

WHAT TO EXPECT IF ELECTED TO COUNCIL

So, you're thinking about running for Council?

Here's what you need to know.



First, are you eligible to run for Council?

To be eligible as a municipal candidate, you must meet certain requirements under the *Local Authorities Election Act* (LAEA) s. 21(1), including that on nomination day you:

- are at least 18 years old,
- are a Canadian citizen,
- have been a resident of the Town of Peace River for six consecutive months preceding Nomination Day, and
- are not otherwise ineligible or disqualified.

Under section 22(1) of the LAEA there are certain criteria that may make you ineligible to be a candidate in a municipal election, which includes but is not limited to:

- you are the auditor of the municipality
- you are an employee of the municipality (unless the employee takes a leave of absence)
- you are in default of your taxes exceeding \$50 (excluding indebtedness on current taxes and indebtedness for arrears of taxes for which you have entered into an agreement with the municipality, providing you are not in default of that agreement)
- you are in default for any other debt to the municipality equal to or exceeding \$500 for more than 90 days
- you have been convicted of an offence under the *Local Authorities Election Act*, the *Election Act*, *Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act*, or the *Canada Elections Act* within the previous 10 years.
- You are employed by the Office of the Ombudsman, unless you take a leave of absence.
- If
 - A report was submitted under section 147.8(1) of the LAEA regarding yourself
 - The Court did not dispense with or extend the time for compliance with section 147.4 of the LAEA
 - Nomination day falls within the 8-year period following the day on which the secretary presented the report to council or transmitted the report to the school board, or where the disclosure statement required by section 147.4 has been filed with the secretary, the 3-year period following the day of filing, whichever period expires first.

- You use or spend contributions in contravention of section 147.23 of the LAEA.

For a full review of what can impact your nomination eligibility, please see the [LAEA](#) or contact the Town's returning officer.

Please note

It is your responsibility to ensure you are fully aware of all the nomination requirements and to comply with them. It is not the returning officer's responsibility to review the validity of the information contained in the candidate's nomination paper. That responsibility lies with the Courts if the candidate's nomination or election is challenged. Under the Criminal Code, it is an offense to make a false affidavit, punishable by up to 14 years imprisonment. You are advised to obtain legal advice if necessary.

Municipal Government Act

The *Municipal Government Act* (MGA) is the second largest piece of legislation in Alberta, governing all municipalities from summer villages, towns, and counties to large cities.

While there are many pieces of legislation a municipality is governed by and must adhere to, the MGA is the overarching legislation that regulates the operations of a municipality and dictates much of what a municipality may or may not do.

Municipal councils may make policy and bylaw decisions that enhance or complement the MGA, but cannot make decisions that are contradictory.

The MGA can be found online here: [Municipal Government Act](#)

What does it mean to be a member of Council?

Town Council sets the vision and direction for their municipality. They do so by adopting policies and bylaws that align with these goals, and by approving the annual municipal budgets. It is then the responsibility of municipal staff to administer and carry out the policies set by Council.

As a Councillor, you will have the occasion to put forward ideas and opportunities for the betterment of your community. However, decisions or monetary commitments may not be made individually and must be made by a majority of Council through a Council Resolution. If a decision made by a majority of Council does not align with your opinion, you must be able to respect the difference of opinion and demonstrate a unified and respectful front.

As a member of Council, you are a leader and a representative of the Town of Peace River. As such, when you are in public, you should conduct yourself in a manner that appropriately aligns with these responsibilities.

What is the time commitment?

During your four-year term as a Councillor, you will be required to attend many meetings and events, which can be demanding on your time.



These include:

- Regular Town Council meeting, which are currently held on the second and fourth Mondays of every month at 5:00 p.m.;
- Working policy meetings, called Governance and Priorities Meetings, which are currently held on the first Monday of every month at 5:00 p.m.;
- Training as mandated by the MGA;
- Meetings of other boards and agencies to which you are appointed as a council representative;
- Various other conferences (e.g. AUMA and FCM), conventions, seminars, and workshops for training and discussions.

A Councillor must also spend time reading agenda packages and preparing for their respective meetings, as well as take time to meet and speak with members of the public, the Chief Administrative Officer, and other parties related to the municipality.

As a member of Council, you will likely be invited to attend many community events and functions. Attendance at these events is at your own personal discretion; however, if in the position of Mayor, there is an expectation to attend many of these community events on behalf of the Town and often to bring greetings.

Councillor duties

Under section 153 of the MGA, all 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 this or any other enactment or by the council.

A copy of the Town of Peace River's Council Code of Conduct Bylaw (s. 153(e.1)) can be found here: [Bylaw No. 2160 Council Code of Conduct](#)

In addition, if you are elected as Mayor (Chief Elected Official), section 154(1) states that 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) Repealed 2022 c16 s9(40).
- (3) 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.

Town Council does **not** direct the day-to-day work of Administration. Council’s only employee is the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), who is the administrative head of the municipality charged with implementing bylaw and policy direction set by Council through the Administrative staff. The CAO is also responsible for keeping Council informed and reporting back to Council as required. Other than their one employee, Council may not hire, fire, or discipline any staff.

Other helpful documents and websites:

[Alberta Government – What every councillor needs to know: A council member’s handbook](#)

[Local Authorities Election Act](#)



[Alberta Municipal Elections Overview](#)

[Alberta Municipalities](#)

[Federation of Canadian Municipalities](#)

Compensation

Councillors are compensated for their time dedicated as a municipal Councillor.

Monthly Honorarium

The mayor, deputy mayor, and councillors each get a base monthly honorarium.

For the 2023-2024 term, honoraria have been adopted at the following rates.

- Mayor: \$2,673
- Deputy Mayor: \$1,833
- Councillors: \$1,524

These amounts will be slightly different for the 2025-2026 term as they are adjusted annually, based on the Cost-of-Living Index, to a maximum of 3% per year.

This annual salary includes compensation for:

- dealing with and responding to public concerns from residents, clubs, organizations, businesses, etc.;
- Meeting preparation and research;
- Meetings with municipal administration;
- Attendance at community events, ceremonies, ribbon cuttings, banquets, fundraisers, golf tournaments, etc.;



- Signing documents;
- Reviewing and responding to correspondence related to council business;
- Town staff social functions;
- In-town travel and car expense;
- Incidentals related to normal execution of duties.

Hourly Pay

Members of Council also receive an hourly rate of pay. For the 2025-2029 term, the hourly rate has been adopted at \$45 (to a maximum of \$450/day) for the following:

- Regular and Organizational council meeting attendance;
- Governance and Priorities Committee meeting attendance;
- Public Hearings (when part of regular or special meeting), Special, or Town Hall council meeting attendance;

- Regularly scheduled meetings and special meetings of Authorities, Boards, Commissions and Committees, and their sub-committees, that a council member or alternate are appointed, that do not remunerate the members. Alternates are only paid an hourly rate for attending in the absence of the primary member;
- Out-of-town travel (in accordance with Council remuneration policy).

Per diems

Members of Council have an allotted number of per diem days they are allowed to use for attending “...meetings, conferences, seminars, conventions, or relevant courses for professional development purposes with content/ subject matter to complement or improve performance of professional duties or remain apprised of best practice in governance at the discretion of the Council member”.

Per diems may be claimed in half day (\$225) or full day (\$450) increments.

Expenses

Councillors are reimbursed for travel expenses incurred while conducting Council business, in accordance with the Council Remuneration policy.

Members are also compensated annually for the use of their personal cell phone in conducting council business (\$600) and for the use of personal office and stationary supplies (\$300). The Mayor is provided with a Town-issued phone and does not receive the cell phone reimbursement.

You can review the full compensation policy here: [Council Remuneration, Travel, and Expense Policy](#).

Important dates

Nomination papers may be filed between January 1, 2025, and 12 noon on nomination day (September 22, 2025)

- Election day: October 20, 2025
- Swearing in Ceremony: October 27, 2025 (tentative)
- Mandatory Joint Elected Official Training with George Cuff: October 29, 2025
- Organizational Meeting: November 3, 2025 (tentative)
- Alberta Municipalities Conference (Calgary): November 12-14, 2025

So, you've decided to run for Town Council?

Please continue to check out our 2025 Elections webpage, where we will post important information regarding the nomination process & fees, campaign funding and disclosure, signage rules, and various other information that you may require to run your campaign.

You may also want to visit our Council portal to familiarize yourself with Town bylaws, policies, and previous Council/Governance & Priorities Committee Meeting Agendas and Minutes.

[Peace River Council Portal](#)

If you are still unsure, or have more questions, please feel free to contact Kayla Parsons, returning officer, at 780-624-2574 or kparsons@peaceriver.ca

