



Municipality of the County of Kings

Position Description

Councillor

POSITION TITLE: Councillor for the Municipality of the County of Kings

CREATION DATE: June 2020

POSITION SUMMARY: As a Councillor for the Municipality of the County of Kings, you have been elected by the constituents of your District to represent your area and the entire Municipality to provide sound decision making as part of the Council. Councillors are to consider the welfare and interests of the Municipality as a whole and to participate in developing and evaluating the policies and programs of the Municipality. Councillors have an important role as you and your counterparts on Council will make decisions potentially affecting all residents.

Position Descriptions are intended to provide an outline of the general areas of responsibility and duties associated with a given position. Position Descriptions are not intended to capture the full breadth of tasks and/or assignments a Councillor may be required to complete at any given time.

JOB DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Councillors are accountable to the citizenry of the Municipality and to Municipal Council. More specifically, members of Council must act in accordance with the laws of Canada, Nova Scotia, and the Municipality. Councillors shall adhere to and uphold the Municipality's Code of Conduct for Elected Municipal Officials. A copy is appended to and forms part of this Position Description.

Duties of a Municipal Councillor can typically, but not exclusively, be grouped into three functional areas: Corporate Responsibilities, Jurisdiction-Wide Responsibilities, and District-Based Activities.

Each Member has **Corporate Responsibilities** to the Municipality which are of primary importance. This responsibility relates in part to the Councillor's fiduciary responsibility to act in the financial best interest of the Municipality. At times, this may mean voting for matters in the interest of the body corporate, which may be out of step with the interests of an individual District or community. Although not limited to, a corporate responsibility relates to a Councillor's consideration and approval of budgets, the annual audit, and administration of decisions under the Municipality's Planning Documents.

Complementing this, there are **Jurisdiction-Wide Responsibilities** as representatives of all the communities within the Municipality. This takes shape in advancing plans and priorities that benefit the entire Municipality, such as the development and advancement of the Strategic Plan, and deliberating Core Program Enhancements.

District-Based Activities relate to the Councillor's work as a delegate, trustee, or representative of the area for which they have been elected. This work responds to the needs of individuals and communities alike.

Reporting Structure

Council has one employee: the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). Pursuant to Part II *Municipal Government Act*, the CAO is responsible to Council for the proper administration of the affairs of the Municipality. Municipal Managers report to Directors, and Directors to the CAO. Council instruction is to be provided solely to the CAO. Councillors do not instruct staff other than the CAO and that instruction is by motion of Council (with the exception of instruction provided pursuant to s.22 *Municipal Government Act*).

Legislative Functions

Decisions of Council are mainly operationalized through Council's passage of resolutions (motions), Policies, and By-laws. Resolutions tend to be related to certain specific one-time decisions that the CAO is not otherwise permitted to operationalize, or decisions that are set out in a Policy or By-law as being a direct responsibility of Council.

Policies typically authorize the CAO to operationalize routine matters as of right, while By-laws are enacted by Council to cover substantive areas of public (municipal) policy. Council's role in this regard normally involves requesting reports and information to be reviewed, considering the contents of said report, and rendering an informed and evidenced-based decision on the adoption of a resolution, Policy, or By-law.

Strategic Decision Making through Council, Committee of the Whole, and Committee Meetings

- All Members of Council shall play an active role in assessing and supporting the Municipality's Strategic Plan, including the Vision, Mission, and Key Strategic Priorities.
- Councillors shall participate in the administration of particular grant programs, including the Councillor Grants to Organizations.
- The Municipality currently holds Committee of the Whole and Council meetings monthly. Councillors are expected to attend all meetings of Council and Committee of the Whole (COTW).
- Special meetings to address budgets, or other time-sensitive items are held as needed.

Community Engagement, Events and Consultation

- Councillors are representatives of their Districts and are often called upon to attend a wide variety of community events and engagement opportunities. Each year Councillors will be requested to attend particular events hosted by the Municipality including the volunteer celebration and awards, planning meetings in their District (Public Information Meetings), District-specific meetings (Community Conversations), and Remembrance Day celebrations.
- The Municipality of the County of Kings encourages Councillors to engage with residents at internally or externally organized events.
- There may be a requirement for a Councillor to Chair a Council or Committee meeting in the absence of the Mayor or Deputy Mayor.
- All Members of Council have an important role in supporting the advocacy work of the Municipality, particularly with other levels of government and community organizations.

Meeting Preparation

Every Councillor will be appointed to Committees of Council, Intermunicipal Service Corporations, and/or Committees and Boards of external organizations. Most meetings are held monthly or quarterly and vary between daytime and evening sessions. A comprehensive listing of Committees to which Members of Council may be appointed can be found [here](#).

- Councillors must be prepared for every meeting they attend. This may include, but is not limited to:
 - Submitting items for inclusion on Council or Committee Agendas;
 - Reading of Meeting Package as released;
 - Becoming familiar with any items to be discussed;
 - Research and discussions with staff for clarification; and
 - Preparation of speaking points and questions.
- Councillors are expected to attend all meetings of Council and the Committees to which they have been appointed. Per s.17(4) MGA, any Member of Council who, without leave of the Council, is absent from three consecutive regular meetings ceases to be qualified to serve as a Member of Council.
 - Councillors may attend meetings of Villages (within or outside of their District) or community organizations of interest.
 - Members of Council may assume the duties of another Member who is on leave.

Training, Conferences, and Research

- Members of Council will have the opportunity to attend conferences hosted by organizations such as the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (Fall and Spring), the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, and others specific to topic areas.
- In supporting the decision making duties of Council and committees, Councillors may undertake independent research on topics of interest that relate to current or future projects within the Municipality.

Travel

- Amount of travel for each Councillor is dependent on which District they represent and the number and location of Committee meetings to which the Councillor is assigned.
- Councillors may be requested to travel to meet with individual constituents.

Working with Constituents

- Constituents will reach out to Councillors for a wide variety of reasons. Some examples may include:
 - Questions and concerns regarding Municipal operations;
 - Questions and concerns regarding other government operations;
 - Requesting support to advocate on behalf of the individual or group; and
 - Requesting support for community groups.
- Reaching out to and liaising with other levels of government and partners to help attain information for or advocate on behalf of a constituent;
- Provide assistance in navigating Municipal By-laws and Polices

DUTIES OF DEPUTY MAYOR

A Deputy Mayor is selected by Council from amongst all Councillors for a term that is determined at the time of appointment. Per s.16 *MGA*, the Deputy Mayor acts in the absence or inability of the Mayor, or in the event the office of Mayor being vacant. The Deputy Mayor has all the power and authority of the Mayor when acting in that capacity.

The Deputy Mayor is regularly called on to Chair meetings of Council and Committee of the Whole. Other duties include periodically acting in the ceremonial role of the Mayor, and in the administrative functions of developing agendas, signing cheques, Agreements, By-laws, and minutes of meetings which they chaired.

LEGISLATION

Notwithstanding other statutory responsibilities, the following summarizes Councillor responsibilities under two important Provincial Statutes: *Municipal Government Act* and *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*.

Municipal Government Act

[*Municipal Government Act*](#) (MGA) is the legislation that allows municipalities to operate. It is the guiding document for all municipalities. The following sections of the MGA specifically relate to a Councillor as an individual, and requirements on the role of a Councillor:

- s. 14 Powers of council
- s. 16 Deputy mayor deputy warden
- s. 17 Mayor or councillor resignation
- s. 18 Employment restrictions for former council member
- s. 19 Council Meetings
- s. 20 Quorum of Council
- s. 21 Voting at a Council Meeting

- s. 22 Open Meetings and Exceptions
- s. 23 Council may make policies
- s. 24 Standing, special and advisory committees
- s. 30 Council and chief administrative officer relationship

Municipal Conflict of Interest Act

All elected officials shall inform themselves and understand of the requirements under the [Municipal Conflict of Interest Act](#).

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING

Qualifications Required Under the Municipal Elections Act

Eligibility as councillor

17 (1) *Except as otherwise provided in this Act, every person shall be qualified to be elected as councillor who*

- (a) is a Canadian citizen of the full age of eighteen years at the time of nomination;*
- (b) has been ordinarily resident in the municipality or in an area annexed to the municipality for a period of six months preceding nomination day, and continues to so reside;*
- (c) has obtained a certificate in the prescribed form from the clerk, treasurer, collector or other official having knowledge of the facts that, as of nomination day, the charges that are liens on the person's property and the taxes due to the municipality by the person have been fully paid or all instalments or interim payments that are due as of nomination day have been paid; and*
- (d) is not disqualified under this Act.*

(2) *A councillor who is otherwise qualified shall be eligible for re-election.*

Education and Experience

Although no formal training or experience is required, there are multiple opportunities to learn more about municipal government through the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities, online learning through various universities, and through staff presentations.

Knowledge, Skills, Abilities

It is important to note that Councillors come from all walks of life and may have very different skill sets. Some knowledge, skills, and abilities may be brought to the Council table at the beginning of the term, while some may be developed over time.

- Exceptional customer service/relationship skills;
- Superior organizational, analytical, research, problem solving and decision making skills;
- Ability to work well in a team environment;
- Ability to formulate and present informed opinions;
- Public speaking;
- Knowledge and understanding of rules of order.

[Policy FIN-05-002: Council and Committee Remuneration](#) defines remuneration for Councillors. Other benefits are available.

APPENDIX A: MEETING SCHEDULE

Current to June 2020

| Meeting | Recurrence | Time |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|---------|
| Council | First Tuesday of Each Month | Evening |
| Committee of the Whole | Third Tuesday of Each Month | Daytime |
| | Second Thursday of Each Month | Evening |