

FACTS – INFORMATION

Urban Election – September 26, 2018

1. Running for Municipal Office

For governments to be representative of, and responsive to, the needs of their constituents, their make-up should reflect the demographics of the constituency. As an elected official, you will

- bring the perspectives of your demographic to the decision-making table
- influence changes that benefit your community and ensure its sustainability
- put forward new ideas for debate and possible implementation and change
- make a positive difference in the quality of life in your community
- provide a voice for your community with other levels of government
- be part of a team that makes decisions that affect all aspects of community life

Qualifications

It's not crucial to have education or experience in a government setting to run as a candidate. You likely have skills, knowledge and abilities that are transferable to the elected official's role.

You may want to undertake a self-assessment of your skills prior to running for elected office.

Think about you're:

- volunteer experience
- community involvement
- work experience
- membership in different organizations
- family life

Often your experiences have taught you how to:

- work as part of a team
- organize and prioritize
- make decisions
- debate
- lead

The Local Government Election Act, 2015 (LGEA) provides the requirements for candidates in municipal elections.

In the case of town, village and city elections, a person is qualified if

- on the day of election is 18 years of age: and
- at the time of submission of the nomination paper, is a Canadian citizen
- has resided in the municipality for at least three months and in Saskatchewan for at least six months.

2. Understanding the Role, Time Commitment and Powers of Municipal Council

As a member of council, you will have the opportunity to shape the future of your municipality. Any ideas or proposed changes you have in mind cannot be achieved without the support of other council members.

Responsibilities

A common role of municipal council is to provide essential core services to the community such as:

- Roads and transportation;
- Water treatment and sewer facilities;
- Snow and garbage removal;
- Recreation facilities and programs;
- Land use planning and economic development;
- Building code regulations;
- Crime prevention;
- Fire prevention;
- Animal control; and
- Emergency planning.

While all of the above responsibilities are important aspects of municipal responsibility, council members are not directly responsible for providing these services. Council members' individual responsibilities can be broken as follows:

- Representation and Accountability
 - A councillor's responsibility is to serve the people who elected them to office. A councillor should engage regularly with the public to take into account the views and concerns of all members of a community when voting on matters of concern.

- Governance
 - Municipal council is responsible for shaping the future of the municipality by implementing new policy, by-laws and community goals. Many decisions that council makes are the result of extensive community consultation, research and advice from community members and groups. It is important for council to remember that they must represent the people who voted them to office. Failure to do so may result in a limited term in office.
- Management
 - Members of council are generally responsible for ensuring that municipal staff follows through on the policies, priorities and direction that council has set forth. Council members should also expect to be active members of committees and boards in the community to ensure that they possess the required knowledge to pass on to council.

When you take office, you will not be starting off from scratch. There will be local legislation existing in the form of bylaws, which will remain in effect until they are amended or repealed. It would be a good idea to contact your municipality and become familiar with local legislation prior to running for council so that you have a good idea of what policies exist in your community, and what kind of changes you might want to consider.

Time Commitment

Many, if not most, council members have full-time jobs outside of municipal council. It's important not to underestimate the amount of time and dedication required to be an effective member or council.

You will be elected to a four year term of office and expected to participate in monthly (sometimes bi-monthly) council meetings. Being a member of council, your responsibilities are not restricted to attending regular council meetings. In addition, you will be expected to attend and participate in:

- Council committee meetings;
- Meetings of boards and agencies in which you are appointed as council's representative;
- Learning workshops, training seminars and conferences; and
- Cultural, social and public events promoting or representing your municipality.

You may also need to spend a significant amount of time talking to the public, business, and colleagues in other municipalities, municipal staff and your administrator. Continuing interaction with these groups is an essential part of making an informed decision as a council member.

Municipal council derives their authority from *The Municipalities Act, The Cities Act* or *The Northern Municipalities Act, 2010*. Individual members of council are not permitted to make decisions on their own on behalf of the municipality. Any election promise you made during your campaign can only be carried out if you can convince a majority of council that it is in the best interest of the municipality.

3. The Nomination Process

Urban Municipalities

The first step to being elected to office is to be nominated by electors of the municipality for which you are seeking office.

A person can be nominated as a candidate for election by filing a nomination paper, personally or by agent, with the returning officer or nomination officer on the days and during the hours specified in Sections 73 and 74 of *The Local Government Election Act, 2015* (LGEA).

The municipal administrator can tell you where to get a form and provide advice on filling it out.

If the population of the municipality is less than 20,000, the nomination form must be signed by five (5) electors.

Nomination of a candidate must be filled out on the prescribed form.

4. Public Servants Seeking Nomination As A Candidate Or Becoming A Candidate

Municipal Employees

An employee wishing to seek a seat on council needs to refer to *Section 43 of The Local Government Election Act, 2015*.

5. Campaigning for Election

The purpose of campaigning is to convince electors you are the best candidate for the job and it involves talking to people, distributing brochures and posters, and perhaps media advertising.

Rules regarding proper campaign procedures can be found within *The Local Government Election Act, 2015* (advertising, canvassing in or near the polling place) and *The Controverted Municipal Elections Act* (bribery and threats).

Every printed advertisement referencing an election must contain the name and address of the person who has authorized its printing, display and distribution.

No candidate, agent or other person shall canvass or solicit votes in a polling place or within 100 meters of the building where the poll is held and when the polls are open.

You should also check with your municipality, they may have passed a bylaw regarding election contributions and expenditures.