

Running for Municipal Council:

What you need to know

What do I need to know?

Simply put, a municipality is the first “frontline” level of government. The elected council is the governing body of the municipality.

As an elected official you may have great ideas or changes you would like to see in your municipality, but you will only achieve those changes with the support of other council members.

Being elected to council means a time commitment. If elected, you will serve a four-year term. During that time you should plan to attend the following:

- Regular and special council meetings;
- Meetings of council committees;
- Meetings of other boards and agencies as a representative of council;
- Conferences, seminars, workshops, and conventions for training and discussion; and
- Events that promote the municipality.

How are municipal governments structured?

Saskatchewan has three types of municipalities.

- Urban (cities, towns, villages and resort villages);
- Rural; and
- Northern (towns, villages and northern hamlets).

General elections in urban municipalities are held every four years. The council of an urban municipality has a mayor (elected at large) and at least two councillors. Some urban municipalities are divided into wards and voters elect at least one councillor for each ward.

Each rural municipality is divided into numbered divisions. The council of a rural municipality has a reeve (elected at large) and a councillor for each division. Members of council are elected to four-year terms. General elections in rural municipalities are held every two years on a rotational basis.

In the 2016 general election, elections will be held for Reeves and odd-numbered division councillors. In 2018, elections will be held for even-numbered division councillors.

Northern municipalities hold elections every four years. The election dates vary. Contact the administrator of your municipality for further information.

You can find more information on municipal councils by searching “council responsibilities” on www.saskatchewan.ca.

How do I run for council?

Am I eligible?

To be a candidate in a municipal election, you must be:

- 18 years of age on election day;
- A Canadian citizen at the time you submit your nomination paper; and
- Eligible to be nominated under relevant guidelines set out in *The Local Government Election Act, 2015*, or any other act.

In addition to meeting general requirements, you need to be mindful of specific criteria you must meet depending on the type of municipality in which you are considering running for office. Contact the administrator of your municipality for further information on eligibility criteria.

What you need to know about running for municipal council

How do I file my nomination?

After your municipality publishes a “Notice of Call for Nominations”, you can file a nomination using the prescribed form. The municipal administrator, returning officer or city clerk will be able to provide you with that form and advice on filling out the information.

Urban and rural municipalities have different requirements for signatures on the nomination form depending on the municipality’s population and if it is divided into wards.

In an urban or northern municipality with a population below 20,000 the following applies:

- If you are running for mayor, your nomination form must be signed by five electors from the municipality at large.
- If you are running for councillor and the municipality is divided into wards, your nomination form must be signed by five electors from the ward you are considering running in.
- If you are running for council and the municipality is not divided into wards, your nomination form must be signed by five electors from the municipality at large.

In urban municipalities with populations over 20,000 the following applies:

- If you are running for mayor, your nomination form must be signed by 25 electors from the municipality at large.
- If you are running for councillor and the municipality is divided into wards, your nomination form must be signed by 25 electors from the ward you are considering running in.
- If you are running for councillor and the municipality is not divided into wards, your nomination form must be signed by 25 electors from the municipality at large.
- You must provide a \$100 deposit when you submit your nomination form. In certain cases, the deposit may be refunded.

In rural municipalities the following applies:

- If you are running for reeve, your nomination form must be signed by at least two voters from the municipality at large.
- If you are running for councillor, your nomination form must be signed by at least two voters from the division you are considering running in.

You must complete all nomination forms in their entirety, including the Candidate’s Acceptance portion, and if required, your form must be accompanied by a Results of Criminal Record Check for Candidate for Election form and the criminal record check. You submit the completed form to the returning officer or nomination officer in the municipality.

When do I need to file my nomination by?

Nomination dates and times are legislated and are as follows:

Resort villages: by 2:00p.m. on the fifth Saturday before election day.

Rural and urban municipalities: by 4:00p.m. on the Wednesday five weeks prior to election day.

Northern municipalities: by 4:00 p.m. on the Wednesday five weeks before election day. As the election day varies, please contact the administrator of your municipality for further information.

Nomination day for all municipalities is identified in the “Notice of Call for Nominations.” The election official will ensure the nomination form is complete and issue a Receipt of Nomination Paper and Candidate’s Acceptance form.

For more information, search “municipal nomination” on www.saskatchewan.ca.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT IF I AM ELECTED?

How is the municipality governed?

Municipalities are governed by a council of elected officials. They make decisions by passing resolutions, setting policies or enacting bylaws. Bylaws are the laws of the municipality. If you are running with some kind of reform in mind you will need to know what bylaws and policies are in place. Examples of local documents you may want to refer to are the meeting minutes, council procedure bylaw, and the zoning bylaw.

What you need to know about running for municipal council

What are the powers of Council?

Municipalities have natural person powers, with some limitations, and governmental powers, which are those specifically authorized by legislation. Natural person powers mean that a municipality has the same privileges as an ordinary citizen and can take actions not explicitly set out in legislation. You can check Saskatchewan's municipal legislation, available through the Queen's Printer, at <http://www.qp.gov.sk.ca>. The legislation is separated into *The Cities Act*, *The Municipalities Act* and *The Northern Municipalities Act*, 2010.

What is the role of council?

The main role of council is to make decisions about the services the municipality will provide to citizens. Council establishes policies about what services to provide, how those services will be delivered and at what levels. The municipal administrator (or administration) is then charged with implementing those policies. Council relies on the support, advice and assistance of the administration through the decision-making process.

What are your responsibilities as a council member?

If you become a member of council, you must take an Oath of Office in the prescribed form prior to carrying out any power, duty or function as a member of council.

Within 30 days of being elected to council, you must complete and sign a Public Disclosure Statement listing your employer, landholdings, business interests and contracts.

This statement must be reviewed yearly and updated when required to ensure its accuracy. Your Oath of Office and Public Disclosure Statement are accessible public documents.

All decisions of council must be made at a meeting open to the public with a majority of council members present. At these meetings, it is important for council members to listen to each other and collectively reach decisions that are in the best interests of the municipality. An individual member of council, including the mayor or reeve, does not have the authority to commit the municipality to any expenditure or direct the activities of municipal employees.

What are the Conflict of Interest rules for council?

A conflict of interest occurs when an elected official's private interests, or a closely connected person's interests may, or may appear to, be affected by a council decision. A financial interest is always a conflict of interest. If as a council member you think you may have a conflict of interest, you must declare the nature of the interest before any discussion occurs, leave council chambers and not vote or discuss the matter with other council members before, during, or after the matter is being considered or decided.

You can find more information on conflict of interest rules by searching "conflict of interest" on the Government of Saskatchewan website (www.saskatchewan.ca).

Further information on municipal elections can also be obtained by contacting:

Ministry of Government Relations
Advisory Services and Municipal Relations
1010-1855 Victoria Avenue
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