

DECIDING TO RUN FOR COUNCIL?

A few things you must consider

Nomination Day

Monday, September 18, 2017

Election Day

Monday, October 16, 2017

If you have decided to run for Council, congratulations! The process is exciting, and there are some facts you need to know before declaring your nomination.

Please note that a **new requirement** this year is the **Notice of Intent**. As per the Local Authorities Election Act, any individual considering running for municipal office must complete and file an Application for Registration of Notice of Intent with Lethbridge County prior to collecting or accepting any donations. (Please see the Contributions section of the pamphlet). This document is in addition to the legislated requirements for a candidate to file nomination papers. You can pick one up at the Lethbridge County Administration Office or get a copy from our website at www.lethcounty.ca If you wish to know more about the Local Authorities Election Act and the Municipal Government Act, which Lethbridge County is governed by, the Acts can be accessed through the Alberta Queen's Printer (www.qp.alberta.ca/)



In order to be **nominated** you must:

- Complete and file the **Nomination Paper (Form 3)**;
- Swear (or affirm) the Candidates Acceptance before a Commissioner of Oaths or the Returning Officer; and
- Pay the \$100 nomination deposit.

In order to be an **eligible** candidate you must:

- Be at least 18 years of age on Nomination Day;
- Be a Canadian citizen;
- Must have resided in your local jurisdiction (Division) for the six (6) consecutive months immediately preceding Nomination Day (***please note: this does not mean 'owning land' in the Division, it must be where your primary residence is;***)
- Are not otherwise ineligible or disqualified.

“UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT”

Nomination Day

Lethbridge County's Nomination Day is **September 18, 2017** from **10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.** at the Lethbridge County Administration Building, 100-905-4thAve. South, Lethbridge, AB. Nomination forms will not be accepted prior to or following this date and time.

Nomination forms must be accompanied with a deposit of \$100. The deposit must be cash, certified cheque or money order. Your deposit will be returned if you are elected, if you withdraw in accordance with section 32 of the Local Authorities Election Act, or if you receive at least one-half the number of votes of the winning candidate.

If, after one or more candidates have withdrawn, the number of candidates remaining does not exceed the number of vacancies to be filled, the returning office shall refuse to accept further withdrawals.

“INFLUENCE THE FUTURE”

You will **NOT be eligible** to be a candidate if:

- You are the auditor for the municipality;
- You are an employee of the local jurisdiction, unless granted a leave of absence;
- Your property taxes are more than \$50 in arrears or you are in default for more than 90 days on any other debt in excess of \$500 to the municipality;
- You have in the previous 10 years, been convicted of an offence under the Local Authorities Election Act, the Election Act or the Canada Elections Act.

Contributions

Campaign contributions by any person, corporation, trade union, or employee organization to a candidate shall not exceed \$5,000 in any year. Money paid by a candidate out of the candidate's own funds to the candidate's election campaign shall not exceed \$10,000 in any campaign period.

A campaign contribution means any money, personal property, real property, or service that is provided to or for the benefit of a candidate without fair market value compensation, but does not include volunteer services provided to the campaign.

Any individual considering running for municipal office must complete and file an Application for Registration of Notice of Intent with Lethbridge County prior to collecting or accepting any donations. This document is in addition to the legislated requirements for a candidate to file nomination papers.

Should there be any changes to the information provided by a candidate, the candidate is responsible for notifying Lethbridge County within 48 hours of the change and Lethbridge County will adjust the register accordingly.

Candidates are responsible for ensuring that their campaign complies with the Local Authorities Election Act. This information is not a replacement for consulting the actual legislation, or for obtaining legal advice.

The Role of Reeve and Councillor

Lethbridge County Council is comprised of seven (7) Councillors elected for a term of four (4) years.

Each year an Organization Meeting is held in October where the seven members of Council elect a Reeve and Deputy Reeve. These positions still serve as Councillor for their Division, but have added duties of the Reeve/Deputy Reeve which involves a higher public profile and commitment of time and availability.

The role of an elected official can be very satisfying. Each member of Council works together as part of a team, to set the overall direction of the municipality. Council's role is to set policies (by resolution, policies, bylaws, etc.). These policies form the guidelines for Administration to follow as they perform their daily duties in the operation of the County.



Time Commitment

Becoming a member of Council involves attending regular and special meetings of Council and Council committee meetings (Lethbridge County has 29 external committees and 8 internal committees, all requiring Council representation). Each member of Council sits on (approximately) 6-10 different committees. Additionally, there are meetings of other boards and agencies to which you are appointed as a Council representative. Conference and convention attendance throughout the year, ongoing seminars and workshops for training and discussion, and attending other events as appointed by Council is expected.

Lethbridge County holds its Council meetings the first and third Thursday of each month, starting at 10:00 a.m.; special meetings are called on an as-needed basis.

On average as a member of Council, you can expect to commit between 10-20 hours per week, while the Reeve is approximately 20-30 hours. There are varying time commitments and flexibility is a key requirement of the role of Councillor. All members of Council may be expected at

It is the job of each member of Council to:

- » Consider the welfare and interests of the municipality as a whole;
- » Participate generally in developing and evaluating the policies and programs of the County;
- » Participate in Council meetings and committee meetings and meetings of other bodies to which they are appointed by Council;
- » Keep in confidence all matters discussed in private at a Council or Council committee meeting until discussed at a meeting held in public;
- » Perform any other duty or function imposed on Councillors by the Municipal Government Act (MGA) or another enactment of Council;
- » Obtain information about the operation or administration of the County from the Chief Administrative Office (CAO), or other person designated by the CAO.

Lethbridge County holds its Council Meetings the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month

some time to attend public meetings, functions, ceremonies, parades and other events, which often occur during evening hours or on weekends. Generally speaking these "social" types of invitations are extended to the Reeve, although many also include the other members of Council. From time to time the Reeve may need assistance in attending some of the functions due to their work or other commitments, and so the Deputy Reeve and other members of Council should always be cognizant of their duties to assist if required.

It is important that anyone considering running for municipal office be open to learning about new things, as the range of committee appointments can be very broad. All members of Council are expected to prepare themselves to be able to represent Council fully on any board they are appointed to.

It is strongly encouraged that anyone interested in running for Council to attend at least one Council meeting prior to determining if they wish to continue their pursuit of office.

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How is Council Governed?

» The province provides the structure for local governments through legislation known as the Municipal Government Act (MGA). Members of Council, working within the structure of the MGA, have the opportunity to influence the future of their community. Some important tips to remember:

- All decisions must be made at public meetings with a quorum (majority) of Council present.
- Individual members of Council do NOT have the power to commit the municipality to any expenditure, or to direct the activities of municipal employees. Further,
- The expenditure of funds or direction of employees may only be carried out by passing a resolution of Council.
- Any promise you make as part of your election campaign that involves the expenditure of monies or the activities of employees can only be fulfilled if a majority of Council votes in favour of the matter in a Council meeting.

And finally.....

Some advice from former Councillors

- “Be prepared to dedicate extra time to serve on committees. It is a big part of the job.”
- “Realize what you are committing to. Talk to past and/or current Council members to realize how much time this takes and what the impact will be on your current commitments.”
- “Make sure you are fully aware of the commitment which includes working during the day, evening and weekends.”
- “Personal agendas are not acceptable on the public stage; keep your mind open and fair.”
- “There will be situations where your decisions are not favourable even to your friends and neighbours.”
- “Being on Council is not a personality contest.”
- “Discuss your interests with your family. You will need their understanding and support.”
- “First and foremost, if you don’t have your family’s support and understanding that they will be sharing you with the entire community, this will be a very hard 4 years.”
- “You will be a member of Council and will no longer be seen to have an opinion as a resident. All groups will hear your words as a Council member first, no exceptions.”
- “Councillors can spend many hours per week in their role so be prepared to attend more meetings than Regular Council and Committee meetings.”
- “Some of your friends may lose faith in you – it’s not your fault.”



Links and Resources

Lethbridge County

County website: www.lethcounty.ca

Information on the 2017 municipal election can be found on the Lethbridge County website.

Returning Officer: Robin Spencer-Buckman

Email: mailbox@lethcounty.ca

Phone: (403) 328-5525

Government of Alberta

Municipal Affairs: Municipal Elections Information

www.municipalaffairs.gov.ab.ca/mc_elections

Alberta Queens Printer Laws On-Line Catalogue

www.qp.alberta.ca/Laws_Online.cfm

Municipal Government Act

Available at www.qp.alberta.ca

Local Authorities Election Act

Available at www.qp.alberta.ca

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

www.servicealberta.ca/foip/

Membership / Service Organizations

Alberta Association of Municipal Districts & Counties

<http://www.aamdc.com/>

Federation of Canadian Municipalities

<http://www.fcm.ca/>

Elected Officials Education Program

<http://eoep.ca/home>

Lethbridge County

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Lethbridge, Alberta

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