

Roles And Responsibilities Of Officials In A Local Government

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 provides that councils can only exercise the powers of the municipal corporation in the proper form, either by **bylaw** or **resolution**.

The councillor's job is to work with other council members to set the overall direction of the municipality through their role as a policy maker. The policies that council sets are the guidelines for administration to follow as it does the job of running a municipality. A councillor will spend a lot of time while on council creating new policies and programs or reviewing the current ones to make sure they are working as they should.

The Councillors

Under the Municipal Government Act, councillors have the following duties:

- 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
- To participate generally in developing and evaluating the policies and programs of the municipality
- To participate in council meetings and council committee meetings and meetings of other bodies to which they are appointed by the council
- To obtain information about the operation or administration of the municipality from the chief administrative officer
- To keep in confidence matters discussed in private at a council committee meeting until discussed at a meeting held in public
- To perform any other duty or function imposed on councillors by this or any other enactment or by the council.

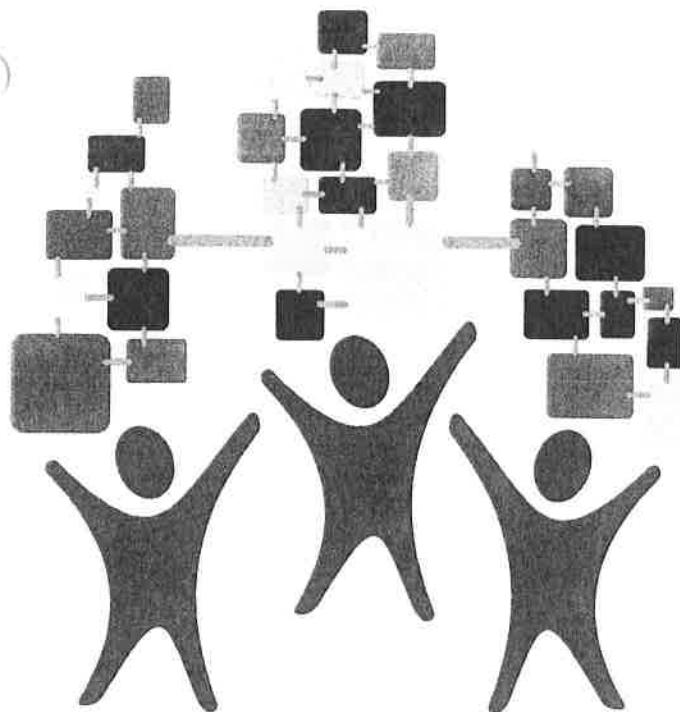
The Chief Elected Official (CEO): Mayor, Reeve or I.D. Chairperson

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 title CEO may be changed to one that council feels is appropriate to the office, such as mayor, reeve, or I.D. chairperson.

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 includes:

- Chairperson of council
- Consensus seeker amongst members of council
- Liaison with senior staff
- Advisor to council
- 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.



Roles & Responsibilities

GUIDELINES

PURPOSE

To clarify the responsibilities of elected officials and staff members and to understand success factors and tools that guide organizational and individual actions reinforcing the distinction between political and administrative roles

1

ROLES

The **key positions** for the purposes of these guidelines include:

- Council – elected decision-making body
- Chief Elected Official – elected official presiding over council meetings
- Chief Administrative Officer – principal staff member responsible for operations
- Staff – responsible for implement policies and programs

The fundamental roles of elected officials and administration involve:

COUNCIL Give direction Make policy decisions Represent the public interest	ADMINISTRATION Implement directions Develop decision making advice Provide technical knowledge
CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIAL Coordinate Council activities Represent the organization Facilitate Council/staff interface	CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER Coordinate organization systems Manage organizational resources Facilitate Council/staff interface

2 REALMS

The **political or governance** realm for Council and the CEO primarily involves:

- Strategic Direction – to provide the overall direction of the organization through mission, vision, goals and priority statements
- Policy Choices – to make decisions that guide organizational activities in terms of the budget, legislation and organizational rules

The **administrative or operational** realm for the CAO and staff primarily involves:

- Service Delivery Implementation – to allocate resources, schedule and deliver internal and external services
- System Coordination to establish and maintain processes required for organizational effectiveness and efficiency

POLITICAL			
STRATEGIC	DIRECTION Goals & Priorities Vision & Values The PUBLIC	CHOICES Legislation & Policy Budget Allocation	DECISIONS
STAFF	COORDINATION Systems Processes	SERVICES Resource Development Service Production The CLIENT	IMPLEMENTATION
		ADMINISTRATIVE	

3 RESPONSIBILITIES

To present specific responsibilities for Council, the CEO, the CAO and staff and tools to strengthen compliance and maximize organizational effectiveness

To discuss Success Indicators as a means of regularly assessing organizational and individual efforts maximizing role clarity and organizational effectiveness

Key functions associated with both the political and administrative roles include:

- Making informed decisions
- Making and implementing policy
- Liaising with other organizations
- Allocating resources
- Setting a direction
- Effectively utilizing staff
- Ensuring good systems
- Dealing with media
- Establishing the council structure

4

MAKING INFORMED DECISIONS

To make informed choices in the public interest using all available information

Council

- All items are to be submitted via the CEO and CAO or designate
- Consider organizational goals, public interest and available resources, existing legislation, current policies and jurisdiction when making decisions
- Provide effective referrals to staff by clarifying the problem, desired outcomes, scope of required analysis and a response timeframe
- Provide effective resolutions – clear direction with clear expectations
- Ensure all information is available to make an informed decision
- A councillor is expected to review material provided and ask questions of administration both before and during the meeting

Chief Elected Official

- Facilitate decision-making processes to seek informed agreement by ensuring good debate and adequate information is available
- Ensure member regard for organizational values and appropriate behaviour
- Monitor meeting effectiveness and encourage member input

Chief Administrative Officer

- Coordinate the agenda preparation process
- Provide recommendations on all council items
- Review agenda with the CEO

Staff

- Proactive in providing a full range of information and implications
- Ensure compliance with statutory requirements
- All staff items submitted through the CAO
- Provide a comprehensive review of related information

Tools

- Follow-up Action List – to ensure decisions are actioned and implemented
- Request For Decision – consistent format for reports and recommendations from staff and committees to Council
- Agenda Preparation Schedule – timelines for submission and distribution of the agenda package
- CAO/Staff Meetings – to review advice with staff before the meeting and to discuss the implementation of decisions after the meeting
- Standard Agenda Format – an established order to conduct business
- Annual Meeting Calendar – for all council related meeting

Success Indicators

- Timely preparation of agenda information for review by members
- Repeated or reversal of decisions avoided
- Follow-up to meeting decisions is ensured
- Focused discussion on issues rather than on personalities
- Balanced meeting agendas and schedule
- Implications for all decisions are known
- Fair and equitable opportunities for everyone to be heard
- Prioritized agenda items to focus the flow of the meeting

5

MAKING & IMPLEMENTING POLICY

To establish legislation that is fair and consistent

Council

- Thoroughly investigate issues before making decisions
- Seek staff advice prior to making policy decisions
- Portray an open mind on matters and listen to all views
- Reflect the public interest while respecting specific interest group requests

Chief Elected Official

- Ensure staff advice is available and presented
- Ensure clear direction for preparing policy from council to staff

Chief Administrative Officer

- Ensure adherence to existing policy and legislation
- Ensure all options are presented along with recommendations
- Ensure staff compliance to policy
- Monitor and advise Council of liability exposure on policy matters

Staff

- Review legislation, policies and precedents when providing policy advice
- Maintain an efficient policy retrieval process

Tools

- Resolution Index – catalogue of Council decisions for easy reference
- Operations handbook – easy reference to existing approved operational or day-to-day practices and guidelines
- Council Strategy Sessions – in depth sessions on specific areas to learn more about the subject material before significant debate

Success Indicators

- Delegation of routine matters to administration by way of policy
- Consistent policy approach to similar issues
- Limited revisiting of policy decisions
- Easy retrieval of policies in a standardized format
- Lack of conflict between policy and legislative initiatives

6

LIAISING WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

To maintain contact with other organizations to effectively share resources and information

Council

- Promote cooperative relations with other agencies – government, not for profit and private sector
- Approve agreements with other agencies that involve sharing the authority and resources of the organization
- A councillor may be requested to act as a Council liaison with another agency at the request of the CEO or Council (see Councillor Portfolio below)

Chief Elected Official

- Provide timely reports on agency liaison activities
- Represent Council based on existing policies, budget and strategic plan
- Obtain Council direction on significant issues not covered by existing policies, budget or strategic plan before representing Council's position
- Act as primary spokesperson for Council with other agencies
- Keep Council informed on meeting with other organizations

Councillor Portfolio

- Provide timely reports on agency liaison activities
- Represent the interests of Council based on existing policies, budget and the strategic plan
- Obtain Council direction on significant issues not covered by existing policies, budget and the strategic plan before representing Council's position
- Liaise with the CAO or assigned staff person on portfolio matters

Chief Administrative Officer

- Coordinate an ongoing and targeted agency liaison program
- Act as primary liaison with senior staff of other organization

7 ALLOCATING RESOURCES

Staff

- Interact with staff of other agencies as delegated by the CAO

Tools

- Agency Liaison Chart – to manage and monitor agency liaison
- Liaison Update on Agenda – to regularly report on agency activities
- Councillor Portfolio List – to regularly report on portfolio matters
- Update Report Form – outline for providing information on agency liaison or matters arising between or at meetings of Council

Success Indicators

- Up to date information on other agencies
- Timely reporting on relevant initiatives and issues
- Staff or elected official represent the organization – not their own views
- Maintain high potential for cooperation with other organization
- Improved external organization perspective by council and the organization
- Respected as a partner or stakeholder in interagency relationships

To effectively allocate resources in an efficient and accountable manner

Council

- Establish a budget and to allocate resources that are commensurate with expectations of the organization's work program
- Ensure a linkage between the budget process and the strategic plan

Chief Elected Official

- Ensure discussion takes place regarding human and fiscal resource implications prior to a Council decision
- Refer emergency expenditures to Council by way of a special meeting or consent by telephone poll (for approval at next meeting) in consultation with the CAO

Chief Administrative Officer

- Advise Council on the implications of all recommendations to Council
- Control financial resources as per Council direction

Staff

- Provide complete assessment of implications for recommendations

Tools

- Service Levels – criteria to ensure resources are consistent with service delivery expectations
- Budget Process Guidelines – steps and milestones for establishing annual operating and capital budgets
- Long Term Fiscal Plan – long term requirements of the organization
- Financial Authority Policy – designating limits of spending authorities

Success Indicators

- Efficient budget timeline
- Adequate information to make choices among competing demands
- Clear budget linkage to priorities and work programs
- Balanced year end budget

8

SETTING DIRECTION

To articulate a community vision and establish a strategic organizational direction

Council

- Consider the organization's capacity and public interest to develop short term priorities and longer term directions
- Continually review the implementation of priorities and directions

Chief Elected Official

- Ensure a process is in place to establish and monitor strategic directions
- Ensure Committee/Administration issues are brought forward to Council
- Manage Council priorities through discussion of an item's urgency, public sensitivity, legislative imperative, monetary and liability consequence

Chief Administrative Officer

- Keep Council and stakeholders informed on progress, recommend changes and new initiatives for the strategic plan and work programs on a regular basis
- Coordinate an ongoing process to monitor organizational priorities

Staff

- Advise Council of the relevance of their decisions to the strategic plan

Tools

- Core Services List – differentiates between core and discretionary services
- Strategic Plan – mission, vision, longer term directions and values
- Council Priorities Work program – to monitor the implementation of significant matters that are of a governance or political nature
- Operational Strategies Work program – to monitor significant administrative matters
- Strategic Sessions – scheduled regularly for the discussion of major issues

Success Indicators

- Linkage to annual budget process
- Opportunities for public involvement
- Determine needs versus wants
- Determine 'what business are we in?'

9

EFFECTIVELY UTILIZING STAFF

To ensure a healthy and productive work environment

Council

- Directs information requests to the CAO on the basis that it will not impact staff work programs and that the information provided will be made available to all councillors
- A councillor information request that does not impact staff time can be referred to the CAO and/or Council by the councillor
- The CEO, member of Council or committee chairperson is not permitted to direct a staff member at any time
- Concerns regarding a staff member are directed to the CAO
- Concerns regarding the CAO are referred to the CEO and/or Council

Chief Elected Official

- Receives concerns regarding staff performance and refers them to the CAO
- Facilitates Council discussion with the CAO on unresolved personnel matters

Chief Administrative Officer

- Coordinates the ongoing review of the organization's effectiveness
- Coordinates the ongoing appraisal of staff performance

Staff

- Regularly reports on operational activities
- Provides regular updates on Council priorities and operational strategies

Tools

- Success Indicators – clear criteria to assess the organization's effectiveness
- Operational Strategies Work Program – operational items for Council review
- Council Priorities Work Program – clarifies political items for administrative attention
- Staff Reports – regular update on significant operational activities

Success Indicators

- Periodic overall or targeted system reviews
- Systems serve organizational needs and priorities
- Organization-wide awareness of systems and how they work
- Staff understanding of Council priorities and expectations

10

ENSURING GOOD SYSTEMS

To ensure consistent and transparent organization processes and systems

Council

- Regularly review organizational efficiency and effectiveness

Chief Elected Official

- Receive organizational performance concerns from councillors and refer them to the CAO
- Facilitate Council's discussion with the CAO on unresolved organizational matters

Chief Administrative Officer

- Coordinate the ongoing review of the organization's effectiveness with Council and staff

Staff

- Regularly report on operational activities

Tools

- Success Indicators – clear criteria to assess the organization's effectiveness
- CAO Sessions – regular sessions for Council and the CAO to discuss what is working well and what could be improved

Success Indicators

- Periodic overall and targeted system reviews
- Systems serve organizational needs and priorities
- Organization wide awareness of systems and how they work
- Regular CAO/Council discussion on organizational performance
- Regular CAO/staff discussion on organizational performance

11

DEALING WITH MEDIA

To effectively communicate Council decisions, strategic directions and organizational accomplishments

Council

- Communicate Council decisions and if deemed appropriate, to express personal concerns discussed during public debate

Chief Elected Official

- Represent the views of Council to the media
- Review media releases based on Council's decision or the consent of a majority of councillors as prepared through the CAO

Chief Administrative Officer

- Provide administrative details on Council decisions and refer political matters to the CEO

Staff

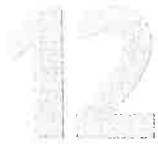
- Refer requests for non-routine information to the CAO
- Provide readily available public information

Tools

- Media Relations Training – how to deal with 'hot seat' situations
- Media Release – standard format and process for consistent application

Success Indicators

- Consistent message to the public
- Timely response to the media
- Ability to freely express opinions while being respectful of Council decisions



COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

To establish governance systems to meet the strategic and political needs of Council

Council Committees

- Make recommendations on policy matters referred by Council
- Make recommendations concerning strategic issues referred by Council
- Suggest topics for Council consideration

Councillor Portfolios

- Present 'requests for decisions' to Council
- Liaise with external interests at the request of Council or CEO
- Liaise with community stakeholders at the request of Council or CEO
- To be well informed on activities and issues within the assigned portfolio
- Suggest topics for the consideration Council

Committee Chairperson

- Chair the committee meeting
- Review agenda with staff liaison
- Present committee recommendations to Council
- To be well informed on activities and issues within the assigned area