

# LET'S VOTE!

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## CANDIDATE'S GUIDE & INFORMATION PACKAGE



*Yellowhead County*

## MUNICIPAL ELECTION 2021

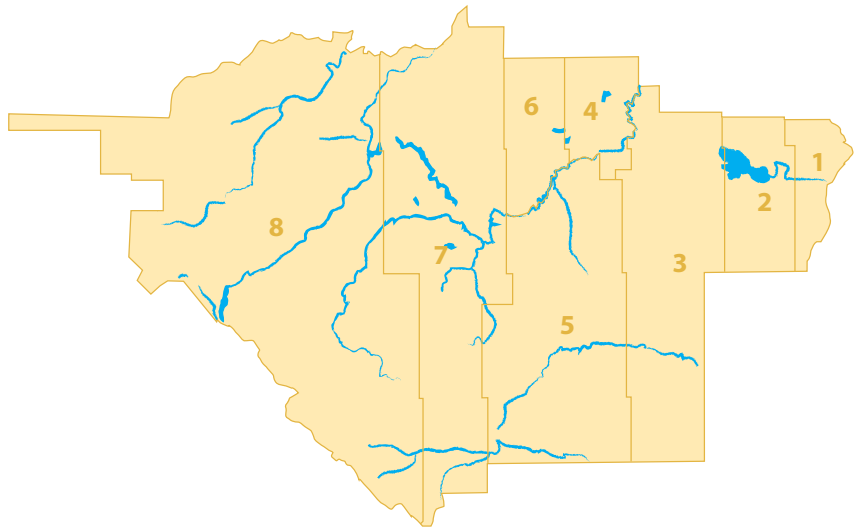
## ABOUT YELLOWHEAD COUNTY

**YELLOWHEAD COUNTY IS** an incorporated municipal entity governed by a nine (9) member elected Council (Mayor-at-large and 8 divisional councillors collectively called "Council").

As the Governing Body, it is expected that the Council will provide leadership relative to setting the course and vision for the future of the County.

To this end, Council determines priorities, makes decisions, approves bylaws and policies, sets tax rates to finance the vision, and follows provincial legislation relative to providing good governance in the interests of all the citizens of Yellowhead County.

*Yellowhead County is divided into eight electoral districts – one councillor is elected for each division with a Mayor elected to represent the county. The division boundaries are based on population numbers, and are divided so that they each represent an equal proportion of residents.*

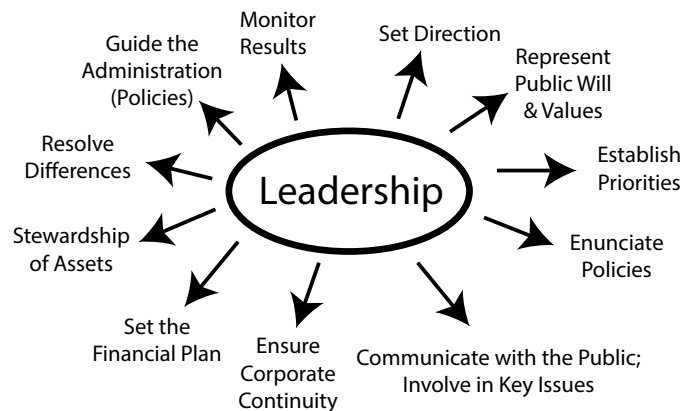


## THINKING OF RUNNING FOR COUNCIL?

### DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES?

The municipal Council is the governing body of the municipality (Yellowhead County). The Council reflects the diversity of views and opinions that naturally reside within the municipality. As a Mayor/Councillor you have a chance to be a leader in your community.

There are no special qualifications legislatively required to be a councillor, however visionary thinking, strong communications skills (speaking and listening) ability to be persuasive, accepting of opposing views, conflict resolution along with energy and enthusiasm are great attributes to bring to the Council table.



### WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A LEADER

Being a municipal councillor is not a lifelong commitment. Think about it as taking your turn to be a leader.

You recognize that local government is grassroots government. It is here that you have the opportunity to build good communities. You want to be part of the process that helps “build a better community for present and future generations”!

As a community leader you will outline your vision for the future, set priorities, communicate with the public and set the financial plan to achieve the desired future Council embarks upon.

## MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT 101

Municipalities such as Yellowhead County are created by the Province and follow the provisions of the **Municipal Government Act (MGA)**.

The MGA states that the purpose of a municipality is to:

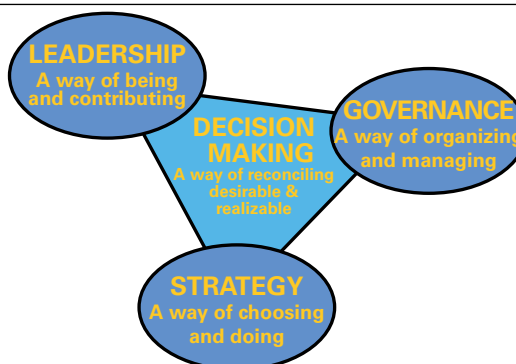
- Provide good government,
- Provide services, facilities or other things that in the opinion of Council, are necessary or desirable for all or a part of the municipality, and
- To develop and maintain safe and viable communities.
- To foster the well being of the environment.
- To work collaboratively with neighbouring municipalities to plan, deliver and fund intermunicipal services.

## ROLE OF COUNCIL (MGA -201)

### WHAT MAKES FOR A GOOD COUNCIL?

The Council in many ways is like the Board of Directors of a Company, where they set direction of the municipality each year with the approval of the budget and the long term direction of the municipality, but they don’t become involved in the day to day operation of the municipality. That function is left to the professional staff.

The principal role of Council is to set the course, determine priorities, make decisions, approve bylaws and develop and evaluate the policies and programs of the municipality, ensuring that the powers, duties and functions of the County are appropriately carried out, and to ensure Council does not exercise a power or function that legislation or bylaws specifically assigned to the chief administrative officer.



## ROLE OF COUNCILLOR (MGA -153)



### WHAT MAKES FOR A GOOD COUNCILLOR?

Being a municipal councillor means being a community leader. It is a place where you and your fellow councillors can make a real difference in the lives of the people in your community.

Legislatively, a councillor has the duty 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.

Furthermore, a councillor is required to participate in the development and review of policies and programs and to be prepared for and to participate in council and council committee meetings, to keep confidences on private matters and to perform any other duties imposed on council by the MGA or other enactments.

As a councillor, you will have the opportunity to bring your knowledge and experience to the decision making process. It is important that the municipal council be made up of ordinary people with diverse backgrounds and views.

Not only will you decide on the issues surrounding the daily services many take for granted like water, sewer, road maintenance, snow removal, recreation and social service initiatives but you will also affect decisions about more general services like land use planning, infrastructure planning and emergency preparedness. Your decisions here will have a very long lasting effect on the future and the viability of your municipality.



You, along with your fellow councillors, will approve the municipal budget. You will make decisions about how much property tax a home owner or a business or a farmer will pay and you will decide on how much to charge for services like recreation and for things like development permits.

It is of the utmost importance to note that as an individual member of council, you will not have the power to commit your municipality to any expenditure or to direct the activities of municipal employees. Any promise you make as part of your election campaign that involves municipal expenditures or the activities of employees can only be carried out if a **majority of council votes in favour** of the matter in a council meeting.

# ROLES OF ELECTED OFFICIALS

## Leadership

- Vision
- Priorities
- Legislative
- Representational
- Community Input
- Community Advocate

## Establishing Service Delivery

- Determine Services
- Establish Level of Services
- Decide on Method of Delivery

## Fiduciary Leadership

- Budget Process
- Council Financial Policies
- External Audit
- Compliance

## Conflict Resolution

- Resolve Differences
- Seek Alternatives
- Review Policy Options

## Policy Guidelines

- Review Policy Bank
- Ensure Currency of Present Policies

## Monitoring Results

- Set Targets
- Assess Annual Results
- Report Publicly



## ROLE OF MAYOR

\*MGA 154

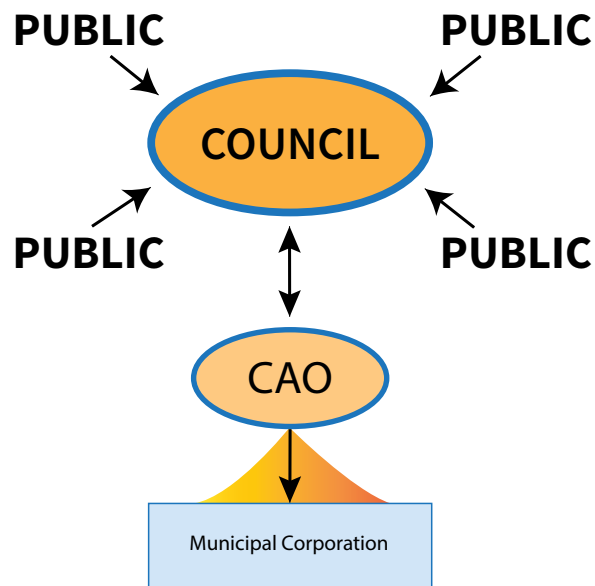
**AS THE ONLY POSITION ON COUNCIL** that is elected from the residents of the entire municipality, the Mayor is regarded in high esteem, and is the main spokesperson for the County and is required to be the presiding officer at Council meetings.

Legislatively, the Mayor has the same duties and responsibilities as a councillor however also performs the following duties;

- **Primary spokesperson dealing with the media**  
(Must be comfortable with public speaking)
- **Primary liaison with other levels of government and other municipalities**
- **Is an ad-hoc member of all council committees**
- **The Mayor is the primary linkage to administration through the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). Due to the daily responsibilities of the Mayor, much time is spent with the CAO. Consequently, the Mayor is able to provide status updates to council relative to the Chief Administrative Officer's performance. The Mayor works with the CAO to ensure that Council's policy directions and priorities are being met.**
- **The Mayor represents the County at ceremonial type, public relation events (i.e. ribbon cuttings, grand openings, award banquets).**
- **The Mayor is the signing authority on behalf of the elected officials of the County. As the Chairperson of Council, he/she signs Council meeting minutes and County Bylaws and agreements.**
- **Perform any other duties imposed on the Mayor by the MGA or other legislated enactments.**



### MUNICIPAL LEADERSHIP FLOWCHART



# KEY ROLES FOR THE MAYOR

## Leadership Functions

- Chair of regular meetings of council; consensus-seeker on behalf of all members
- Key spokesperson to community and to the municipal organization
- Appointment of members of council to council committees and to council-liasion positions on external agencies, boards, and committees
- Authority to make recommendations regarding peace, order, and, good government
- Consensus Seeker

## Monitoring Functions

- Acts as council’s eyes and ears in maintaining an oversight role with regard to the conduct of municipal officers
- Ability to recommend the suspension of a municipal officer (if necessary)
- Ensure that the law is carried out
- Review Function of Committees

## Communication Functions

- Brief council members on all meetings and correspondence
- Liaison with the CAO
- Liaison with public
- Key linkage and spokesperson to other levels of government
- Spokesperson for the decisions of council, both internally and externally; expresses the “will of council”

## Representational Functions

- Acts in an ex officio capacity to boards and committees (if so permitted by legislation)
- Performs a ceremonial role on special occasions
- Main spokesperson to other levels of government



## TIME COMMITMENT FOR COUNCIL MEMBERS



### MAYOR

The Mayor's position can be described as a part-time flexible commitment. While it is not necessary for the Mayor to have office hours, due to all the other responsibilities, especially being available for inquiries from the public and media, the Mayor is essentially "on call."

### COUNCILLORS

The demands on Councillors' time can be heavy. During your four-year term in office you will be required to attend:

- Regular meetings of council, which are normally held on the second and fourth Tuesdays of every month commencing at 9:30 a.m. and can be either half-day or full-day meetings. In preparation for these meetings, an agenda is prepared and posted on the County's website the Friday before the next council meeting to allow time for reading and reviewing the issues.
- Governance & Priorities Meeting, which is currently held the third Tuesday of each month, normally commencing at 9:30 a.m.
- Meetings of other boards and agencies to which you are appointed as a Yellowhead County's representative. Time commitment will vary depending on the specific needs and requirements and may be regularly scheduled meetings or on an as-call basis.
- Strategic Planning
- Budget Meetings
- Conferences, conventions, seminars, and workshops for training and discussion. Yellowhead County is a member of the Rural Municipalities Association (RMA), and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. More information is available on their respective websites at [www.rmalberta.com](http://www.rmalberta.com), [www.fcm.ca](http://www.fcm.ca)
- Social and other events promoting the County.
- You will also need to spend time reading material and talking with residents, the Chief Administrative Officer and others. This will all be part of the necessary preparation for meetings so that you can make informed decisions.





## LIABILITIES AND DISQUALIFICATION OF COUNCILLORS

Conflict of Interest  
Equivalent factor in the context of  
organization/group/individual  
incentives,  
for one



### PECUNIARY INTEREST:

As an elected official of the municipality, you are held to a high standard relative to protecting the best interests of the municipality and to operating in an open and transparent manner.

As an elected official, you have a duty to disclose interests you may have that cross paths with your municipal role that could monetarily impact you and your family. This is called "**pecuniary interest**".

A councillor will have a pecuniary interest in a matter if the matter COULD monetarily affect the councillor, the councillor's family or the councillor's employer. (See Section 170 of the Municipal Government Act.)

### WHAT TO DO?

In such a situation the councillor must disclose the general nature of the interest, abstain from voting and discussion of the issue, and leave the council chambers until the matter before council is concluded.

### CIVIL LIABILITY

A councillor can be held civilly liable should he/she:

- Makes an expenditure not authorized in the budget or approved by council
- Votes to spend money borrowed or from a grant on something else
- Votes in favor of loan, borrowing or guarantee which exceeds debt limit

A councillor can be held liable for defamation.

### DISQUALIFICATION:

A councillor can be disqualified from sitting as a member of council for the following:

- Was not eligible to be nominated under the Local Authorities Election Act
- Ceases to be eligible under the Local Authorities Election Act
- Failed to file a disclosure statement as required under the Local Authorities Election Act
- Is absent from all regular council meetings held during any period of eight (8) consecutive weeks
- Is convicted of an offence punishable by imprisonment for five (5) or more years
- The councillor does not vote on a matter before council (unless required or permitted to abstain)
- Does not declare a pecuniary interest and leave the council chambers on a matter having a pecuniary interest
- Uses unpublished information for their own benefit
- Becomes an employee of the municipality
- Is found to be civilly liable

## ✓ REALITY CHECK

### HALLMARKS OF A SUCCESSFUL ELECTED OFFICIAL

George Cuff, a name well known in the municipal world as a governance expert and author of many books and articles on governance, summarizes *The Hallmarks of a Successful Elected Official* in his book "Cuff's Guide for Municipal Leaders"



As Cuff states;

"Not everyone elected to public office at any level of government succeeds. Many quickly become frustrated and are happy to leave after one term; others toil on in obscurity, either failing to ever have "their" agenda successfully addressed, or constantly heading the list of "best whines"

Some are absolutely shocked by how little personal power they wield, while others are dismayed by how much time it takes to change policies or legislation.

Fortunately, many are highly effective and successful, adding greatly to the community's progress and improvement in the style of living"

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Personal Integrity What distinguishes those who are effective from those who are not appears to be the following **12 important characteristics** of effective local elected leaders:

- Prepared to Learn
- Servant to the Community
- Respectful of Others
- Well prepared
- Understands and Accepts Democracy
- Prepared to Ask "Dumb" Questions
- Understands Teamwork; Resists Group Think
- Prepared to Work
- Ability to Stay the Course and Sound Enthusiastic
- Accountable
- Multi-Dimensional
- Personal Integrity

### GEORGE CUFF BIO

George Cuff is a well known name in the municipal world as a governance expert and the author of many books and articles.

Many of the thoughts and ideas, particularly in the Reality Check section are borrowed from Cuff's books and various articles on municipal governance. Yellowhead County has worked with George Cuff over the years in helping Council to consider many of the ways that local government can be run from both a philosophical and practical viewpoint. More information on George Cuff can be found at [www.georgecuff.com](http://www.georgecuff.com).



### NEXT STEPS (BOOK 2):

***SO YOU DECIDED TO RUN FOR COUNCIL. THE NOMINATION PROCESS.***

### Includes information on:

- **Qualifications,**
- **Costs,**
- **Campaigning rules, and**
- **Nomination application forms.**

Contact:

**Tracy Parker**  
**Returning Officer**

Yellowhead County  
2716 1 Ave, Edson, Alberta T7E 1N9  
**780-723-4800**  
tparker@yellowheadcounty.ab.ca



## INFORMATION SOURCES

*Please Note: This information has been assembled for your assistance however it is not inclusive of all the information contained within the specific acts and other legislation. Any person wanting a complete copy of the Local Authorities Election Act (LAEA) or Municipal Government Act (MGA) may purchase copies from the Alberta Queens Printer.*

### Additional Resources for Potential Candidates

Alberta Municipal Affairs has excellent guides and information available on the website at [www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca](http://www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca)

Alberta Government Municipal Elections

[www.alberta.ca/municipal-elections.aspx](http://www.alberta.ca/municipal-elections.aspx)

Municipal Government Act of Alberta (MGA)

<https://open.alberta.ca/publications/m26>

Recent changes to the MGA

[www.alberta.ca/municipal-government-act-changes.aspx](http://www.alberta.ca/municipal-government-act-changes.aspx)

Local Authorities Election Act

<https://open.alberta.ca/publications/l21>

#### PLUS:

Roles and Responsibilities of Municipal Officials:

[www.alberta.ca/roles-and-responsibilities-of-municipal-officials.aspx](http://www.alberta.ca/roles-and-responsibilities-of-municipal-officials.aspx)

What every councillor needs to know! A council member handbook:

<https://open.alberta.ca/publications/9781460136324>

Pecuniary interest for Municipal Councillors:

<https://open.alberta.ca/publications/9781460132494>

Voter Identification Requirements

<https://open.alberta.ca/publications/voter-identification-requirements>

Accountability and Transparency / Campaign Finance / Third Party Advertising / And more...

<https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/implementation-fact-sheets-local-authorities-election-act-2018-and-2020>

George Cuff's Survival Kit – Cuff's Guide for Municipal Leaders Volume One and Two

[www.municipalworld.com/product/cuff-s-survival-kit-item-0059-3/](http://www.municipalworld.com/product/cuff-s-survival-kit-item-0059-3/)



**IMPORTANT ELECTION DATES**

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Nominations Open	January 1, 2021
<b>Nomination Day</b> Nominations close at 12:00 noon	<b>September 20, 2021</b>
<b>Election Day:</b>	<b>October 18, 2021</b>
Special Ballots Deadline	October 18, 2021 by 8:00 PM
*Special Ballots must be returned to: <b>Edson Administration Building</b> <b>(2716 1 Ave, Edson AB)</b>	
Removal of all Campaign Signs	Removed before October 22, 2021
Official Results	October 22, 2021 at 12:00 noon

**Newly Elected Officials Dates**

Council Orientation with George Cuff	October 21, 2021
Staff and Council Governance Overview	October 22, 2021
Council Meeting and Swearing-In Ceremony	October 26, 2021
Council Legal Overview (Reynolds Mirth)	October 27, 2021
Council Meeting	November 9, 2021
Governance and Priorities Meeting	November 16, 2021
RMA (Rural Municipalities of Alberta) Fall Convention	November 22-25, 2021
Council Meeting	November 23, 2021

\*Note: Please ensure your Candidate Disclosure Form is completed and submitted

