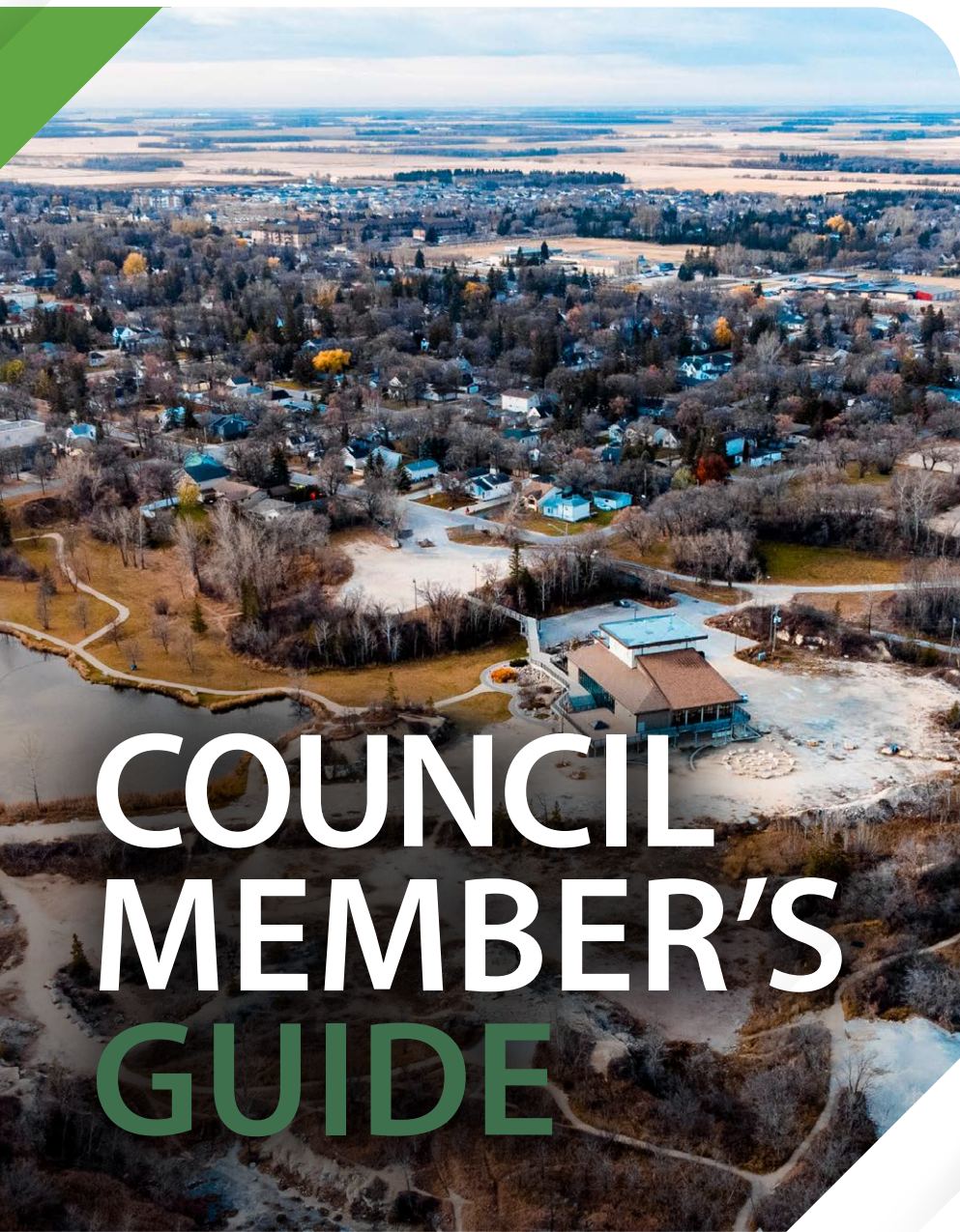




COUNCIL MEMBER'S GUIDE

2026

| ONCE ELECTED, WHAT'S EXPECTED?

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Note: This guide is for informational purposes only. Please refer to *The Municipal Act* and other applicable laws and regulations for more information – electronic copies of Manitoba’s laws are available online. You can also contact Manitoba Municipal and Northern Relations at mrmaas@gov.mb.ca with any questions or for clarification, or to request an alternate format of this document.

GETTING STARTED

IN THIS SECTION

CONGRATULATIONS

GETTING STARTED CHECKLIST

GETTING STARTED

CONGRATULATIONS

You have been elected to serve in an important role in your municipality. As an elected local government, your council will chart your municipality's course into the future. You will make decisions that affect every resident and property owner in your municipality. Considerable trust has been placed in you and other members of council to govern your municipality objectively, fairly, and, most importantly, with the public's best interest in mind.

As a municipal council member, you will no doubt have many exciting, often challenging, and very rewarding experiences. This guide provides you with an overview of what you can expect to encounter during your term of office,

including public participation in municipal decision-making, council's role in financial management, the code of conduct, and conflict of interest. The guide also includes information about the roles of council and administration, as well as the Association of Manitoba Municipalities. It also provides you with helpful tips to assist you in making a positive and lasting contribution to your municipality.

The Association of Manitoba Municipalities, together with Manitoba Municipal and Northern Relations, the Manitoba Municipal Administrators, and the Association of Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities, wishes you success over the next four years!

GETTING STARTED CHECKLIST

Your term starts at noon after the election, and there is a lot to do to get started. Key items are listed on the checklist below to help you stay on track. Items you are legally required to do are in bold.

DAYS 1-30

- **Take your Oath of Office.** This must be done within 30 days and before you perform any function as a council member.

- **Hold the first council meeting.** This must be done within 30 days.

- Start building positive relationships with the rest of council and your CAO so you can get things accomplished.

- Review your organization's by-laws and procedures to understand the specific rules for your municipality.

- Follow the process in your organization's by-laws to appoint members as the Deputy Head of Council and to committees and other bodies.

- Ask about orientation opportunities and review available materials to understand municipal operations and current priorities.

- Visit the websites of the Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM) and Manitoba Municipal and Northern Relations to learn about roles, responsibilities, and resources.

- Attend the AMM's annual Fall Convention – your first major event after your election, featuring dedicated training for newly elected officials and networking opportunities.

DAYS 31-60

- **File your Statement of Assets and Interests by November 30.**

Remember that you must file any changes within 30 days of their occurrence.

- Ask your CAO about completing the mandatory council code of conduct training. **This must be completed within six months.**

- File your campaign finance statement with the CAO **before the deadline set out in the municipality's by-law.**

- Ask about any additional orientation or learning opportunities during this period.

- Review the year's financial results.

- Prepare for the upcoming budget cycle. Ask how the process works in your municipality. Review key documents, such as the current budget and strategic plan.

- Discuss next year's priorities with the council and the CAO.

DAYS 61-90

- **Pass an interim operating budget.**

- Begin deliberations on your full-year budget.

- Formally review your procedures and organizational by-laws. **This must be done once per term.**

ASSOCIATION OF MANITOBA MUNICIPALITIES

IN THIS SECTION

ABOUT THE AMM

AMM IS READY

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LEVERAGING AMM EVENTS

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ABOUT THE AMM

The Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM) has represented municipalities across Manitoba since 1999, when the Union of Manitoba Municipalities and the Manitoba Association of Urban Municipalities merged. Although our roots trace back to the early 1900s, we now represent all 137 incorporated municipalities, including the City of Winnipeg.

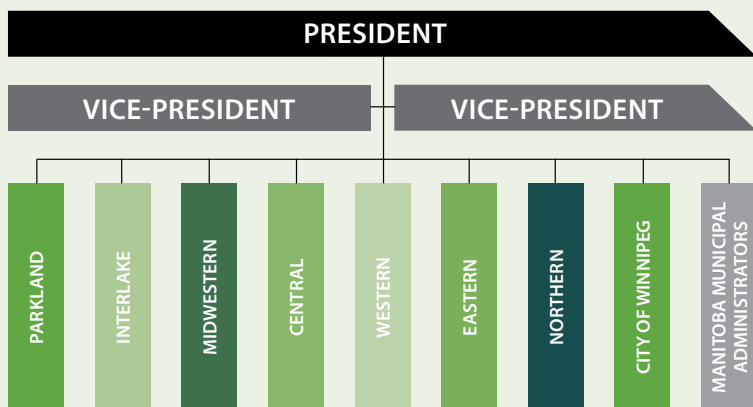
Supporting our members – mayors, reeves, councillors, and municipal administrators – is central to AMM's mission. We provide leadership, resources, and advocacy to help municipalities thrive and meet their communities' needs.

OUR BOARD & LEADERSHIP

- The AMM Board comprises two directors from each of the seven districts, one director from the City of Winnipeg, and the Manitoba Municipal Administrators' (MMA) President as an ex officio member.
- The Executive – the President and two Vice-Presidents – is elected every two years at the Fall Convention.
- District Directors are elected every two years during the June District Meetings.
- AMM representatives also serve on the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Board, linking Manitoba municipalities to national advocacy efforts.

Learn more about our Executive and Board of Directors at www.amm.mb.ca/about/board-of-directors.

AMM EXECUTIVE AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS



AMM IS READY

In 2024, the AMM launched a refreshed brand, developed with direct input from our members. Feedback gathered at events such as the Mayors, Reeves, and CAOs meetings in April and the June District Meetings helped shape a brand that truly reflects who we are and how we serve our members.

This refreshed brand goes beyond a logo. It represents the perceptions, emotions, and experiences that members associate with the AMM. By listening to our members, we ensured the brand captures their perspectives and the association's energy, passion, and commitment to leadership in Manitoba municipalities.

We want to inject confidence that change can happen and add momentum to everything we do on our members' behalf.

The AMM is READY:

- We are READY to serve.
- We are READY to engage.
- We are READY to collaborate.
- We are READY to move forward.

Attending AMM events is a key way for members to engage with this energy. Whether it's the Fall Convention, District Meetings, or other gatherings, these events offer opportunities to **learn, contribute, and help shape the association's priorities** – essential to staying connected and driving positive change.

Our new brand marks an exciting chapter in AMM's evolution, shaping how we communicate, connect, and deliver value to members across the province.

Learn more about our brand at www.amm.mb.ca/our-brand.

ROLE OF THE AMM

Municipal government is the order of government “closest to the people” and AMM exists to support our members. As a non-partisan organization, we focus solely on advancing Manitoba municipalities’ needs and priorities.

Our mission is simple: to advance municipal interests across the finish line. We advocate, collaborate, and provide the tools and resources municipalities need to succeed.

Through advocacy, training, and support, AMM assists municipalities:

- Meet current and future challenges.
- Strengthen local councils.
- Deliver essential services that matter to residents.

By representing municipal interests and providing strong, practical support, AMM ensures that Manitoba communities have the leadership and resources they need to thrive.

Discover how AMM supports municipalities at www.amm.mb.ca/issues.

LEVERAGING AMM EVENTS

The AMM Board and staff recognize the importance of the time our members invest in attending our events, and carefully consider the topics, presentations, and format to ensure that the experience benefits you in your role as a municipal official.

MEMBER MEETINGS

The AMM engages with members through three organized meetings each year: Municipal Visits; the Mayors, Reeves, and CAOs Meetings; and June District Meetings.

MUNICIPAL VISITS

Throughout the year, the AMM Executive and District Directors meet with individual councils and administration through Municipal Visits. These visits allow councils to discuss issues that specifically affect their municipality and provide an opportunity for AMM representatives to update councils on issues the AMM Board has been involved in over the past few months and on what the organization will be working on in the future. The AMM Executive visits each

municipality once during the four-year period between municipal elections.

MAYORS, REEVES, AND CAOS MEETINGS

The day before the Spring Convention, Heads of Council and administrators from across Manitoba gather for the Mayors, Reeves, and CAOs Meetings. These sessions combine interactive discussions with updates on current policy issues, offering a valuable forum for sharing insights and best practices.

AMM SPRING CONVENTION

Following the Mayors, Reeves, and CAOs Meetings, the AMM hosts the Spring Convention each April. Starting in 2027, the Spring Convention will be held in Brandon. This two-day event features

professional development sessions, discussions on current municipal policy issues, and a jam-packed Trade Show showcasing the latest products and services for municipalities.

JUNE DISTRICT MEETINGS

Hosted by a municipality in each of the AMM's seven districts, these meetings are chaired by the District Directors and offer members the opportunity to discuss municipal issues, learn about AMM programs, and debate and vote on resolutions to be presented at the AMM Fall Convention. Every second year, District Directors are elected at the June District Meetings, with the next election scheduled for 2027.

AMM FALL CONVENTION

The AMM's Fall Convention is the annual general meeting of the entire AMM membership. It is the largest AMM event of the year, bringing together approximately 800 municipal delegates. Held each November, the Fall Convention will take place in Winnipeg on an ongoing basis.

The Fall Convention offers elected officials a wide range of learning opportunities, including sessions on the latest programs and developments in local government, the unique and highly anticipated Ministerial Forum, where

the Provincial Cabinet takes questions directly from delegates and debates and votes on resolutions, presentations from inspirational keynote speakers, and a jam-packed Trade Show. Most importantly, it provides the chance to connect with municipal colleagues from across the province. The Fall Convention is also where the AMM Executive elections are held every second year.

TRADE SHOWS

Both the Spring and Fall Conventions feature a Trade Show with dozens of vendors showcasing innovative products and services to support municipal operations, all in one place. From large equipment such as graders and fire engines to municipal software, office supplies, and playground equipment, each Trade Show is a major event in its own right.

EDUCATION SESSIONS AND WEBINARS

Throughout your four-year term, the AMM offers a range of educational opportunities to help you stay informed and effective in your role. At both the Fall and Spring Conventions, members can attend sessions on emerging issues, best practices, and key policy developments affecting municipalities.

The AMM also hosts webinars throughout the year in collaboration with provincial departments and partner organizations. These sessions provide clarity on legislative processes, introduce new funding programs, and offer opportunities for municipal input during consultations.

Participating in these sessions is an important way to continue learning throughout your term, stay up to date on issues affecting municipalities, and strengthen your ability to make informed decisions for your community.



AMM INSURANCE PROGRAM

Western Financial Group is committed to partnering with the AMM and its members to provide an insurance program that is responsive to their evolving risks and needs. If you have questions about the AMM Insurance Program or would like to speak with an insurance advisor about your current policy, please contact 800-665-8990 or visit www.westernfinancialgroup.ca/amm.

The AMM Commercial Insurance Program operates under a 'protected self-insurance' structure, enabling municipalities to collectively insure under a Self-Insured Retention while receiving in-house underwriting, risk management services, and claims services. The program offers municipalities a sense of ownership of their insurance program and provides risk management advisors and strategies to help municipalities control losses. All AMM member municipalities outside Winnipeg participate in the AMM's property/casualty 'protected self-insurance' program, administered by Western Financial Group.

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In addition, due to the unique Self-Insured Retention, the AMM has the opportunity to receive returns of premium during surplus years when claims are low. **Since 2010, \$37.6 million has been returned to participating members to reinvest in their communities.** If not for the collective nature of municipalities banding together, these funds would remain within the insurance industry as excess profit.

Coverage options have been tailored to the unique risks faced by Manitoba municipalities, including:

- Cyber Liability
- Equipment Breakdown Coverage
- General Liability
- Pollution Liability
- Property
- Public Entity Management Liability

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Western Financial Group also partners with the AMM to deliver an innovative and reliable Employee Benefits Program for its members. This long-standing collaboration provides municipalities with high-quality coverage and rate stability that go beyond what is typically available on the open market.

Through the AMM Employee Benefits Program, a significant portion of premiums is directed into a member-owned, self-insured fund. This structure allows participating municipalities to avoid many of the cost pressures associated with traditional insurance and to benefit from potential returns of premium when surpluses are generated in low-claim years. By operating under this model, the program offers consistent rate stability while delivering comprehensive coverage options and exceptional service.

Today, the AMM Employee Benefits Program provides dependable, meaningful benefits coverage to more than 2,000 employees, councillors, and volunteers across Manitoba.

Western Financial Group continues to work closely with industry partners to strengthen the program through new offerings, enhancements, and value-added services that protect municipalities and support their long-term needs. This ongoing partnership ensures members have access to reliable insurance solutions and expert guidance as they navigate the evolving challenges ahead.

CANOE PROCUREMENT GROUP OF CANADA (AMM TRADING COMPANY)

The AMM Trading Company is the business arm of the AMM and a member of the Canoe Procurement Group of Canada. Canoe is a Canadian not-for-profit group procurement organization built by the public sector for the public sector. Canoe helps municipalities and other public sector organizations move from resource-intensive tendering to a streamlined, efficient, and compliant procurement process through competitively awarded contracts that have already been tendered on their behalf.

Supporting over 6,000 members across Canada through 500+ contracts and 90+ procurement programs, AMM members can use Canoe contracts to reduce administrative workload, secure better procurement value, and gain improved access to an extensive network of suppliers across key municipal goods and services categories, including fleet, fuel, technology, facilities, office, heavy

equipment, construction, project management, and more. Canoe contracts have no use obligations or minimum purchase requirements to participate. AMM members can choose any approved supplier for quotes and purchases and use Canoe contracts for both planned and emergent needs.

FUEL PROGRAM

Through Canoe, RMA Fuel is responsible for offering and managing the AMM Fuel Program for members, who have used it for almost 20 years.

FLEET PROGRAM

Through a partnership with RMA, the Fleet Program offered to AMM members is administered by Enterprise Fleet Management, which provides telematics, maintenance, and fuel.

HUMAN RESOURCES

The AMM has partnered with People First HR Services to offer the 'HR On Call' program.

HR support when you need it most.

Practical guidance. Real HR experts. No guessing.

With HR On Call, you get real-time HR advice by phone or email, plus access to 100+ ready-to-use templates to help you handle everything from everyday questions to complex workplace issues.

HR On Call.

Your people questions, answered.

866-899-1340

hroncall@peoplefirsthr.com

www.peoplefirsthr.com

SAFETYCARE PROGRAM

For almost 30 years, Safetycare has helped organizations protect their most valuable asset, their people. AMM has contracted with Safetycare to provide the Safetyhub platform, which municipalities use for most safety needs and records management.

Learn more about AMM programs at www.amm.mb.ca/partner-programs.



STAY CONNECTED WITH THE AMM

Have questions or want to learn more about how we support Manitoba municipalities? Get in touch – we’re here to help.

 **Email:** amm@amm.mb.ca

 **Phone:** 204-857-8666

 **Address:** 1910 Saskatchewan Avenue W, Portage la Prairie, MB R1N 0P1

AMM Staff contacts can be found at www.amm.mb.ca/about/ourteam.

Follow Us for Updates, News, and Insights:

- **Facebook:** www.facebook.com/AMMManitoba
- **Instagram:** www.instagram.com/amm.manitoba
- **YouTube:** www.youtube.com/@AMMManitoba



Scan the QR code to visit the all new Member Essentials webpage.

Stay informed, stay connected, and see how AMM is **READY** to work for your municipalities.





ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES OF MUNICIPALITIES

IN THIS SECTION

ROLE OF MUNICIPALITIES

MUNICIPAL SERVICES

SERVICE REVIEW CHECKLIST

RESOURCES

ROLE OF MUNICIPALITIES

Municipalities are democratically accountable governments responsible for delivering local public services.

Municipalities exist to make important decisions about local services, programs, facilities, and infrastructure. They establish local laws, make financial and taxation decisions, and plan for the future.

Municipalities must provide certain services under Manitoba's laws and may also offer many optional services to their citizens. Municipalities have broad,

flexible powers to help them achieve their goals.

GOVERNMENT POWERS

Government powers directly affect people and property. Municipalities can tax property, sell properties with unpaid taxes, expropriate private property, create and enforce many of their own laws, and respond to emergencies.

CORPORATE POWERS

Corporate powers allow municipalities to buy land, infrastructure, or equipment; hire employees; enter into agreements; and determine how the municipal organization is structured.

MUNICIPAL SERVICES

REQUIRED SERVICES

Manitoba's laws require municipalities to provide certain services and may also set specific requirements for how those services are provided.

ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE



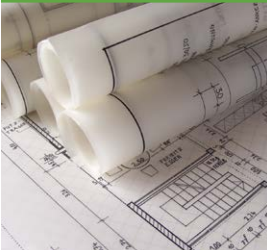
ROAD MAINTENANCE



WASTE DISPOSAL



LAND USE PLANNING



BUILDING CODE & INSPECTIONS



WEED CONTROL



FIRE PROTECTION & INSPECTIONS



POLICE SERVICES



EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT



Other services may also be required. If you have questions about any of your municipality's services, check with your CAO.

OTHER SERVICES

Municipalities may choose to provide many other services, including those listed below.

WATER AND WASTEWATER

DRAINAGE

RECREATION

BY-LAW ENFORCEMENT

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ANIMAL CONTROL

CEMETERIES

PUBLIC TRANSIT

OTHER SERVICES



Ideas for existing or new municipal services should be discussed with the rest of council and with the CAO.

SERVICE REVIEW CHECKLIST

When considering new services or reviewing existing ones, here are some key questions for your council to ask. These can also be helpful when you are budgeting, planning strategically, etc.

- Is this service required or optional?
- Are there legal requirements for how we provide this service? If so, are we complying with them?
- How important does council and/or the public think this service is?
- Does the quality of this service meet the public's expectations?
- How much of our budget is allocated to this service?
- How has the cost of this service changed over time?
- Does this service generate revenue, or are taxpayers subsidizing it?
- How do we measure how this service is performing? What do those metrics tell us?
- Are there any ways we could improve how efficient or effective this service is?
- Do similar municipalities have markedly different service levels and costs for this type of service?
- Are there any opportunities to share this service with others in our community?

STARTING RESOURCES

Administration & Finance: www.gov.mb.ca/mr/mfas

Drainage: www.gov.mb.ca/sd/water/water-rights/drainage-and-water-control

Drinking Water: www.gov.mb.ca/sd/about/office-of-drinking-water

Economic Development: www.gov.mb.ca/jec

Emergency Management: www.gov.mb.ca/emo/contact

Fire Services, Building Inspections: <https://firecomm.gov.mb.ca>

Land Use Planning: www.gov.mb.ca/mr/land_use_dev

Manitoba Municipal Officials Directory: www.gov.mb.ca/mr/contactus/pubs/mod.pdf

Municipal Board: www.gov.mb.ca/municipalboard

Municipal Contacts: www.gov.mb.ca/mr/contactus/pubs/mod.pdf

Municipal Funding: www.gov.mb.ca/mr/mfpp

Police – Manitoba Justice: www.gov.mb.ca/justice

Police – RCMP: www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/mb

Waste Disposal: www.gov.mb.ca/sd/waste_management

Water and Wastewater Rates: www.pubmanitoba.ca

Water Funding: www.gov.mb.ca/mr/mwsb/mwsb

Weed Control: www.mbweeds.ca

If you are seeking additional information, ask your CAO. You can also visit Manitoba's website or contact a Municipal Services Officer (see Municipal Contacts). Municipal Services Officers can provide information on municipal governance to elected officials, municipal administrators, and the public.

ROLE OF COUNCIL

IN THIS SECTION

ROLE & DUTIES OF COUNCIL

DUTIES OF ALL COUNCIL MEMBERS

DUTIES OF THE HEAD OF COUNCIL

COUNCIL COMPENSATION

ROLE & DUTIES OF COUNCIL

ROLES OF COUNCIL

Council is the group of elected representatives who make decisions for the municipality. Council has four major roles:

- **Decision-making** – Make fair and transparent decisions. Discuss, use relevant information, and vote to decide.
- **Governance** – Pass or amend the local by-laws that govern people and activities in your municipality.
- **Representation** – Engage with the public and act in the best interests of the entire municipality.
- **Stewardship** – Safeguard the municipality's resources and plan for the future. Through the CAO, ensure that infrastructure, financial, and staff resources are managed effectively.

DUTIES OF COUNCIL

Council as a whole must:

Appoint a Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). CAOs are the municipality's senior administrators; they implement policies and programs and have specific duties under *The Municipal Act*.

Develop and evaluate policies and programs. Maintain clear, consistent policies to guide the municipality, and ensure that services meet council's objectives using available resources.

Ensure that the municipality acts appropriately and legally. Council is accountable for the municipality's actions.

Oversee the emergency management group. Council must create, coordinate, and appoint a Local Emergency Response Control Group.

DUTIES OF ALL COUNCIL MEMBERS

Council members have one vote and an equal voice at the table.

All council members must:

- **Consider and act in the interests of the entire municipality**, not just their own ward.
 - **Develop, review, and evaluate municipal programs and policies.**
 - **Attend and participate** in council and committee meetings.
 - **Keep closed-meeting discussions confidential.** A breach may result in disqualification.
 - **Follow their *Council Code of Conduct*.**
- Only council as a group can make decisions. Members cannot act alone and may face personal legal or financial consequences if they do so.**

 - **Declare their assets and avoid conflicts of interest.** Seek advice if something comes before council where you may have a real or perceived conflict of interest.

DUTIES OF THE HEAD OF COUNCIL

The Head of Council also has additional duties. They must:

- **Provide leadership and direction to council.**
- **Preside over meetings** unless the municipality's by-law on procedures says otherwise.
- **Act as a signing authority** for the municipality.
- **Call a special council meeting** if two other council members request it in writing.
- **Declare a state of local emergency** if council cannot.
- **Table the annual audited financial statements** for the municipality.

COUNCIL COMPENSATION

Council sets its own compensation and expense rules by by-law (e.g., mileage, meals). Ensure the by-law is reasonable and clear to avoid criticism. Payments to council will be reported publicly.

When setting compensation levels, council may wish to consider practices in similar municipalities, affordability for ratepayers, and the time commitment required of council members.



COUNCIL BEHAVIOUR & CONDUCT

IN THIS SECTION

COUNCIL CODE OF CONDUCT

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

PUBLIC HARASSMENT

COUNCIL CODE OF CONDUCT

Citizens expect that, as a member of council, you will fulfil your duties with honesty and integrity. *The Municipal Act* requires municipalities to establish a *Council Code of Conduct* by-law. As a member of council, you must uphold the code of conduct.

**As a member of council,
you must uphold the
code of conduct.**

Your council's code of conduct outlines the standards and values you are expected to uphold. It should be made available to the public.

A provincial regulation requires your code of conduct to include minimum standards and values for respect, accountability, and professionalism, and to set requirements for training, complaint and appeal processes, and sanctions. Municipalities can also expand their code of conduct beyond these minimum requirements.

MANDATORY TRAINING AND ANNUAL REVIEW

All council members must complete code of conduct training within six months of election or re-election. At a minimum, this training is available at www.manitobamunicipallearning.ca. Your code may also require additional training,

so be sure to check with your CAO. A member who has not completed the training cannot act as a council member until they do so.

Councils are required to review their by-law on the code of conduct annually to ensure it continues to meet council's needs. Councils are also encouraged to consider whether to require additional mandatory training.

ADDRESSING A BREACH OF THE COUNCIL CODE OF CONDUCT

A breach of the *Council Code of Conduct* is a serious matter. Council members should carefully review the by-law governing the *Council Code of Conduct* and ensure they are aware of the process to follow, which will normally require:

- Trying to resolve an issue informally.
- Filing a formal complaint with the CAO.
- The CAO will send the complaint to the neutral intake reviewer, who will report to council on the complaint.
- Potential mediation or investigation of the complaint.
- Review by council, with the opportunity to impose sanctions.

- An appeal opportunity for any sanctions imposed on a council member.

CODE OF CONDUCT SANCTIONS

A council has the authority to impose sanctions on a member found to have breached the code, which may include:

- A formal censure or reprimand.
- Requiring a member to issue an apology or take additional training.
- Suspending a member from chairing council or committee meetings.
- Suspending a member from committees or from council itself.
- Imposing fines.

Council members may appeal any sanctions imposed on them.

CODE OF CONDUCT RESOURCES

The learning portal also includes many other resources to help council members, including guides and forms to support you through the code of conduct process. If you are ever looking for resources, that is the place to start.

Manitoba has also prepared a short video on council codes of conduct. You can access it at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=KHCvJ9r-rRY.



CONFLICT OF INTEREST

As a member of council, you must act in the best interests of the entire municipality.

A conflict of interest arises when a council member's personal interest may, or may appear to, conflict with their responsibility as a municipal councillor to make impartial decisions.

The Municipal Council Conflict of Interest Act generally defines a conflict of interest as follows:

A subject where you, your spouse, or dependent children have a financial interest.



Employment



Stock greater than 5%



Gifts



Any property in Manitoba other than the principal residence



Contracts with the municipality

By the end of November each year, you must file a disclosure with the municipality regarding various financial interests, such as those listed above. The list is extensive, so be sure to consult sections 10 and 11 of the Act for the full list of disclosures and exemptions. The list must be updated within 30 days of any changes, and the public may inspect the list.

If you have an interest in a subject that comes up at a meeting, you must take the following steps:



Do not participate



Declare the interest immediately



Physically leave the meeting



Do not attempt to influence the matter at any time

Sometimes a financial interest is not clear. The first step is to ask yourself whether you, your spouse, or your dependent child stand to gain or lose financially from council's decision.

Each member is responsible for upholding this Act, and only the courts can determine whether the Act has been breached. Because you are responsible, you may want to consult your own legal

counsel if you have complex financial interests or any questions.

If you are absent from a meeting where a matter you had an interest in was discussed, you must still disclose your interest at the next council meeting.

Manitoba has also prepared a short video about conflicts of interest, which you can view at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=E7q6N4DbDG8&feature=youtu.be.



Council and all of its members have the right to conduct their proceedings safely and efficiently.

PUBLIC HARASSMENT

Sometimes, matters before a council may become heated. If a member of the public disrupts a council meeting or harasses members, the chair of the meeting can:

- Warn the individual.
- Call a break.
- Have the individual removed.
- Contact local law enforcement (if necessary).

It can help for councils to model the behaviour that they expect, and to regularly engage with the public proactively and strategically on any issues that may be controversial.

With the rise of social media and misinformation, it can be beneficial

to encourage residents to move conversations offline and in person, and to engage with facts and clear explanations. Remember that online narratives often do not accurately reflect public opinion.

If there is any threatening behaviour, be sure to contact your local law enforcement.

The Association of Manitoba Municipalities has developed a toolkit to help municipalities address anti-government sentiment. You can access it at: www.strongcitiesnetwork.org/resource/a-toolkit-for-manitoba-municipalities-addressing-anti-government-hate-and-harassment.

ROLE OF ADMINISTRATION

MUNICIPALITY OF RHINELAND

IN THIS SECTION

ROLE OF ADMINISTRATION

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

DESIGNATED OFFICERS

EMPLOYEE CODE OF CONDUCT

WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION

ROLE OF THE MMA

ROLE OF ADMINISTRATION

ROLE OF ADMINISTRATION

Your administration (CAO and staff) provides advice to council, implements council decisions and policies, and delivers services to the public.

Council's role is to direct the CAO through its resolutions, policies, and by-laws. A respectful, trusting, and professional relationship between council and the CAO is critical to municipal success.

From Alberta, the Working Well Together: A Toolkit for Council-CAO-Administration Relationships offers practical advice on managing the relationship between council and administration. You can access it at www.rmalberta.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/RMA_ABmunis-Working-Well-Together-Toolkit.pdf.

Council steers the boat, while administration rows it.

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

The CAO is the senior executive leader of your municipality. They manage the municipality's administration, finances, and human resources. All municipalities must have a CAO, though they may share CAOs or other staff.

Under *The Municipal Act*, CAOs have key responsibilities that they may delegate to staff. These responsibilities include implementing policies and programs, advising council and keeping minutes, managing finances, reporting on operations to council, and supervising other employees.

Council and the CAO should have some basic expectations of each other to work effectively, as listed below:

COUNCIL CAN EXPECT FROM THE CAO:

- Respect for the council's role as the decision-maker.
- Implementation of council's decisions and programs.
- Being informed of matters requiring council attention, with timely advice, recommendations, and relevant information.
- Meeting agendas and supporting documents are prepared before a meeting.
- Regular and understandable information about the municipality's finances.
- Accountability for the municipality's operations.
- Respectful and professional treatment of the council and the public.

CAOS CAN EXPECT FROM COUNCIL:

- Respect for the CAO's role in managing staff and operations.
- Clear decisions and direction from the council by resolution, policy, or by-law.
- Receiving information and direction from council as a group through resolutions, policies, and by-laws.
- Considering the advice provided, with council asking for more information as needed.
- Clear guidance on what the council expects for information.
- Timely feedback and performance reviews.
- Respect and professional treatment of the CAO and staff.



Council should regularly review the CAO's performance and provide formal feedback. The Canadian Association of Municipal Administrators provides an evaluation toolkit for councils at www.camacam.ca/sites/default/files/2022-12/CAMA-C~3.PDF.

As senior executives, CAOs require a broad range of knowledge and skills to operate effectively. You can learn more about these in the MMA's competency framework for CAOs at www.municipaladministrators.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/47748-MMA-CompetencyFramework-v4b.pdf.

You should have a position description that clearly outlines your CAO's duties and responsibilities,

defines the role's responsibilities, and outlines council's expectations.

Municipalities should have contracts with their CAO that define the nature of their employment relationship. The MMA and AMM can provide guidance on the general nature of these contracts and offer templates. However, council should consult a lawyer when entering into contracts.

The compensation package for CAOs can either attract or deter the right candidate for your municipality. Using the MMA's voluntary salary matrix can provide you with a salary range for a CAO in your municipality. This calculator is endorsed by the AMM and posted on the AMM and MMA websites.

DESIGNATED OFFICERS

Council can establish designated officer positions by by-law to carry out specific powers, duties, or functions. Certain duties must be performed by a designated officer, such as signing cheques, inspecting properties, and enforcing by-laws.

A designated officer may further delegate their powers, duties, or functions to another municipal employee. The CAO supervises designated officers to ensure they perform their duties and functions appropriately.

EMPLOYEE CODE OF CONDUCT

Council should expect all employees to act objectively and fairly. Municipalities must have a code of conduct for all employees, including the CAO, other employees, and volunteers.

Your employee code of conduct must include rules on prohibited conduct, at a minimum addressing conflicts of interest. Council should review this code regularly, at least once per term, to ensure it meets municipal needs and remains current.

A sample employee code of conduct is available to your CAO in 'The Municipal Act Procedures Manual.' Consult your CAO for assistance with any proposed changes to this code.



WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION

The Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) Amendment Act protects people from retaliation if they report significant wrongdoing in government.

This Act does not automatically apply to most municipalities unless they opt in and are included in a regulation under the Act. You can find more information on whistleblower protection at: www.gov.mb.ca/csc/whistle.

ROLE OF THE MMA



The Manitoba Municipal Administrators (MMA) is the professional association created by an act of the Manitoba Provincial Government in 1969 (SM-1989-90C75). It is a not-for-profit, board-run entity. The MMA is similar to other professional associations (e.g., doctors, dentists, accountants, etc.) and has existed in one form or another since 1931. The primary purpose of the MMA is to provide support, education, and continuing professional development to its members.

The MMA envisions a Manitoba of thriving communities, built on a foundation of strong, collaborative, and professional administrative leadership. Through its work, the MMA provides cost-effective training and other supports to ensure your administrative staff have

the skills and knowledge to manage your municipality's day-to-day operations effectively and professionally.

MEMBERSHIP

The MMA is not just for CAOs. Membership in the MMA is open to anyone employed by a municipality, quasi-municipal body, or local government district performing an administrative role.

Registered members of the MMA have access to unique training and development opportunities, as well as other professional benefits, including peer-to-peer learning and resource sharing.

It is strongly encouraged that, at a minimum, your CAO be a member of this association to help them perform at their best in their position.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE & LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

The municipal landscape is constantly evolving, with new legislation and regulations, as well as shifting expectations from citizens. The MMA hosts an annual conference and AGM in the fall, bringing members together for seminars and presentations on current issues and leading practices in the municipal sector. In addition, the MMA offers a spring leadership summit focused on professional development, leadership skills, and emerging challenges, providing further opportunities for members to learn, collaborate, and stay informed.

CERTIFIED MANITOBA MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATOR

In partnership with the University of Manitoba, the MMA delivers a comprehensive education and training program for municipal administrators. Upon successful completion, administrators are entitled to use the Certified Manitoba Municipal Administrator (CMMA) designation.

MMA EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

The MMA is governed by its executive council, which comprises elected representatives from each of the MMA's districts, an elected president and vice president, the immediate past president, and the MMA executive director (ex officio).

The executive council, like your council, sets the direction for the organization and

provides organizational oversight. The MMA executive director, like your CAO, is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the organization.

MMA COMMITTEES

The MMA has established a number of committees to support the organization's work and to advance its strategic plan. Committees are composed of member volunteers and other invited specialists. Committees such as the Professional Development Committee and the Legislative Advisory Committee undertake critical work for the organization and offer members unique opportunities to build their knowledge and skills simply by participating.

THE BENEFIT OF MMA TO YOUR COMMUNITY

By building the skills and capacity of your administrators, MMA supports the delivery of effective and affordable services to your community. Citizens are best served by dedicated, knowledgeable, skilled, and professional municipal civil servants.

Ensuring your administrative staff have the resources to join the MMA, participate in timely professional development opportunities, attend conferences, and have the time to serve on the executive council or a committee are important ways to invest in the long-term success of your municipality.

CONTACT THE MMA



Address: PO Box 2 - Winnipeg PO, St. Norbert, MB, R3V 1L5



Phone: 204-255-4883



Email: info@municipaladministrators.ca



Website: www.municipaladministrators.ca

COUNCIL MEETINGS

IN THIS SECTION

MAKING DECISIONS

HOW COUNCIL MEETINGS WORK

MAKING DECISIONS

You have a duty to be there and participate.

Under sections 83 and 94 of *The Municipal Act*, council members have a duty to attend meetings and to participate. Members can be disqualified for missing three regular council meetings in a row, or for missing three Local Urban District Committee meetings in a row if they are the council representative on that committee.

You cannot make decisions alone.

Individual council members have no authority. Only council, acting as a group in a public meeting, can make decisions on behalf of the municipality. Council can

make decisions through resolutions, by-laws, or policies.

RESOLUTIONS

These are used for one-time or routine decisions (e.g. approving payments, financial statements, etc.). Draft resolutions are normally prepared by your CAO.

Any council member can 'move' a resolution, and if another 'seconds' it, council can discuss or amend the resolution. A majority vote then passes the resolution.

Resolutions should clearly and simply state what council is deciding. Sometimes, resolutions also include additional background.

BY-LAWS

These are typically used for decisions with a long-term impact on the community, and some decisions must be made by by-law (e.g., zoning, borrowing money, or setting tax rates). Your CAO can advise when a by-law is required and is normally responsible for drafting it with legal or expert input.

Passing a By-law

- Requires three votes (readings) to pass, over at least two council meetings.
- Council can discuss or amend it before each reading.
- The meeting minutes must show how each council member voted during the third reading.

Some by-laws require external approval (e.g., from the Municipal Board, Public Utilities Board, or a Minister), and the CAO can advise whether this is required.

POLICIES

These are standing decisions adopted by resolution. For example, council could approve a policy for when a road will be plowed, rather than considering individual requests.

Policies prevent repetitive decisions and ensure fairness. They can also be made public for clarity and transparency.

Council should review old policies with the CAO to keep them current and relevant.





BEING EFFECTIVE ON COUNCIL

To be effective on council:

- **Prepare for meetings.** Review agendas and reports in advance, and think of questions or key points for discussion.
- **Keep it professional.** Decisions are a team effort. Listen respectfully and remain polite, even when you disagree during healthy debate.
- **Seek advice.** Your CAO and administration are there to provide essential information and expert guidance.
- **Communicate.** Share your views respectfully, consider other perspectives, and engage positively with everyone. Stay relevant and on topic.

MAKING FAIR DECISIONS

Citizens expect fairness. When making decisions, you should:

- **Use relevant information.** Do not let unrelated matters cloud the issue.
- **Be consistent.** People expect to be treated similarly to others.
- **Be reasonable.** Decisions should make sense and avoid unnecessary hardship. If it is hard to justify, think twice.

DELEGATING DECISIONS

Council may delegate decisions to the CAO or other municipal officers for efficiency, either through a resolution or a policy. However, council cannot delegate its authority to pass by-laws or resolutions.

HOW COUNCIL MEETINGS WORK

Members should become familiar with the specific rules for council meetings in their Procedures By-law.

Quorum – Council cannot hold a meeting without a quorum. More than half of council members must attend for a meeting, and council may allow members to attend remotely. There is an exception if a member withdraws due to a conflict of interest.

Open Meetings – Council meetings must be open to the public, and decisions can only be made in an open meeting so the public can hear and understand them.

Councils may close a meeting only for very specific matters. Anything from a closed meeting must be kept confidential until discussed in an open meeting, or you may be disqualified.

Attendance – Council members have a duty to attend council meetings. You may be disqualified for missing three consecutive regular meetings.

Regular and Special Meetings – Councils must set their regular council meetings in their Procedures By-law. Councils can also hold special meetings if there is a need to meet between regular meetings.

Agendas – Agendas keep meetings efficient and on track. Your Procedures By-law will set out rules for items on the agenda. The CAO should provide you with the agenda and supporting documents in advance so you can be prepared to participate.

Voting – All council members, including the Head of Council, have one vote on each decision. A tie defeats a decision.

Minutes – Your CAO or other staff will take minutes – the official public record of council's decisions. Minutes do not include statements or debate – only decisions. Minutes must be publicly available upon request and are typically posted online.



FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

IN THIS SECTION

COUNCIL'S ROLE

BUDGETING

TAXES

FINANCIAL REPORTING

ASSET MANAGEMENT

WATER AND WASTEWATER UTILITIES

COUNCIL'S ROLE

Council oversees and makes decisions about the municipality's finances and is accountable to the public for them. Every year, council must set the municipality's budget, monitor its implementation, and report to the public on the previous year's financial results. Council must also plan adequately for future budgets and projects.

You are not expected to be a financial expert. However, council should expect financial information from the CAO in a format that members can understand and use to provide effective oversight. Use the checklist below to support effective oversight.

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES – KEY ACTIONS

MONTHLY:

- Review your internal financial statements for variances.
- Confirm that bank reconciliations are up to date.
- Ensure that all payments are properly authorized.

EVERY YEAR:

- **January:** Adopt a temporary operating budget.
- **Jan–Feb:** Hold your budget deliberations publicly.

- **March 15:** Deadline to file the unaudited financial statements.
- **May 15:** Deadline to file your Financial Plan.
- **May–June:** Ensure your audited financial statements are on track. Invite the auditor to discuss any issues.
- **June 15:** Deadline to file your tax-levy by-law.
- **June 30:** Deadline for council to review last year's audit.
- **June–July:** Make sure your property tax bills are on track.
- **August 31:** Deadline to appoint an auditor.
- **Oct–Dec:** Determine whether the municipality will have a surplus or a deficit. Deficits require provincial approval.
- **Oct–Dec:** Start making decisions for next year's financial plan.

BUDGETING

The annual budget, or financial plan, is one of council's most important decisions.

The financial plan allocates resources to turn plans and priorities into actions and realities. It will determine:

- What services are provided and at what cost?
 - How these services will be paid for?
 - Property tax rates, fees and other sources of revenue.
 - Major purchases – buildings, equipment, etc.
- Municipalities cannot budget to spend more than they take in without the Minister's permission. Council will need to raise taxes or revenue, or cut other spending, for any new spending.

THE FINANCIAL PLAN

The public and other organizations rely on the financial plan for information about your municipality. It has three key parts:

- The **Operating Budget** outlines how much will be spent on services.
- The **Capital Budget** sets out how much will be spent on infrastructure or equipment.
- The **Five-Year Capital Plan** outlines the projects the municipality plans to undertake over the next five years.

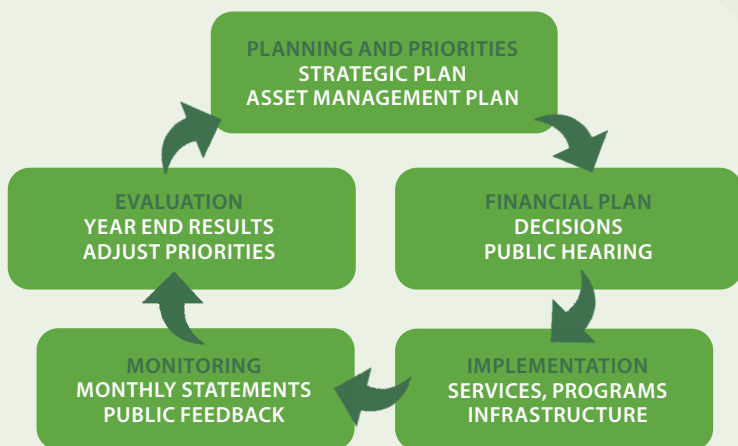
Each part of the financial plan must be balanced and must identify where money will come from to pay expenses.

Preparing the financial plan and allowing enough time for staff to set up the required public hearing can take a long time. **Get started early.** If you do not have a financial plan in place by January 1, you will also need to pass a temporary operating budget until the financial plan is approved. The financial plan is due on **May 15**, and council must hold a public hearing before finalizing it.

THE BUDGETING PROCESS

Developing and implementing the financial plan is a team effort:

- **Council** does the strategic planning, sets priorities, makes budget decisions, and monitors results;
- **CAO** provides information, analysis, and advice to council and implements the financial plan;
- **Public** provides feedback.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

As a member of council, you are expected to be involved in the budgeting process. When engaged in the budgeting process, here are some good questions to ask yourself, the rest of council, or the CAO:

- What effect does this budget have on the public?
- Are some people affected differently (rural or urban residents, farmers, businesses, and cottagers)? Why?
- Does this budget reflect council's priorities? Has council set priorities in a strategic plan, an asset management plan, etc.?
- Is this something the municipality should be handling? If so, are we meeting expectations? Is the service efficient and cost-effective?
- Could a different approach be more efficient while still meeting the public's needs?
- Are we also planning for the future? Is there enough set aside for a rainy day?
- How do we compare with similar municipalities?
- Are our property taxes reasonable and fair?
- How do our property taxes compare with last year?
- If we have a water and/or wastewater utility, is it financially healthy? (See the Water and Wastewater Utilities section on page 40.)

TAXES

General property taxes are the primary source of revenue for most municipalities.

HOW PROPERTY TAXES WORK

Manitoba will provide the assessed market value for each property in your municipality.

Municipalities can tax only a portion of a property's market value. For example:

- Businesses: 65% of market value
- Residences: 45% of market value
- Farms: 26% of market value

As part of your budget, you will set a general tax level for all properties (called a 'mill rate'), which is the amount of tax that must be paid for each \$1,000 of taxable assessment.

The municipality is responsible for collecting property taxes and can charge penalties for late payment or even sell property to recover back taxes.

Caution: Comparing your mill rate with last year's is not a reliable way to determine whether you have kept taxes the same, because market values are updated every two years through reassessment.

For example, if the market value of every property doubles while the mill rate stays the same, you will be charging twice as much tax, even though the mill rate is unchanged.

You may want to focus on the overall dollar amount of taxes you will collect and also consider any 'tax growth' from new or improved properties. Your CAO can help you understand and communicate how your decisions will affect taxation levels.

TAX TOOLS

Municipalities can also use other tools besides general taxation to help pay for the cost of services:

- **Special service taxes** – for certain services, property owners may be charged a special levy, which can be set



in different ways. These require a public hearing and Municipal Board approval.

- **User fees and charges** – Council can set fees or charges for municipal services by by-law. Some fees require special approval (e.g., utilities).
- **Tax credit programs** – municipalities can provide property tax credits by by-law, although everyone else will have to pay more taxes to make up for the credit.
- **Municipal portioning** – the portioning is the percentage of a property class's assessed market value that is taxed. Municipalities may apply to the province for authority to vary portioning (for municipal property taxes only).

UNDERSTANDING PROPERTY TAX BILLS

Property taxes are the largest source of revenue for most municipalities. A typical property tax bill is included on page 37, with explanations of all the different information and sections. This may help address any questions ratepayers have about their tax bill.

Municipalities are responsible for collecting both municipal and school property taxes, which are clearly separated on the tax bill. A single property tax bill is easier for ratepayers and streamlines the tax collection process.

2026 PROPERTY TAX BILL

RM MUNICIPALITY
 234 MAIN ST CITY MB R0A 1A0
 Phone : 204-555-5555 Fax : 204-555-5555
 Website : www.examplemunicipality.com E-mail : info@municipality.com

MUNICIPALITY # 000
ROLL NUMBER 1111.000

SMITH JOHN
 123 MAIN ST
 CITY MB R0A 1A0

REAL PROPERTY INFORMATION

Lot/Section	Blk/Twp	Plan/Range	Frontage/Area	Dwelling Units
DES 1	11111		100 F	1

Civic Address : 123 MAIN ST

Title or Deed	Tax Status	Assessment			Class	Portion %	Portioned Assessment
		Land	Building	Total			
TITLE NO	Taxable	10,000	100,000	110,000	Residential 1	45.00	49,500

MUNICIPAL TAXES

By-Law	General Municipal	End Year	Levy	Assessment	Mill Rate	Taxes Owning
2-2021	GENERAL MUNICIPAL AT LARGE	2035	49,500	49,500	23.927	1,194
L/S & SEWER UPGRADE						18.81

NET MUNICIPAL TAXES → 1,202.81

SCHOOL TAXES MINUS PROVINCIAL TAX CREDIT MINUS REBATE

School Division	Residential	Assessment	Mill Rate	Taxes Owning
SCHOOL DIVISION	Residential	49,500	12.325	610.09
MANITOBA HOMEOWNERS AFFORDABILITY TAX CREDIT				-610.09
NET SCHOOL DIVISION LEVY				00.00

NET SCHOOL TAXES → 00.00

CURRENT TAXES → 1,202.81

BALANCE OWING → 1,202.81

Important Messages: **DUE DATE : Oct 31, 2024**

The Manitoba government has applied the Homeowner Affordability Tax Credit Advance directly to the 2026 tax notices for declaring principal residences. For more information, visit manitoba.ca/hatc. **Manitoba Farmland School Tax Rebate:** For complete details on the program including how to access an application form, visit: www.masc.mb.ca/fstr; email: fstr@masc.mb.ca, or call: 431-615-6163.

DETACH AND RETURN WITH PAYMENT TO : 234 MAIN ST CITY MB

ROLL NUMBER	ARREARS/CREDITS	BALANCE OWING	AMOUNT PAID
1111.000	0.00	1,202.81	

PLEASE MAKE CHEQUES PAYABLE TO RM MUNICIPALITY

SMITH JOHN
 123 MAIN ST
 CITY MB R0A 1A0

REAL PROPERTY

DUE DATE : Oct 31, 2026

- The roll number is a unique number assigned to each property in the municipality to identify it.
- The names and mailing address of the owner(s).
- This information covers the roll, including the legal survey description,

- the property's frontage, and the number of dwelling units.
- 'Tax status' indicates whether the property is taxable. Most properties are taxable, but some are exempt from school taxes, from all taxes, or pay grants instead of taxes.

5. The 'Assessment' section shows the assessed market values of land and buildings, as well as the total.
6. The 'Class' section describes the property type, and the 'Portion %' section provides the portion of the property's market value that would be subject to tax (if taxable).
7. The 'Portioned Assessment' section provides the actual value used in any mill rate calculations.
8. The blue section shows all municipal taxes. Manitoba uses colour blocks and labels to clearly indicate to ratepayers which taxes are municipal and which are school taxes.
9. The 'General Municipal At Large' line shows the municipality's general tax rate. This combines all the rates that apply across the entire municipality.
10. The 'By-law' section lists any special taxes the municipality levies on this property, such as local improvement or special service taxes.
11. The mill rate column shows the mill rate used for each tax based on assessment.
12. 'Net Municipal Taxes' shows the total amount of taxes levied by the municipality.
13. This pink section clearly separates all school taxes on the property, as well as any school tax credits. It also provides contact information for the school division for any questions taxpayers may have.
14. This area shows any provincial credits for school taxes.
15. Some properties must pay an additional school tax, the provincial Education Support Levy, which would appear here. However, residential and farm properties do not pay it.
16. 'Net school taxes' shows the total amount of school taxes for the property.
17. 'Balance owing' is the total amount the property owner must pay for their property. It includes any arrears and credits reported by the municipality.
18. This whole bottom section is detached and returned with payment for anyone who sends payments by mail.
19. This shows the municipality's due date for tax payments.

FINANCIAL REPORTING

THE FINANCIAL PLAN

The financial plan is not just about the current year – it must also include last year's plan and the actual results. Be prepared to answer questions about the current year's plan or previous results.

Council should be ready to present its financial plan clearly to the public. The CAO or financial staff often assist council in preparing to present the financial plan.

THE AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The annual audit of the municipality's year-end financial statements is the

council's most important tool for reporting on the municipality's financial position. The audited statements are used by the public and other organizations to review the municipality's financial position and operations.

Council must appoint an auditor each year. Your auditor must submit the audit to council by **June 30** of the following year and send a copy to the Province. Some funding programs require an audited financial statement or other financial reports. Not having an audit may limit your ability to access funding.

The auditor will also prepare an opinion and a supplementary report that informs council of any problems with the municipality's accounting procedures or financial controls, or any other issues they discover. Council should request that the auditor report at a council meeting to discuss the audit and the supplementary report.

Municipalities must give public notice when the audit is ready and provide it on request. Many municipalities post the audit online so it is easily accessible.

IMPORTANT: Ensure your annual audited financial statements are received by June 30 and made available to the public.

ASSET MANAGEMENT

Asset management is an important tool for municipalities to make infrastructure decisions. It helps you plan to ensure your infrastructure and other assets will continue to meet your municipality's needs for the long term. It can also help you plan when and how to maintain your current assets to extend their useful life.

Some federal or provincial programs may require your municipality to have an asset management plan as a condition of funding. Manitoba typically requires municipalities to submit annual reports on their asset management plans.

Further information about Asset Management is available at: www.amm.mb.ca/issues/infrastructure-and-asset-management.

Basic parts of asset management include:

- **Asset Management Policy or By-law** – adopted by council.
- **Asset Management Strategy** – outlining the overall goals and objectives for asset management.
- **Asset Information** – an inventory or registry of municipal assets, including technical and financial data, condition assessments, and life-cycle costs.
- **Asset Management Procedures and Tools** – used by administration to

guide the process for collecting, using and maintaining asset data.

- **Risk Assessment and Management** – identification of key risks to municipal assets and strategies to address them.
- **Levels of Service** – expected by residents from the assets.
- **Asset Management Plan** – the overall plan for how assets will be acquired, maintained, operated, renewed, replaced and decommissioned.
- **Financial Strategy** – integration into municipal financial planning and decision-making.

Effective asset management can ensure that your municipality maximizes its infrastructure investments and delivers the best value to the public.

A municipality will need to dedicate staff time and financial resources to do asset management well. The following discussion prompts are provided to help council review its approach to asset management:

ASSET MANAGEMENT DISCUSSION PROMPTS

- Do council and staff have training in asset management?
- Does council know which services are being provided and which assets are required to provide them?

- Is council considering how to balance long-term costs, service levels, and risks in its decisions about assets?
- Are assets sustainable in the long term? What financial legacy is council leaving?



- How committed are we to asset management? Do we have a policy, and are we adhering to it?
- Who leads asset management in our municipality?
- Do we have a plan to improve asset management?
- What service expectations do people have? What does it cost to meet those expectations, and can we afford them now and in the future?
- Does our asset management plan align with our long-term capital planning (e.g., the five-year capital plan)?
- If there are gaps in how we will fund maintenance and replacement of current assets, how will we address them?

WATER AND WASTEWATER UTILITIES

In Manitoba, the financial health of municipal water and wastewater utilities (outside the City of Winnipeg) is regulated by the Public Utilities Board (PUB).

In particular, the utility rates that municipalities can charge require PUB approval. Municipalities must also report utility deficits to the PUB as soon as they are known, and the PUB can order municipalities to take specific action regarding their utilities.

The PUB strives to ensure Manitobans have safe, reliable access to necessary public services at just and reasonable rates. When applying for a rate increase, all utilities under the PUB's jurisdiction must justify the need for the requested increase. You can find more information on the PUB's website.

It is important to ensure that your utility's rates keep pace with its financial needs. As part of council's role in budgeting and financial governance,

councils should discuss key questions about their utility with their CAO.

UTILITY DISCUSSION PROMPTS

- What is the utility's overall financial health?
- Does it normally run an operating surplus or a deficit under PUB regulatory requirements?
- When was the last time utility rates were updated?
- Does a PUB Order require us to return at a specific time to obtain new rates?
- Have all directives from previous Board Orders and all letters from the PUB been followed?
- Are there any other active PUB Orders for our utility (e.g., deficit-recovery rate riders)?
- Does the utility have any current or planned capital projects, and is there anything council should be aware of regarding the utility's current capital assets?

CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

IN THIS SECTION

PUBLIC HEARINGS & ENGAGEMENT

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

PUBLIC COMPLAINTS

PUBLIC HEARINGS & ENGAGEMENT

Provincial laws require councils to hold public hearings on specific matters that significantly affect citizens and property owners. Your CAO can advise when a public hearing is required. Councils may also choose to hold a public hearing or a town hall meeting on any other matters they wish.

Public hearings give citizens full information and the opportunity to provide input before decisions are made, helping council to make informed choices.

Council can also use other ways to engage the public, such as surveys, online messaging and engagement tools, social media, and informal meetings. These approaches can supplement public

hearings or gather feedback when a public hearing is not required.

YOUR ROLE AT PUBLIC HEARINGS

All council members must attend public hearings unless excused, ill, or declaring a conflict of interest. Attendance ensures that all members understand public views and make informed decisions.

To be prepared for a public hearing, council should:

- Ask the CAO to review key information and any proposal details.
- Decide who will present and answer questions.
- Review the public hearing procedures in your Procedures By-law.

- Have the chair provide the public with an introduction to the hearing's purpose and how it will be conducted. Council members should listen respectfully to presenters and avoid negative comments, even when views differ. However, disrespectful behaviour by presenters is also unacceptable and should be addressed by the hearing's chair.

ENCOURAGING PARTICIPATION AT HEARINGS

Your CAO must provide public notice of hearings in accordance with the law. Your municipality can also encourage public attendance and participation at hearings by:

- **Doing additional advertising** beyond the minimum legislative requirements. Consider using other methods (e.g., social media) beyond the minimum requirement.
- **Telling the public how to participate** (e.g., by presenting).
- **Setting a hearing time when most people can attend**, such as evenings or weekends.
- **Picking the right venue** for the expected number of attendees. Consider accessibility when choosing a venue.
- **Provide the public with clear, relevant, and appropriately detailed information in advance.** Explain why something is being considered, what other options were reviewed, costs, impact on taxpayers, etc.
- **Deliver an engaging presentation.** Consider visual aids, graphs, or other ways to encourage feedback.



ACCESS TO INFORMATION



Citizens have a right to access most of a municipality's information, either automatically for certain documents under *The Municipal Act* or through a formal request and process under *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FIPPA). Your CAO can provide advice on access to information issues.

Municipalities are encouraged to make most information available by default. Normally, most information presented at an open council meeting should be available to the public. Consider adopting a policy that defines which information will be automatically provided.

For FIPPA requests, municipalities must follow a defined process to

address them. FIPPA also requires municipalities to protect certain types of information, especially personal information. You can find additional information about FIPPA, including FAQs for municipalities, at www.gov.mb.ca/fippa/public_bodies.

Important

- Most municipal documents should be publicly available by default.
- Documents should be provided in alternate formats for accessibility needs upon request.
- Keep key documents readily available on your municipality's website.
- Personal information must be protected.

PUBLIC COMPLAINTS

WORKING WITH THE MUNICIPALITY

Councils are elected by and accountable to the public. The public is expected to first try to work with the municipality to address any complaints.

Municipalities are encouraged to develop policies and processes for handling public complaints. This can help the municipality track complaints, document actions and responses, and resolve them professionally. A good process for handling complaints can prevent some matters from escalating and, if they do, will support later decisions about the complaint by council or other bodies.

THE OMBUDSMAN

The public can complain to Manitoba's Ombudsman if they believe a municipal decision was unfair and the issue cannot be resolved with the municipality. The Ombudsman has authority to investigate complaints about actions by council or staff.

The Ombudsman is independent and has significant authority to conduct impartial investigations of complaints. The Ombudsman can require information to be provided.

If the Ombudsman finds a complaint justified, they will provide a written report with recommendations to the Head of Council. Council must discuss the report at its next regular agenda in a closed session. The report may include recommendations and require the municipality to report back.

If the municipality fails to take adequate steps to address the issue, the council may be required to make the Ombudsman's report public. The Ombudsman also shares the investigation's results with the complainant.

For more information about the Ombudsman, visit www.ombudsman.mb.ca.

THE COURTS

The public can challenge municipal decisions in the Court of King's Bench if they believe that a municipality is acting outside or contrary to its legal authority. This includes failing to follow legislated procedures or spending money without proper authority.

The court process is lengthy and is often seen as a last resort when other avenues of dispute resolution have failed. Councils should make every effort to work with the public to address concerns before reaching this point.

Important

- Most public complaints can be resolved in a constructive manner.
- Have good policies and processes to receive and track complaints and to document municipal actions and responses.
- The public can complain to the Ombudsman. Municipalities should take any reports or recommendations from the Ombudsman very seriously.
- The public also has recourse to the courts.



BILINGUAL MUNICIPALITIES

IN THIS SECTION

THE ASSOCIATION OF MANITOBA BILINGUAL MUNICIPALITIES MEMBER MUNICIPALITIES

THE ASSOCIATION OF MANITOBA BILINGUAL MUNICIPALITIES



The Association of Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities (AMBM) is the official voice of 16 municipal governments, including the City of Winnipeg, united in their commitment to delivering services in both of Canada's official languages – French and English – and to proactively meeting the needs of Francophone and bilingual communities across the province. Together, these municipalities represent over 60% of Manitoba's population and nearly 80% of individuals who can communicate in both official languages.

The AMBM's mandate is to advance, structure, and champion municipal bilingualism as a key strategic driver of growth and innovation. This commitment is rooted in our bilingual advantage – a distinctive capacity to enhance the accessibility and quality of public services, strengthen the economic attractiveness of our regions, and attract and retain a skilled, diverse workforce. In doing so, the AMBM contributes directly to building strong, competitive, and prosperous communities.

In this context, the AMBM actively engages with provincial and federal

governments to ensure that the realities, priorities, and full potential of Manitoba’s bilingual municipalities are recognized. The organization works to ensure that public policies, programmes, and investments integrate bilingualism as a core pillar of development. For the AMBM, our bilingual advantage is not simply an institutional commitment – it is a tangible driver of long-term prosperity, community resilience, and social cohesion across Manitoba.

To provide concrete, structured support to its members, the AMBM has developed the Municipal Maturity Model (3M), a strategic tool that guides continuous improvement. The model enables municipalities to assess their organizational capacity, plan the progressive development of services in both official languages, and advance along a measurable, results-driven path tailored to their local realities.

Through its leadership, the AMBM positions municipal bilingualism as a distinctive competitive advantage at the heart of a dynamic, inclusive, and forward-looking Manitoba.

This leadership is further embodied in the AMBM Group – a collaborative consortium comprising the AMBM, the Economic Development Council for Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities (Conseil de développement économique des municipalités bilingues du Manitoba, CDEM), and Eco-West Canada (EWC). This integrated approach ensures coordinated, complementary action in economic development, innovation, and sustainable transition, benefiting Manitoba’s Official Language Minority Communities (OLMCs).

For more information, please contact the Association of Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities (AMBM) by email at bcdd-oceo@ambm.ca, by telephone at 204-289-4077, or by visiting their website at www.ambm.ca.

MEMBER MUNICIPALITIES

The AMBM’s member municipalities include:

Rural Municipality of Alexander

Rural Municipality of De Salaberry

Rural Municipality of Ellice-Archie

Rural Municipality of Grey

Rural Municipality of La Broquerie

Rural Municipality of Lorne

Rural Municipality of Montcalm

Rural Municipality of Piney

Rural Municipality of Taché

Rural Municipality of St. Laurent

Rural Municipality of Ste. Anne

Rural Municipality of Ritchot

Town of Powerview-Pine Falls

Town of Ste. Anne

City of Winnipeg

Village of St. Pierre-Jolys

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**Association of
Manitoba
Municipalities**

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