

**SAO Report:**

***Council Onboarding Schedule 2021/22***

*Effective leaders, however, typically find a way to talk about even the most controversial issues in a thoughtful and non-inflammatory way as part of a deliberative discussion.*

Goal: To provide as much requisite information, training, and education so that Mayor and Council feel grounded and ready to start the exciting work of supporting and growing your community.

Mayor and Council are permitted to meet outside of the formal meeting process for the purposes of strategy formation and education.

Mayor, Council, and senior management met November 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> for the purposes of new council member orientation, veteran council update and team development.

When the public chooses an effected official, the public is putting its trust and confidence in him or her to act the public's interest, not their personal interests.

Saturday, November 6<sup>th</sup>

9:00 – 9:45: Breakfast

10:00 – 12:30: Mayor and Councils' Roles & Responsibilities

Personal SWOT exercise for Council

12:30 – 1:30: Lunch

1:30 – 4:00: Organizational chart

Human resource model

Departmental presentations

- Existing resource investment
- Successes and challenges

Sunday, November 7<sup>th</sup>

9:00 – 9:45: Breakfast

10:00 – 12:30: Strategic Plan update/assessment

Councillor platform requests

12:30 – 1:30: Lunch

1:30 – 4:00: Existing plan review and implementation

#

There are a variety of matters demanding Council's attention. They will be challenged by complex issues, faced with controversial policies, and receive questions from constituents. Understanding the role of a municipal councillor, as well as the role of council and staff, will help address the business of running a municipality. In general, council and staff work together towards the common goal of serving the needs of those who live in the municipality.

It is important to note that some municipal services are mandatory (they must be provided) while others are optional (council can decide whether to provide them).

Municipal Mayor and Council and Administration must abide to the following: (this is not an exhaustive list)

- The CTV Act
- PATA
- Robert's Rules of Order
- Town of Norman Wells Bylaws and Policies and Plans
- Our water license requirements with SLWB
- PSAB financial reporting/accounting processes
- Awarded grant conditions/restrictions
- Territorial law
- Federal law

### **Municipal Structures**

The administration of local government is handled by the municipal public service. It is made up of officials and employees appointed by an elected council and is organized into departments. Council members are politicians who are voted into office in municipal elections. Council members are non-partisan and run for office as individuals, rather than as part of a political party.

Most municipal councils establish committees. Each committee makes recommendations to the municipal council. The Town of Norman Wells Council has struck the following committees:

- Town Planning and Land Use
- Recreation and working group for Multipurpose Centre
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Economic Development and working group for Regional Economic Development Conference
- EMO

### **Mayor**

In Canada, the significance of the office of mayor comes from its high profile. In provincial and territorial statutes, the mayor is variously described as the "chief officer," "chief executive officer" or "head of council." The mayor may be high profile; but they have little power independent of the municipal council.

All provinces and territories provide that the mayor shall be elected at large. Canadian mayors preside at all council meetings. They are ex officio members of all committees and can make recommendations to the council.

## **Municipal Council**

Municipalities are governed by municipal councils. The job of municipal councils is to make decisions about municipal financing and services. Key responsibilities as a councillor are to support the municipality and its operations while ensuring that the public and municipality's well-being and interests are maintained.

Municipal councils have a broad range of responsibilities and may choose to organize their work using committee structures. The Town of Norman Wells uses a committee of the whole structure, and several standing advisory committees made up of a mix of councillors and members of the public. These committees conduct the work of council and then report back to council with recommendations.

A committee of council is often subject to similar legislative requirements as council under the Act, such as having open meetings.

### **Role of the councillor as governors and fiduciaries:**

A councillor has three main roles to play in your municipality: **a representative, a policymaker, and a steward**. These roles may often overlap. They will be called on to consider and make decisions on issues that will sometimes be complex and controversial. Many of those decisions will have long-term consequences for your municipality that extend beyond your term of office and should be made in the context of your municipality's plans for the long-term health and welfare of your community.

### **Representative role**

The representative role of council is clearly indicated in the Act. The representative role is simple and straightforward.

Voters elect a councillor to represent their views when dealing with issues that come before council. Constituents have many views and opinions, and a councillor cannot represent all of them, all the time.

Election to office requires a councillor to have a broader understanding of the issues that impact the municipality. A councillor will have to consider conflicting interests and make decisions that will not be popular with everyone. Evidence-based **decisions** are made by considering all available information.

Disagreements and healthy debates among council members are common, but it is important to remember that you are working towards a common goal.

There may also be circumstances where decisions are made by designated staff who operate at arm's length from the council, and where it could be inappropriate for elected officials to interfere or be seen to be interfering. These individuals may also be acting in accordance with accountability provisions under other pieces of legislation, which may impact their advice to council. I.e.: EMO, PSAB, SWLB

A councillor who has made promises that they cannot keep may lose credibility with the public and strain their working relationship with staff.

### **Policy-making role**

Council's role in policymaking is important to providing direction for municipal operations. Policymaking is another key council responsibility identified in the Act.

Many council decisions are routine, dealing with the ongoing administration of the municipality, but others establish the principles and direction that may determine the municipality's future actions. These are often considered to be policy decisions. Some policies can be specific, such as a by-law requiring dogs to be kept on leashes in public areas, and others can be broader and more general, such as approval of an official plan, or a Landfill Bylaw.

*Policymaking may involve several steps and requires council to:*

- *identify an issue that needs to be dealt with*
- *reach agreement on the facts of the issue, making sure the objectives are met*
- *give direction to staff to research the issue, identify the available options and report back to council with recommendations*
- *engage members of the public on the issue and consider their feedback*
- *consider the information provided by staff, considering demands on time, funding, and other issues*
- *decide based on the best course of action available and adopt a policy*
- *direct staff to implement the policy*
- *work with staff to evaluate the policy and to update or amend it as required*

In many cases, council refers a policy issue to a committee of council to take advantage of the committee's expertise in a particular area or to reduce council's workload. A committee of council may follow the same steps outlined above in making policy or making recommendations back to council.

In practice, however, policymaking is sometimes less orderly because of:

- a rapidly changing environment, the complexity of issues facing local government, and the difficulty in singling out problems that require more immediate attention
- differing and sometimes strongly held views by stakeholders and members of the public
- the lack of time to identify all alternatives and to conduct detailed research and analysis
- the legal and financial limits on what council may do
- the complexity of implementing policies and developing ways to monitor and evaluate them

Council is the municipality's primary policy-making body. Staff can provide information and advice to help inform council's policy decisions. Municipal staff are responsible for implementing policies approved by council.

## **Stewardship role**

Council's objectives are to ensure that the municipality's financial and administrative resources are being used as efficiently as possible now and into the future.

There is a fine line between council's overall stewardship of the municipality and the administration's management of day-to-day activities. Council monitors the implementation of its approved policies and programs, but the practical aspects of its implementation and administration are a staff responsibility.

Effective Council oversight leaves the day-to-day details for staff to manage. Leaving Council freer to deal with exceptional situations, ensure that policies are current and listen to issues raised by the public to represent the broader community interest.

#

Council extensively discussed their vision for the upcoming term, what they heard from the community during the campaign season and what they believe are realistic goals for the coming year and term. Second term councillors were able to inform new council members of the history of the decisions of last council.

Each department manager outlined the following:

- present resource investment in their department
- successes and challenges in each department

Council reviewed the plans passed by resolution of last Council with an eye to prioritization of tasks and implementation:

- Recreation Master Plan (building condition analysis next steps)
- Community Plan and Zoning Bylaw
- Economic Development Plan (regional conference)
- Asset management plan
- EMO

Council discussed at length the need for consistent communications to all their audiences and has made this a priority. All council meeting will now be streamed to the public on a user-friendly platform.

## **Senior Administrative Officer (SAO/Town Manager)**

As per the Cities, Towns and Villages Act Section 45. (1), Primary duties of senior administrative officer:

"Subject to the direction of council, the senior administrative officer shall:

- (a) *Supervise and direct the affairs of the municipal corporation and its employees.*
- (b) *Implement the policies of council.*
- (c) *Provide advice to council.*
- (d) *Inspect and report on all municipal works as required by council.*
- (e) *Ensure that budget is prepared in accordance with this Act.*

*(f) Ensure that all contracts of the municipal corporation are prepared and executed as required by council; and perform such other duties that council may delegate or require.”*

### **SAO Work Plan for 2021/2022**

The Senior Administrative Officer oversees and manages the organization such that each department works as efficiently as is possible with the resources available.

#### **1. Human Resources:**

- Onboarding/training of new staff:
  - Economic Development Officer
  - Development Officer
  - Fire Chief in training
  - Recreation Manager
- Skills inventory of all staff – gap identification
- Staff recruitment/retention and work environment creation
- Comprehensive succession training
- Ongoing senior team management
- Ongoing organizational management
- Ongoing business improvement – customer service
- Volunteer recruitment/retention

#### **2. Financial Resource management:**

- Operational and capital budgets: short, mid, and long-term planning
- Grant and funding applications:
  - Federal
  - Territorial
  - FCM
  - Environmental groups
  - Recreation/cultural/historical grants
  - Food security
- Fund development:
  - Donations
  - Alumni development
  - Community buy-in
- Required funding for:
  - Landfill expansion
  - Phase 3 clean-up on town owned lot
  - Asset management
  - Cultural/recreation centre
  - Alternative energy development
  - Fleet replacement
  - Heavy equipment for landfill
  - Daycare models
  - BCAs on recreational facilities

#### **3. Advocacy**

- Housing
- Health care
- All season road
- Food security
- COVID-19 fund reimbursement
- Increased capital/infrastructure funding from territorial and federal levels of government
- GNWT lease tax arrears
- Housing sole sourcing of new builds

**4. Partnership/network building**

- NWLC
- SAHTU leadership
- NWTAC
- Chamber
- In-community groups
- Customers and service providers

**5. Contract negotiation preparation:**

- Civil Works
- Garbage collection
- Water/Sewer
- IORL

**6. Plan implementation**

- Economic Development Plan and conference
- Community Plan
- Zoning Bylaw
- Landfill expansion/Bylaw implementation
- Recreation Master Plan
- Updated Strategic Plan
- Asset Management plan

**7. Ongoing research for alternative service delivery models in all areas**

- Daycare provision models
- Food security models
- Municipal best practices
- Sustainable business models
- Climate change impacts on municipalities