaw should set the date and time of regular council meetings, provide for the order of business, set rules regarding the proceedings at regular meetings of council, and describe how items may be put on the council agenda and method of distributing the agenda for council meetings, among other things. This bylaw should be reviewed every four years as councils are elected.

Policy-Making and Program Monitoring

Council is responsible for considering the types and levels of services that are necessary or desirable for the municipality. This responsibility involves providing input into the municipality's programs and services (policy-making) and making sure that administration provides the programs and services in the best possible way (program monitoring).

Council policy provides the basis for consistent decisions. Administration is responsible for providing the programs and services to the residents according to council policy.

Program monitoring is staying up to date through information obtained from the CAO and assessing the results against what council planned to achieve.

Public Participation Policy [s. 216, Alberta Regulation]

It is always important for a council to work with citizens to request input and address concerns. Each council is required to establish a public participation policy that will tell the electors how they can take part in important decisions of council that are not otherwise regulated. The policy should identify the types or categories of approaches the municipality will use to engage their stakeholders as well as the circumstances in which the opportunity will be exercised. Examples to be considered in the policy could include holding a 'town hall' to discuss the budget process or to explain the auditor's report. This policy is intended to promote consistent expectations and increase public confidence in the local government decision making process.

Voting [s. 183, 184, 185, and 172]

Council makes decisions. Under the MGA, a councillor is required to vote on all resolutions and bylaws unless required or permitted to abstain from voting under other legislated provisions or the Code of Conduct Bylaw. Council must ensure that each abstention and the reason for it are recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

If there is a public hearing on a proposed bylaw or resolution, a councillor must abstain from voting on the bylaw or resolution if they were absent from all of a public hearing, and may abstain if absent for a part of a public hearing. Section 172 of the MGA states that councillors must also abstain from voting on matters in which they have a pecuniary interest.

At any time before a vote is taken, a councillor may request that the vote be recorded. The minutes must show the names of the councillors present and how they voted.

Each councillor has one vote. A resolution is passed by receiving the majority of votes from the councillors in attendance at the meeting. When there is a tie vote on a resolution, it is defeated.

A quorum must be present at a council meeting for any resolution or bylaw to be valid. A quorum is a majority of councillors making up the municipal council. For example, if council consists of seven councillors (including the CEO); four councillors would constitute a quorum.

Administration

Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) [s. 153.1, 205, 205.1, 207, 208, and 209]

Every council must establish, by bylaw, a position of CAO. The CAO is an integral advisor to council in supporting the development and implementation of strategic objectives and policies. The CAO builds strong working relationships with stakeholders and provides mentorship and strategic guidance to their staff by fostering a culture of municipal excellence throughout the organization.

A primary duty of the CAO is to provide the same information to all councillors. When a councillor asks the CAO a question, it is their duty to provide that same information to all other councillors.

The CAO works collaboratively with council in building the community and effectively representing the interest of the municipality. As the administrative leader, the CAO will mentor, coach, and guide the performance of municipal staff to meet the needs of the community through public service excellence and a high degree of personal initiative.

A performance appraisal system for the CAO is a key building block for a lasting and positive relationship between council and the CAO. Even though the current relationship may be good, a formal appraisal process provides the opportunity to discuss opportunities for improvement. The MGA therefore requires that council provide the CAO with an annual written performance evaluation.

Designated Officers (s. 209 and 210)

A CAO may delegate any of his or her powers, duties, or functions to a designated officer or an employee. Designated officer positions are established by bylaw and are under the CAO's supervision, unless otherwise provided by bylaw. A designated officer may also delegate any of those powers, duties, or functions to an employee of the municipality. When a designated officer position has not been assigned, that duty falls back on the CAO.

Policies

The importance of policies is paramount in providing consistency and transparency to the CAO and the tax payer. Most successful municipalities maintain a policy manual with an index to enable easy reference. Policies should be approved by council, and should be periodically reviewed and updated to ensure they are still relevant.

Staff Development

Human resources are as important as financial resources. A variety of educational opportunities are available for both new and experienced municipal administrators. The most successful municipalities encourage staff development and training to ensure that their employees are able to effectively carry out their duties and stay familiar with new developments in the field of municipal administration.

Finance

The majority of activities that take place in any municipality have a cost associated with them. As a member of council, you will spend a substantial amount of time assessing the financial implications of council decisions on the local taxpayers.

Operating and Capital Budgets [s. 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 283.1]

The budget is the center of the municipal finance system. The priorities of council will necessarily be reflected in the funding priorities established in the budget. Through the budget, council sets the municipality's priorities for the next year (or number of years) by allocating funding for each program, service, or project. Careful and realistic budget planning and control can translate into better and more cost-effective services for the community.

Best practices indicate that sustainable municipalities have a strategic plan that maps out longer term goals and identifies the municipality's priorities over a number of years. A strategic plan can provide year to year guidance and direction to the annual budget process, and provides the longer-term context for annual goals.

The MGA requires that every municipality adopt an annual operating and a capital budget or a single annual budget that incorporates both operating and capital items. Property and business tax bylaws cannot be passed until a budget has been adopted. Municipal budgets must include sufficient revenues to cover planned expenditures. Reserve funds may be used to balance the budget. Municipalities are not permitted to allow the accumulated surplus, net of equity in tangible capital assets, to be less than zero.

The operating budget is a detailed estimate of how much your municipality needs to spend to meet its ongoing financial obligations and provide programs and services to the residents. The capital budget identifies the sources and uses of funding for fixed assets such as buildings, roads, vehicles, water and sewer facilities, and land.

Beginning in 2020, municipalities are required to have written three-year financial and five year capital plans in addition to the annual budget. Financial plans must identify expected revenues and expenditures as well as project the annual and accumulated surplus or deficit. The capital plan must meet the minimum of five years but a longer term plan is encouraged. The plan must identify planned capital property additions as well as allocated or anticipated sources of funding. Both the capital plan and operational plan must be reviewed and updated annually.

The budget is one of, if not the most, important council policy decision Council should receive regular reports from administration that compare actual financial results to the budget.

Procedure for Expenditure Authorization [s. 248 and 249]

Each council must establish procedures to authorize and verify expenditures that are not included in a budget. Such policies typically set thresholds for at what level the CAO or his/her designate can make an expenditure not included in the budget and when those expenditures must be brought to council for approval.

It is also important to note that if you, as a councillor, make an unauthorized expenditure, or vote to spend granted or borrowed funds for a purpose other than that for which they were granted or

borrowed, you could be held personally liable under section 249 of the MGA for the amount of the expenditure, grant, or borrowing.

Borrowing [s. 249, 252, and 275]

The Minister of Municipal Affairs has, by regulation, established municipal debt and debt service limits. As long as a municipality is within the limits, no provincial approvals are required for borrowing, but the Minister's approval is required for any borrowing beyond the debt limits. If you vote for a borrowing that puts the municipality above the regulated debt or debt service limit, you could be held personally liable for the amount of the borrowing, unless the borrowing is approved by the Minister.

Auditor [s. 276, 277, 278, and 280; Alberta Regulation 313/2000]

Each council must appoint an auditor for the municipality and must submit audited financial statements and an audited financial information return to the Minister of Municipal Affairs by May 1 of each year. In addition, the financial statements or a summary of them must be made available to the public by May 1 of each year. The financial statements must disclose the municipality's debt limits, as well as the salaries of the CEO, individual councillors, the CAO, and the designated officers of the municipality.

Property Assessment, Taxation, and Other Revenues

Assessment [s. 285, 298, 454, 454.1, 454.2, 454.3, 460, 460.1, 468, and 470]

Property assessment is the process of assigning a dollar value to a property for taxation purposes. In Alberta property is taxed based on the *ad valorem* principle. *Ad valorem* means “according to value.” This means that the amount of tax paid is based on the value of the property.

Assessments for all types of property are prepared by professional, certified assessors. Provincial assessors designated by the Minister of Municipal Affairs assess designated industrial property, while municipal assessors employed or contracted by municipalities assess all other types of property. Under provincial legislation, a council must appoint, by bylaw, a designated municipal assessor. A designated assessor is responsible for the completion of a number of tasks laid out by provincial legislation and regulations.

After the assessed value of a property has been determined, the property is assigned an assessment class. The assessment class determines the tax rate that will be applied to each property, as assessment classes may have different tax rates.

The municipal assessor is responsible for assigning assessment classes to property. Property is classified according to its actual use. The classes set out in the MGA are Class 1 – residential; Class 2 – non-residential; Class 3 – farmland; and Class 4 – machinery and equipment.

To ensure that property owners have a voice in the property assessment system, the MGA has set out a complaints and appeals system for property owners who have concerns about their assessment.

Property Taxation [s. 242, 297, 318, 354, 355, 356, and 359.1]

Each year, municipal councils determine the amount of money they need to operate their municipality through the budget process. From this amount, the council then subtracts known revenues (for example, licences, grants, and permits). The remainder is the amount of money the municipality needs to raise through property taxes in order to provide services for the year.

Very simply, the revenue requirement divided by the total assessment equals the tax rate.

The tax rate is applied to each individual property assessment using the following formula:

Property assessment x Tax rate = Taxes payable.

Council is required to pass a property tax bylaw annually (Section 353). Council may set different municipal tax rates for each of the four assessment classes each year; however the difference between non-residential and residential tax rates can be no more than 5:1. Council may also set different tax rates for vacant and improved non-residential property and for different sub-classes of residential property. Council can only affect the tax rate by changing the revenue requirement (budget).

In addition to municipal tax rates, municipalities must set tax rates to raise funds that are requisitioned for cost sharing programs such as the Alberta School Foundation Fund and seniors lodges, etc.

Once the tax notices are mailed, the property tax rate bylaw cannot be amended unless approved by Ministerial Order.

For more Information on Property Assessment and Taxation please visit:

www.municipalaffairs.gov.ab.ca/mc_property_assessment_and_taxation.

Education Tax and Equalized Assessment

Property assessment is used as the basis on which to requisition property taxes from all or a number of municipalities for the financial support of several regional and provincial programs. Equalized assessment is a process that levels the playing field for municipalities so that property tax requisitions and grants can be fairly allocated.

Just as property owners pay taxes in proportion to the value of the property they own, municipalities are required to contribute to the provincial education and other requisitions based on the proportion of assessment within their jurisdictions. Equalized assessments are used to determine the specific contributions to be made by each municipality, and they are also used in formulas for provincial grants to municipalities.

Inter-municipal fairness and equity is important when requisitioning property taxes from municipalities or calculating grants. In this regard, it is usually necessary to make some adjustments in the assessment base figures that each municipality reports to the province before those assessments are used to determine each municipality's contribution to a regional or provincial program, or its equitable share of grant dollars. These adjustments are made through the equalized assessment process.

The MGA requires that most properties be assessed at market value. Ideally, all properties would be assessed at 100 per cent of market value. In practice, however, assessments may vary from market value to a limited degree. Because this variance may occur, equalization is used to adjust each municipality's assessments to 100 per cent of market value. The equalization process removes the variations in assessment levels to make the assessment bases more comparable among municipalities. The process produces a set of adjusted, or "equalized," assessments that can then be used to distribute **requisitions*, or allocate grants, among municipalities in a fair and equitable manner."

Legislative Provisions

Process	Legislation
Equalized Assessment	<i>Municipal Government Act</i> , s. 317-s. 322, s.325 Alberta Regulation 220/2004, s. 10, s.13-s.19 <i>School Act</i> , s. 161(1)-(4)
*Requisitions	<i>Municipal Government Act</i> , s. 326(a)
Education Property Tax Requisitions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alberta School Foundation School Board Requisitions 	<i>School Act</i> , s. 164(1)-(8), s. 174(1)-(13) <i>Municipal Government Act</i> , s. 359.1(1)-(8) <i>Municipal Government Act</i> , s. 359.2(1)-(8)
Seniors Lodge Requisition (Management Body)	<i>Alberta Housing Act</i> , s. 7

Planning and Development

Council shapes the physical future of the community through its authority over land-use planning and development control. It is the responsibility of council to focus on the future of the community as a whole while balancing the current rights, needs and concerns of property owners and residents. The purpose of planning is to achieve the orderly, economical and beneficial development, use of land and settlement without infringing on the rights of individuals, except as necessary for the community. A number of tools are available to council for this purpose.

The *MGA* identifies the hierarchy and relationship of statutory plans. The order is:

Intermunicipal Development Plans (IDPs) – all other plans must be consistent with the IDP.

Municipal Development Plans (MDPs) must be consistent with the IDP.

Area Structure Plans (ASPs) and Area Redevelopment Plans (ARDs) must be consistent with any MDP and IDPs. The IDP prevails to the extent of the conflict or inconsistency between the plans.

ALSA Regional Plan (ALSA s. 20, 21, and 22; MGA s. 630.2 and 638.1)

Alberta Land Stewardship Act (ALSA) regional plans inform land-use decisions. They build on existing policies and initiatives by establishing a set of strategic directions to achieve the regional vision and outcomes, include regional objectives, strategies and actions undertaken to support achievement of the regional vision and outcomes and indicators to measure and evaluate progress and enable achieving the strategic direction and strategies and actions. Under ALSA, land-use decision-makers and the provincial government will coordinate their planning and decision-making.

The current MGA land-use policies will be phased out as new regional plans under the ALSA come into force. The MGA will provide authority, through regulation, to create land-use policies for municipal planning matters that are not included in a regional plan.

Where there is an approved ALSA regional plan, the subdivision authority, development authority, municipal planning commission, and subdivision and development appeal board of the municipalities within that region must act in accordance with the applicable ALSA regional plan's policies and outcomes.

Intermunicipal Development Plan [s. 631]

Two or more municipalities must adopt an inter-municipal plan (IDP) (within two years of MGA amendments being proclaimed) to address issues of mutual concern with respect to designated lands. The plan must provide for the future use of land, the manner of and proposals for future development, the provision of transportation systems and environmental matters, the co-ordination of intermunicipal programs, or other matters relating to the area. The plan must include a procedure to resolve, or attempt to resolve, conflicts; a procedure to amend or repeal the plan; and provisions relating to plan administration. The Minister may require two (2) or more municipalities to enter into an inter-municipal development plan. A Growth Management Board (GMB) is required to create a framework only for those matters that are not addressed in the growth plan. GMB members must create a framework with non-GMB municipalities where there is a common boundary.

Municipal Development Plan [s. 632 and 636]

Every council with a population greater than 3500 must adopt a municipal development plan (MDP). The MDP provides a general framework for development within the municipality and is the official statement of your municipality's policies concerning the desired future pattern of development. The municipality must afford opportunity to affected persons as well as neighbouring municipalities to review and make comment on the plan. Inter-municipal issues such as coordination of land use and infrastructure must be addressed in the municipality's own municipal development plan when there is not an IDP respecting these matters.

Area Structure and Redevelopment Plans [s. 633, 634, 635, and 636]

Council may, by bylaw, adopt an area structure plan (ASP) to provide a framework for subdivision and development for a particular area. The area structure plan will generally describe the sequences of development, proposed land use, population density, and the location of major transportation routes and public utilities.

When an area is undergoing redevelopment, council may adopt an area redevelopment plan, (ARP) which, in addition to providing guidelines, may result in a redevelopment levy being used to acquire land for park, school, or recreation purposes in the redevelopment area.

Listing and Publishing of Policies [s.638.2]

Every municipality must be more transparent with their planning documentation. They must list, publish and keep updated the list of all planning policy documents, and describe how they relate to each other and to the municipality's statutory plans. The information must be published on their municipal website. A development authority, subdivision authority, subdivision and development appeal board, the Municipal Government Board (MGB) or a court shall not have regard to any policy unless it is listed and published. All documents must be listed and published effective January 1, 2019.

Land Use Bylaws and Development Decisions [s. 639, 640, 640.1, 641, 642, 683.1, 685, and 686]

All municipalities must have a land use bylaw (LUB). This bylaw provides a specific means of implementing the policies that are expressed in a general way in the municipal development plan. The bylaw provides for a system of development permits and divides the municipality into land use districts or 'zones', including direct control, prescribing permitted and discretionary uses for land, and development standards for each land use district. Council must establish a development authority to administer the development approval process. Development decisions may be appealed to the Subdivision and Development Appeal Board (SDAB).

Subdivision [s. 623, 652, 653.1, 654, 655, and 678]

Dividing a piece of land into two or more parcels generally requires approval from a subdivision authority. The authority ensures that the land to be subdivided is appropriate for its proposed use. Council must establish the subdivision authority by bylaw and delegate powers in accordance with the MGA. Subdivision decisions can be appealed to the SDAB, or in certain situations to the Municipal Government Board. While a subdivision is approved by the subdivision authority, any changes to zoning that accompany the subdivision must be brought to council for approval by bylaw.

Subdivision or Development Agreements [s. 650 and 655]

Prior to a subdivision or development having full approval, your municipality may require a developer to enter into a subdivision or development agreement as a condition of approval. These agreements may address construction or payment of a road, walkway, public utility, parking/loading and unloading facilities, off-site levies and security to ensure that the terms of the agreement are carried out. In addition, requirements of inclusionary housing may be addressed in the agreement. After legal consultation, administration will bring the agreement forward to council for acceptance, after which the application can be given final approval.

Subdivision and Development Appeal Board [s. 627, 678, and 686]

A municipal council is required to establish a subdivision and development appeal board (SDAB) to act as a quasi-judicial body to deal with subdivision, development and stop order appeals. Members of council cannot form the majority on the SDAB or intermunicipal board.

A council that establishes a SDAB must appoint a clerk as a designated officer. Members and clerks must have completed the mandatory training. Appeal matters are addressed by the MGB. This sets out the jurisdictional matters that the board must act within. The SDAB must hold a public hearing to deal with an appeal.

For more information on the services of the Planning and Development, please refer to www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/am_planning_and_development.

Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework (Part 17.2)

The purpose of this part is to require municipalities to develop an intermunicipal collaboration framework among two or more municipalities to provide for the integrated and strategic planning, delivery and funding of intermunicipal services, to steward scarce resources efficiently in providing local services, and to ensure municipalities contribute funding to services that benefit their residents.

This framework is mandatory and must be in place within three years of proclamation and reviewed every five years to ensure continued application of the documents.

Municipal Collaboration and Mediation (s. 690)

Alberta Municipal Affairs Intermunicipal Relations team provides assistance in building collaboration and relationships between and within municipalities across Alberta. The team helps municipalities assess what resources and support you may need to collaborate on, or resolve, any internal or intermunicipal issue. In the next three years, this team will have a specific focus to help municipalities create their Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks (ICFs) by assisting with access to resources and supports such as facilitation, mediation, and tools.

The Intermunicipal Relations team:

- works with municipalities to assess the most appropriate tools, services and supports they need to proactively collaborate on, or resolve, any internal or intermunicipal issue;
- works with municipalities to ensure that all the necessary preparations are in place to convene a collaborative or dispute resolution process;
- provides a roster of qualified private sector mediators available to work with municipalities;
- works with municipalities to design collaboration, relationship building and dispute resolution training programs, including preparation for collaboration, mediation, internal communication and public participation;
- facilitates applications for grant funding towards the cost of retaining private sector facilitators, mediators or consultants.

It is important to note that the *MGA* requires municipalities to attempt negotiations and mediation before bringing an inter-municipal land use dispute or a contested annexation to the Municipal Government Board. The Intermunicipal Relations team provides support for municipalities wanting or needing to go to mediation for an annexation of intermunicipal land use dispute.

Municipalities can use facilitated negotiations for any inter-municipal service, issue or dispute at any stage in their negotiations.

For more information on these services of the Intermunicipal Relations team, please refer to www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/MDRS.cfm.

Economic Development

The Economic Developers Association of Alberta (EDA Alberta) is an incorporated, non-profit organization formed to enhance the economic development profession in the province, providing an active network of communication, information and education. EDA coordinates programs and workshops for municipal councils and economic development committee members to help communities with their economic plans by creating an awareness of what they can do on the local front to enhance their economic development activities. The website is www.edaalberta.ca.

Provincial Legislation

This list is not all-inclusive; however, these additional Acts may impact a municipality.

Alberta Land Stewardship Act (ALSA) sets out the legal basis for regional land use planning in Alberta. It requires decision-making and local government bodies to review their regulatory instruments then make any necessary changes to ensure these instruments comply with the regional plan.

Cemeteries Act controls the disposition of human remains, ensures cemeteries meet requirements of local authorities, and protects consumers who invest in pre-need cemetery supplies and services. Awareness may be necessary as some municipalities own and operate cemeteries.

Emergency Management Act (EMA) governs measures taken during an emergency and requires municipalities to establish an emergency plan. It outlines the roles and responsibilities of the Minister of Municipal Affairs, the provincial government, and local authorities. The *EMA* provides the authority for the granting of additional powers during a state of emergency or a state of local emergency and governs the coming into force, expiration, and termination of these states of emergency.

Employment Standards Code establishes Alberta's minimum standards of employment in many areas including payment of wages, hours of work, overtime, vacation and holidays, leaves and termination of employment. It establishes the processes by which an employee can seek recourse if the standards have not been met.

Forest and Prairie Protection Act enables the protection of the forests and prairies of Alberta from wildfire. This legislation makes the chief elected official, each councillor and the chief administrative officer, by virtue of their offices, fire guardians in and for the municipal district except that part of the municipal district that is within a forest protection area.

Highways Development and Protection Act delineates the responsibilities and powers of the authorities that oversee the various categories of highways and roads in Alberta. It also prohibits and limits certain developments near highways and roads.

Interpretation Act sets out rules for interpreting legislation (various presumptions, definitions, rules of statutory interpretation and construction) that apply to all Alberta Acts and regulations, and who can act under legislation.

Land Titles Act details the legal mechanism for registration of land related documents and establishes priority between them. The government guarantees the title and a fund is established to compensate people who have been deprived of an interest in land, for situations such as an error made by the Registrar, fraud or forgery.

Local Authorities Elections Act (LAEA) governs municipal elections by establishing procedures around campaigning, voting and counting of votes.

Oaths of Office Act applies to oaths of allegiance, official oaths and judicial oaths. All elected officials must take an oath of office before they can fulfill their duties. It provides that any

person required by statute to make an oath is permitted to make a solemn affirmation instead of taking an oath.

Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHS) sets out the framework for health and safety in Alberta's workplaces, including municipalities.

Peace Officers Act establishes the roles of peace officers (non-police) in Alberta and allows different levels of government the opportunity to obtain peace officer status for community safety enhancement and specialized law enforcement needs. This act establishes the requirement for authorization of employers and appointment of peace officers including the application process, suspension/cancellations, employer liability and responsibility, the role of the Director of Law Enforcement, oversight process and the mechanism for public complaints. It also provides the offences and penalties.

Safety Codes Act establishes a unifying framework for the administration of ten safety disciplines which each have their own safety codes and standards. The Public Safety Division of Alberta Municipal Affairs administers the framework, including development of codes and standards adopted in Alberta, providing advice and technical support to the public, industry, all municipalities and the Safety Codes Council, monitoring the work of municipalities, corporations and agencies that administer the Act or provide services under the Act, and managing agencies under contract to provide services such as permits and inspections for municipalities that do not administer the Act in their jurisdiction.

Traffic Safety Act promotes safety on the province's highways, the definition of which includes any street, road, sidewalk or bridge that the public is ordinarily entitled or permitted to use.

Weed Control Act defines the actions municipalities in Alberta must take with respect to weed control, issuances of notices and the conditions necessary for appeal.

Alberta Queen's Printer is the official publisher of Alberta's laws and the Alberta Gazette, and partners with Government of Alberta ministries to produce and distribute various government publications. The most current legislation is available for purchase, viewing or printing at www.qp.alberta.ca.

Domestic Trade Agreements

Alberta municipalities are party to two trade agreements: the New West Partnership Trade Agreement (NWPTA) and the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT). Through these agreements, the province has sought to reduce trade barriers, enhance labour mobility and open investment opportunities for Albertans and Alberta businesses. The Canadian Free Trade Agreement (CFTA) came into effect on July 1, 2017 replacing the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT) that had been in force since 1995.

More information on how the procurement practices of Alberta municipalities are impacted by these trade agreements is available at economic.alberta.ca/trade-agreements.asp.

Municipal Affairs

Pecuniary Interest for Municipal Councillors

January 2017

Alberta 

Capacity Building, Municipal Services Branch

Pecuniary Interest for Municipal Councillors

Alberta Municipal Affairs

© Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Alberta, as represented by the Minister of Municipal Affairs, 2017

www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca

This document is made available under the Open Government Licence – Alberta
(<http://open.alberta.ca/publications/9781460132494>).

ISBN 978-1-4601-3248-7 (print)

ISBN 978-1-4601-3249-4 (PDF)

Printed in Canada

Pecuniary Interest for Municipal Councillors

Pecuniary Interest

Alberta's municipal councillors have a strong record of public service to their communities. As a public servant, you are responsible for upholding the public interest ahead of any private interests you may have.

The *Municipal Government Act (MGA)* describes pecuniary interest and sets out the procedures you must follow if a matter in which you have a pecuniary interest comes up at a council meeting or a committee of council meeting. These rules are designed to protect the public interest while ensuring that your ability to work is not adversely affected by your election to council.

In order that the public interest is served and seen to be served, it is important that you be open and honest about dealing with the municipality. Be fair to yourself, your electors, and your municipality by keeping your private interests in harmony with the public interest.

This document is only a guide to the legislation. It is recommended that you consult your solicitor for advice on specific situations.

Definition

Section 170 of the *MGA* describes pecuniary interest as something which could monetarily affect you, your spouse, or adult interdependent partner, or children, your parents or the parents of your spouse (in other words, your immediate family), or a business which employs you or in which you have an interest.

Specifically, pecuniary interest means an interest in a matter which could monetarily affect:

- you
- a corporation, other than a distributing corporation, in which you are a shareholder, director or officer
- a distributing corporation in which you
 - beneficially own voting shares carrying at least 10% of the voting rights attached to the voting shares of the corporation or of which you are a director or officer
- a partnership or firm of which you are a member.

This section also says that *"a councillor has a pecuniary interest in a matter if (a) the matter could monetarily affect the councillor or an employer of the councillor, or (b) the councillor knows or should know that the matter could monetarily affect the councillor's family."* You must decide when you have a pecuniary interest. Council cannot make the decision for you.

Section 172 of the *MGA* sets out the procedure you must follow if a matter in which you have a pecuniary interest comes before any meeting in which you are taking part in your

Pecuniary Interest for Municipal Councillors

capacity as a member of council. Failure to follow these procedures could lead to your disqualification from council.

Exceptions

Several exceptions are listed in section 170(3) of the *MGA* so that an overly-restrictive interpretation of the provisions will not disrupt the affairs of the municipality or your function as a councillor.

A councillor does not have a pecuniary interest only because:

- the councillor, an employer of the councillor or a member of the councillor's family may have as an elector, taxpayer or utility customer of the municipality,
- the councillor or a member of the councillor's family may have by reason of being appointed by the council as a director of a company incorporated for the purpose of carrying on business for and on behalf of the municipality or by reason of being appointed as the representative of the council on another body,
- the councillor or member of the councillor's family may have with respect to any allowance, honorarium, remuneration or benefit to which the councillor or member of the councillor's family may be entitled by being appointed by the council to a position described above,
- the councillor may have with respect to any allowance, honorarium, remuneration or benefit to which the councillor may be entitled by being a councillor,
- the councillor or a member of the councillor's family may have by being employed by the Government of Canada, the Government of Alberta or a federal or provincial Crown corporation or agency, except with respect to a matter directly affecting the department, corporation or agency of which the councillor or family member is an employee,
- a member of the councillor's family may have by having an employer, other than the municipality, that is monetarily affected by a decision of the municipality,
- the councillor or a member of the councillor's family may have by being a member or director of a non-profit organization as defined in section 241(f) or a service club,
- the councillor or member of the councillor's family may have
 - by being appointed as the volunteer chief or other volunteer officer of a fire or ambulance service or emergency measures organization or other volunteer organization or service, or
 - by reason of remuneration received as a volunteer member of any of those voluntary organizations or services,
- the councillor, an employer of the councillor or a member of the councillor's family that is held in common with the majority of electors of the municipality or, if the matter affects only part of the municipality, with the majority of electors in that part,
- the interest is so remote or insignificant that it cannot reasonably be regarded as likely to influence the councillor, or
- they discuss or vote on a bylaw that applies to businesses or business activities when

Pecuniary Interest for Municipal Councillors

the councillor, an employer of the councillor or a member of the councillor's family has an interest in a business, unless the only business affected by the bylaw is the business of the councillor, employer of the councillor or the councillor's family."

What to Do

Section 172 of the MGA says that you may not take part in the discussion and decision-making on any matter in which you have a pecuniary interest. The legislation attempts to ensure that you are not discriminated either for or against by virtue of your membership on council.

If you have a pecuniary interest:

- you are to disclose that you have an interest and its general nature
- you are to abstain from any discussion of the matter and from voting
- you are to leave the room until the matter has been dealt with, and you should make sure that your abstention is recorded in the minutes.

For example, you might say *"Mr. Mayor, I am abstaining on this matter because I am a shareholder in the company. I am leaving the room and I ask that my abstention be recorded."*

If the matter is one in which you, as an elector or property owner, have a right to be heard by council (for example, a land use bylaw amendment, lane or street closure, etc.), you are to disclose your interest and abstain, but you may remain in the room to be heard by council in the same manner as any person who is not a member of council. In this case, you should follow the procedure required of any other person to be placed on the list of delegations to be heard by council. When the matter comes up for hearing, you might say *"Madam Mayor, I am abstaining from this matter because I own the property affected. I ask that my abstention be recorded."*

You should then leave the council table and go to the area where the public sits. The mayor should call you to make your presentation in the same manner as any other person. You should state your case, answer any questions that may be asked of you and then be seated in the public area for the remainder of the public hearing.

When council debates the matter it would be advisable to leave the room during the decision-making process.

Temporary Absence

On occasion, you may be temporarily absent from a meeting when a matter in which you have an interest comes up for discussion. If so, upon returning to the meeting, or as soon as you discover that the matter was discussed, you are to disclose the general nature of your interest.

Pecuniary Interest for Municipal Councillors

The *MGA* requires the secretary to note your disclosure in the minutes.

The purpose of this provision is to ensure that a member of council does not avoid disclosing an interest by simply leaving the meeting before the matter is discussed and returning after the discussion is complete. If some matter is discussed by council while you are temporarily absent from a meeting, upon your return and as soon as you become aware of the matter, you should get the attention of the chair and say something like *“Mr. Mayor, during my absence a matter was discussed in which I have an interest. I am disclosing that my husband is an employee of the company and I ask that my disclosure be recorded in the minutes.”*

All Meetings

The disclosure and abstention rules apply to every meeting of council and any of its committees. They also apply to you at a meeting of any board, committee or agency to which you are appointed as a representative of council (section 172(6) of the *MGA*). In other words, any time that you are acting as a councillor, the disclosure and abstention rules apply to you.

It is important to remember to ask the secretary at any of these meetings to record your abstention and to check that it is actually included in the minutes.

Doing Business

Although there is no prohibition on doing business with the municipality when you are a member of council, every contract or agreement with the municipality in which you have an interest must be approved by council (section 173 of the *MGA*). So, if your council has delegated purchasing authority to administration, it is important that those officials know of any business interests that you have and that you make sure council approves of any contract with your business. You cannot raise the matter in council, but, if you submit a bid or offer, you can note the matter must receive council approval. If it doesn't, you will be disqualified and the contract has no force or effect.

The following are the only exceptions:

- if the contract or agreement is for the performance of work or the provision of a service in the case of an emergency, or
- if the contract or agreement is for the sale of goods or services to the municipality or to persons contracting with the municipality at competitive prices by a dealer in those goods or services, that is incidental to, or in the ordinary course of business
- the agreement was entered into before your term of councillor started

Statement of Disclosure of Interests

If you have extensive business interests, it may be difficult for you to know when these businesses are dealing with your municipality. It may be even more difficult for purchasing

Pecuniary Interest for Municipal Councillors

agents to identify a contract which requires the approval of council because a member of council has an interest.

In such cases, it may help everyone involved – yourself included - if a listing of interests is available in the office. Council may, by bylaw, require its members to file a statement with a designated officer showing the names of their immediate families and any business in which they have an interest (section 171 of the *MGA*). The designated officer then compiles a list of all the names reported on the statements and provides it to the employees of the municipality indicated in the bylaw.

This provision is permissive. This means the council has the power to pass such a bylaw, however, is not required to do so.

Remember

If you vote on a matter in which you have pecuniary interest, you are subject to disqualification, even if you vote against your interest.

Ask to have your abstention recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

The rules apply at all meetings of your council and its committees, and at the meetings of any board, commission, committee or agency to which you are appointed as a representative of the council.

If your council passes a bylaw requiring a statement of disclosure of interests, keep your statement up-to- date by regularly informing the designated officer of additions or deletions.

If you are in doubt as to whether you have a pecuniary interest, obtain a written legal opinion from your own solicitor.

This guide is an information summary only and has no legislative sanction. For certainty, refer to the *Municipal Government Act* and the *Local Authorities Election Act*. Copies can be purchased from Alberta Queen's Printer Bookstore:

7th floor Park Plaza Building
10611 - 98 Avenue NW
Edmonton, AB T5K 2P7

Phone: 780-427-4952

Fax: 780-452-0668

Email: qp@gov.ab.ca

Website: www.qp.alberta.ca/

Council roles and responsibilities

The council is the governing body of the municipal corporation and the custodian of its powers, both legislative and administrative.

The *Municipal Government Act* (MGA) provides that councils can only exercise the powers of the municipal corporation in the proper form, either by bylaw or resolution.

Councillors

Under the MGA, councillors have the duty to:

- consider the welfare and interests of the municipality as a whole and, to bring to council's attention anything that would promote the welfare or interests of the municipality
- participate generally in developing and evaluating the policies and programs of the municipality
- participate in council meetings and council committee meetings and meetings of other bodies they are appointed to by the council
- obtain information about the operation or administration of the municipality from the chief administrative officer
- keep in confidence matters discussed in private at a council meeting until discussed at a meeting held in public
- perform any other duty or function imposed on councillors by this or any other enactment or by the council.

Chief Elected Official (CEO)

The CEO can be a mayor, reeve or I.D. chairperson.

The CEO, in addition to performing a councillor's duties, must preside when attending a council meeting, unless a bylaw provides otherwise.

The CEO must also perform any other duty imposed under the MGA or any other enactment. In practice, the CEO is also generally the main spokesperson for the municipality, unless that duty is delegated to another councillor.

The CEO of a city or town is elected by a vote of a municipality's electors, unless the council passes a bylaw requiring council to appoint the CEO from among the councillors.

In a village, summer village, or municipal district, council appoints the CEO from among the councillors unless it passes a bylaw providing that the official is to be elected by a vote of the municipality's electors.

The CEO role, unless a bylaw says otherwise, includes:

- chairperson of council
- consensus seeker amongst members of council
- liaison with senior elected officials
- ex officio member on various boards and committees
- key representative with regard to ceremonial responsibilities
- liaison with other levels of government
- advice with regard to policy development

A deputy CEO will assume this role if the CEO is not available.

To learn more about elected officials visit these websites:

- [Alberta Urban Municipalities Association \(AUMA\)](#)
 - deals with issues and services for urban municipalities
- [Rural Municipalities of Alberta \(RMA\)](#)
 - deals with issues and services for rural municipalities

Interests of the municipality

A councillor is elected to look after the interests of the entire municipality.

A councillor who is in a municipality that has wards must be careful not to place the interest of the ward or electoral district above the interest of the whole municipality.

Council's effectiveness depends on councillors providing input on their areas while thinking and voting for the whole municipality.

Councillors also have to make certain that they do not put themselves in a conflict of interest situation.

Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)

Every council must establish, by bylaw, a position of CAO. The council may give the position an appropriate title, such as Town Manager or Administrator.

The CAO is the administrative head of the municipality.

The CAO's responsibilities include:

- ensuring that the municipality's policies and programs are implemented
- advising and informing the council on the operation of the municipality
- performing other duties assigned by the council
- ensuring appropriate staffing is in place

Councillors work with the CAO to keep informed on what the municipality is doing and will depend on the administration to provide information so they can make sound decisions.

A performance appraisal system for the CAO is a key building block for a lasting and positive relationship between council and the CAO.

Designated officers

A CAO may delegate any of his or her powers, duties, or functions to a designated officer or to another employee.

Designated officer positions are established by bylaw and are subject to the CAO's supervision, unless otherwise provided by bylaw.

A designated officer may also further delegate to an employee of the municipality any of those powers, duties or functions.

To learn more about municipal administrators in Alberta, visit these websites:

- [Society for Local Government Managers of Alberta](#)
 - The professional regulatory body that grants the Certified Local Government Manager designation in Alberta.
- [Alberta Rural Municipal Administrator's Association](#)
 - Represents rural municipal administrators in Alberta.
- [Local Government Administrators Association](#)
 - Represents municipal administrators in Alberta.

Ward Population (approximate)

Ward	Usual Residents
1	499
2	469
3	403
4	431
5	647
6	432
7	196

Council Boards & Committees
Agricultural Service Board
Alberta Surface Rights
Clear Creek Fire Committee (2 members and 1 alternate)
Clear Hills Joint Venture Ltd. - Directors (Reeve & Deputy Reeve)
Clear Hills Joint Venture Ltd. - Operating (2 members, 2 alternates)
Mercer Peace River Pulp Ltd. Public Advisory Committee
Health Professional Enhancement committee
Economic Development Committee
Emergency Management Committee (Reeve & Dep Reeve)
Medical Clinic Operating Society
Grimshaw Gravel Aq. Management Advisory Committee
Interprovincial/Intermunicipal Committee (All)
Mackenzie Municipal Services Agency
Mighty Peace Tourist Association
Municipal Planning Commission (5 members)
North Peace Housing Foundation & Coalition
North Peace Regional Landfill Commission
Northern Transportation Advisory Council
Peace Library System/CH Advisory Comm
Peace Regional Economic Development Alliance
Recreation Board - Burnt River
Recreation Board - Cherry Canyon
Recreation Board - Cleardale
Recreation Board - Hines Creek & District
Recreation Board - Worsley & District
North West Species at Risk
Trades Training Program Committee
Worsley & District Health Promotion Society
MD of Peace No. 135 Weed and Pest Control Appeal
Joint inter-Municipal (intermunicipal Collaboration Committee)
Mackenzie inter-Municipal Subdivision and Development Appeal Board (SDAB)
Development Appeal Board
Village of Hines Creek Subdivision and Development Appeal Board (SDAB)

Council meetings are held at 9:30 a.m. in the Clear Hills County Office 313, Alberta Avenue Worsley, Alberta, on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month with the exception of July, August and December or if rescheduled/cancelled by Council motion. Special meetings may be called by the Reeve or Council as required.