

Municipal Affairs

**Running for Municipal Office
in Alberta**

A Candidate's Guide

Running for Municipal Office in Alberta

Before you file your nomination paper

Here are some things you should consider:

Are you qualified?

To become a candidate you must be at least 18 years of age on nomination day, a Canadian citizen and, you must have been a resident of the local jurisdiction for the 6 consecutive months preceding nomination day.

In a municipality with a ward system, you must have been a resident of the electoral division or the ward in which you intend to run for the same six-month period, except in the case of a City.

In a summer village, you must meet the eligibility to vote in the election requirement and have been a resident of Alberta for the 12 consecutive months immediately preceding election day.

Ineligibility for nomination

You would not be eligible to become a candidate under any of the following circumstances:

- if you are the auditor of the municipality
- if you are an employee, unless granted a leave of absence
- if your property taxes are more than \$50 in arrears or you are in default, for more than 90 days, for any other debt in excess of \$500 to the municipality.

If you are a judge, a member of parliament, senator, or member of the legislative

assembly, you must resign that position before you take office as a member of council.

Do you have the time?

The demands on your time will be heavy. You will be elected for a three-year term of office and during that time you will be required to attend:

- regular meetings of council
- council committee meetings
- meetings of other boards and agencies to which you are appointed as council's representative
- conferences, conventions, seminars, and workshops for training and discussion
- social and other events promoting your municipality.

You will also need to spend time reading material and talking with residents, the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), and others. This will all be part of the necessary preparation for meetings so that you can make informed decisions. Don't forget the time you need for your personal life, work, etc.

Remuneration

Elected officials generally receive remuneration or other financial compensation for the time and energy they have devoted to their community. The remuneration varies in each municipality, so check with your local municipal office to find out about remuneration for elected officials in your area.

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more time now than you will if you are elected.

Ask how much time may be required for committee work and for council appointments to other boards and agencies, over and above the time required for regular council meetings. Once you are elected you have a duty to represent your community.

Filing your nomination

Nomination form

Your nomination must be filed on the prescribed form. Your CAO, returning officer or city clerk will be able to tell you where to get a form and provide advice on filling it out.

Nominators

Your form must be signed by five people eligible to vote in the election. Cities with a population of at least 10,000 can pass a bylaw increasing that number to a maximum of 100 signatures. These people must be eligible to vote and residents in the local jurisdiction on the date of signing the nomination paper.

If you are running in a municipality with a ward system, the people signing your nomination form must be a resident in your electoral division or the ward in which you are running.

In a summer village, the nominators must be eligible to vote in the election, be 18 years of age, a Canadian citizen and named

on the certificate of title as the person who owns property within the summer village or is the spouse or adult interdependent partner of the person named on the title.

For each nominator, the form must include that person's name, address (street address or legal description of residence) and signature.

Candidate

The nomination form states that you are required to make an affidavit saying that you are eligible for nomination, not otherwise disqualified from office, and that you will accept the office if you are elected. You must swear or affirm that affidavit before a Commissioner for Oaths or the returning officer. Ensure you are aware of the contents of Sections 12, 21, 22, 23, 47 and 151 of the *Local Authorities Election Act*.

Under the Criminal Code (Canada), it is an offence to make a false affidavit and it is punishable by up to 14 years imprisonment.

Filing the form

The completed form is to be filed with the returning officer between 10 a.m. and noon on nomination day, unless the municipality has passed a bylaw prior to June 30th in the year in which a general election is held, stating that the returning officer may receive nominations earlier than 10 a.m. The elected authority may also provide by bylaw, other locations, in addition to the local jurisdiction office, where a deputy

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Be sure that your nomination paper is filed on time.

After filing

Campaigning

You will want your campaign style to match your municipality, your personality and your resources. The purpose of campaigning is to convince the electors that you are the best candidate for the position. You may want to do that by talking to people, preparing brochures or posters, and/or advertising in the media. Following are some rules regarding proper campaign procedures.

Bribery

It is an offence to give or promise to give money or any other valuable consideration (such as an office or job) to anyone in return for their voting or refraining from voting at an election. It is also an offence for anyone to accept money or any other valuable consideration in return for voting or not voting.

Undue influence

It is an offence to use or threaten violence, injury, damage or intimidation to compel a person to vote or refrain from voting at an election or to obstruct a person from voting.

Allowable campaign expenses

The payment of the following expenses (related to the campaign) is not considered a contravention of the legislation:

- your personal expenses

- cost of acquiring premises, accommodation, goods or services for proper election campaign expenses
- payments for the costs of printing and advertising
- reasonable payment to any person for the hire of transportation used by a candidate or speakers in travelling to and from public meetings or by any person in connection with and for the proper purposes of an election.

- A candidate whose campaign is entirely self funded has a funding cap of \$10,000 in a campaign period and is not required to open a bank account or file a disclosure statement unless there is a surplus exceeding \$500 from a previous election.

- A candidate must declare campaign contributions funded from any person, corporation, trade union, or employee organization by completing an Election Candidate Campaign Contribution and Disclosure Statement Form. Campaign contributions by any person, corporation, trade union or employee organization to a candidate shall not exceed \$5,000 in any year.

- A candidate who funds a campaign by contributions must open a campaign account at a financial institution.

On election day

It is an offence to canvass or solicit votes in or immediately adjacent to a voting station. It is also an offence to display or

Appendix

Municipal Government Act

Section 3 Municipal Purposes

The purposes of a municipality are

- (a) to provide good government,
- (b) to provide services, facilities or other things that, in opinion of council, are necessary or desirable for all or a part of the municipality, and
- (c) to develop and maintain safe and viable communities.

Section 153 General duties of councillors

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.

Section 154 General duties of chief elected official (Mayor or Reeve)

- (1) A chief elected official, in addition to performing the duties of a councillor, must
 - (a) preside when in attendance at a council meeting unless a bylaw provides that another councillor or other person is to preside, and
 - (b) perform any other duty imposed on a chief elected official by this or any other enactment or bylaw.
- (2) The chief elected official is a member of all council committees and all bodies to which council has the right to appoint members under this Act, unless the council provides otherwise.
- (3) Despite subsection (2), the chief elected official may be a member of a board, commission, subdivision authority or development authority established under Part 17 only if the chief elected official is appointed in the chief elected official's personal name.

Section 201 Council's principal role in municipal organization

- (1) A council is responsible for
 - (a) developing and evaluating the policies and programs of the municipality;
 - (b) making sure that the powers, duties and functions of the municipality are appropriately carried out;

