



Local Government and the Role and Responsibilities of Council

A local government is elected by constituents to ensure quality services are delivered while making decisions on local matters. Services delivered include recreation, street construction and maintenance (ploughing, filling potholes), fire and police protection, and animal control. Each local government has a council made up of a mayor and councillors who are elected through a general municipal election to represent their constituents locally. Local governments are also commonly known as municipalities (cities, towns, villages, rural communities or a regional municipality).

The vision of local governance reform is to work together for vibrant and sustainable communities and to enhance the quality of life of New Brunswickers. This reform will see a total of 77 local governments and 12 rural districts established in New Brunswick. In many of the newly restructured local governments, an election or by-election is required to elect a new council or fill council seats.

Out of the 77 local governments, 58 local governments will be going to elections or by-elections taking place on November 28, 2022.

WHERE WILL ELECTIONS TAKE PLACE?

- Where there is a population increase of 15-50% in a restructured local government, by-elections will be held to add the appropriate number of councillors to the existing council;
- Where there is a population increase of more than 50% and/or two or more local governments are joining together, there will be an election for the entire council including the mayor; and

- All rural districts. More information on rural districts is available on: www.gnb.ca/VibrantNB.

To find out which local governments are having elections in November, or to view detailed information and maps related to local government elections, visit www.ElectionsNB.ca.

COUNCIL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A local government council is made up of the mayor, deputy mayor, and councillors.

The mayor presides at all meetings of council, provides leadership to the council, speaks on issues of concern to the community, and is subject to the direction of the council. They also often serve as board members for the regional service commission.

In the absence of the mayor, or if the office of the mayor is vacant, the deputy mayor shall act in place of the mayor. The procedural by-law for the local government lays out how the deputy mayor is selected.

A councillor brings matters to the attention of council that promote the welfare and interests of the local government, takes part in developing and evaluating the policies and programs, participates in council and committee meetings and other bodies as appointed by council, and performs other duties given to them by council.

Overall, the key role of a council (mayor and councillors) is to work together for the betterment of their community.

WHAT TIME COMMITMENT SHOULD A COUNCIL MEMBER EXPECT?

Councils are required to meet a minimum of four times per year. However, each local government is different. Typically, regular council meetings take place once per month and special meetings may take place to address urgent matters. The local government's procedural by-law determines the frequency of meetings. Your municipal administrator will provide you with this information. In addition, councillors may take on other roles that require an additional time commitment.

WHAT TYPE OF COMPENSATION IS AVAILABLE?

Salary and other allowances are determined by council and will be specified in a by-law.

WHAT TYPE OF RULES ARE THERE RELATED TO CONDUCT FOR COUNCIL MEMBERS?

All local governments must have a code of conduct by-law that addresses:

- The values to which members of council are expected to adhere;
- The behavior of the members of council toward other members of council, officers, employees and residents of the local government;
- The use of local government property, resources and services by members of council; and
- The use of communication tools and social media by members of council.

ARE THERE THINGS I NEED TO CONSIDER IF I'M ELECTED TO COUNCIL AND OWN A BUSINESS?

The Local Governance Act addresses conflict of interest. These provisions outline what is and is not a conflict of interest, how a conflict of interest is addressed, etc. If elected, your municipal administrator will provide you with more information related to how you identify conflicts in advance, to ensure you are meeting the requirements under the Act.

More information on local governance reform, newly restructured entities, composition of council, and ward boundaries is available on: gnb.ca/VibrantNB.

More information on to how to become a candidate in a local government election is available at ElectionsNB.ca.