Municipal Administrators' Resource Guide

Government of Saskatchewan

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Introduction

This guide is an overview of administrative resources for municipalities operating under *The Municipalities Act*. The guide was prepared by the Ministry of Government Relations and is not intended to replace legislation or legal advice.

The Municipalities Act provides the legislative framework for Saskatchewan's towns, villages, resort villages and rural municipalities. Municipalities have the responsibility to:
- deliver good government;
- provide services, facilities or other things that, in the opinion of council, are necessary or desirable for all or a part of the municipality; and
- develop and maintain safe and viable communities. These are broad and important responsibilities.

The implementation involves managing and balancing resources to meet both current and future municipal needs.

A vital part of the smooth operation of municipal government is the interaction between the council and the administration. The administrator is the administrative head of the municipality and is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the municipality which includes managing municipal staff, preparing materials for council meetings, and acting as the primary advisor for council. The elected municipal council provides direction for the administrator through resolutions and bylaws.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the administrator's key responsibilities?

Two responsibilities of an administrator are legislative and financial duties. *The Municipalities Act,* section 111 sets out a few of the duties the administrator is legislated to perform. Examples include, safekeeping of records, recording council meeting minutes, maintaining municipal bylaws, keeping accurate accounting records. There are also a number of resources available to administrators at https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/municipal-administration.

Are there key dates to be aware of?

There are a number of legislated dates by which information must be either completed or submitted. **The Administrator's Legislative and Operational Calendar** is a vital document to assist in managing important dates. The calendar can be found at https://www.saskatchewan.ca/ government/municipal-administration/tools-guides-and-resources/municipal-administrator-resources.

What is council's role?

Council's main role is to provide leadership and make policy. Council members make decisions about the services a municipality will provide to its citizens, how services will be provided, and at what level. Once decided, administration is responsible for implementing the policies. Further information on council responsibilities can viewed be at https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/municipal-administration/tools-guides-and-resources/council-responsibilities.

What is my responsibility to council?

An administrator's key role is to advise council and make recommendations on all facets of municipal operations. Remember council makes the final decision. After council makes its decisions, you are responsible to ensure those decisions are carried out.

What is the administrator's role at a council meeting?

The administrator, or designate, is required to attend all council meetings. The administrator must ensure the minutes and names of all council members present are recorded. The council will give guidance as to what is expected, but council typically requires a prepared agenda and the package of information to be discussed. Procedures are set out in the municipality's council procedures bylaw.

Why are council meeting minutes important?

Minutes are a formal record of all decisions made by council. Minutes must include date, time and location of the meeting and names of council members present. Minutes should reflect the decisions or resolutions only, and not include the discussion surrounding the decision. Minutes from the previous council meeting are approved by council at the next regular council meeting. Once approved the public has a statutory right of access to minutes.

Who can sign municipal documents?

Section 115 of *The Municipalities Act* sets out provisions regarding who is required and entitled to sign municipal documents on behalf of the municipality. Typically municipal documents require two signatures but the authorized signatories will vary depending on the document and local policies.

What is a conflict of interest?

A conflict of interest occurs when the interests of an elected official or a closely connected person may, or may appear to, be affected by a council decision. Information can be found at https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/municipal-administration/tools-guides-and-resources/conflict-of-interest.

What rules or requirements does the administrator need to be aware of?

By legislation, all municipalities must have the following items in place.

Public Disclosure Statement

Public disclosure statements became underlined mandatory for elected municipal officials on November 19, 2015. The mandatory disclosure helps to ensure the public that decisions are made in the best interests of the municipality. It can also serve as a guideline to determine whether an elected member may be in a conflict of interest regarding a matter before council.

Oath of Office

An individual assuming a position in public office through election must take an Oath of Office. The Oath reminds them of their obligations to the public and to perform their duties to the best of their abilities. Prior to assuming any powers, duties, or functions, each council member must take an Oath of Office.

Employee Code of Conduct

An employee code of conduct is intended to:
- provide an understanding of the fundamental rights, privileges and obligations of municipal employees;
- protect the public interest; promote high ethical standards among municipal employees;
- provide a means for municipal employees to obtain authorization for conduct in circumstances where they are uncertain as to the ethical appropriateness of that conduct; and
- set out the corrective measures for unethical conduct.

Council Procedure Bylaw

Councils must adopt a procedure bylaw to provide a standard, familiar format for council meetings and make it easier for members of council, staff, the media, and the public to understand the process by which decisions are made. A sample bylaw can be found at http://www.publications.gov.sk.ca/details.cfm?p=79389

Council Code of Ethics

A code of ethics outlines the basic ethical standards and values for members of council. It is to be used to guide members of council respecting what their obligations are when fulfilling their duties and responsibilities as elected officials. A sample code of ethics can be found at http://publications.gov.sk.ca/details.cfm?p=83132.

These requirements are vital to the integrity in the decisions and day-to-day operations of a municipality. Information can be found at https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/municipal-administration/tools-guides-and-resources/conflict-of-interest/resources.

What is the difference between a policy, resolution and bylaw?

➢ A municipal **policy** provides guidance to municipal staff related to how to implement the policy and/or they govern the actions of the public within municipally-owned facilities. Policies are adopted either by resolution or by bylaw. An example of a municipal policy manual can be found at https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/municipal-administration/tools-guides-and-resources/municipal-administrator-resources.

➢ A **resolution** is a decision of council, and includes routine administrative and management matters such as approving the minutes of the previous meeting.

➢ A **bylaw** is a form of legislation established by local government to resolve issues and address the needs of citizens. Enforcement action can be taken as a consequence of non-compliance. Bylaws govern the actions of all people in the municipality. An example of a bylaw is animal control. A sample bylaw can be found at https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/municipal-administration/tools-guides-and-resources/bylaw-samples.

It is important that municipal policies, resolutions and bylaws align with each other.

What is a local improvement?

A local improvement is a project undertaken by a municipality that provides a benefit to select properties, such as sidewalks and sewers. The manual outlines each step in the process and can be found at https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/municipal-administration/community-planning-land-use-and-development/local-improvements-manual.

What will an administrator need to know about the municipal election process?

The Local Government Election Act, 2015 provides the legislative framework for municipal elections. In Saskatchewan, general elections are held every four years. A general election was held in July 2016 for resort villages and in October 2016 for urban, rural and northern municipalities. In a rural municipality, election terms are staggered. In the October 2016 rural elections, the election was held for the reeve and odd-numbered division councillors. The next general election to be held in rural municipalities will be in October 2018 for the even-numbered divisions and in 2020 for resort villages, urban, northern and rural municipalities for reeves and odd-numbered division councillors.

When is a by-election held?

If a vacancy occurs on council, at the next council meeting, a date must be set for holding a by-election. The date of the by-election must be within six months of the vacancy occurring.

To assist in understanding the election process, there are a number of resources available, including an election calendar, procedures and guide at https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/municipal-administration/elections.

How are property taxes determined?

Property assessment for taxation purposes and its administration is a complex and technical process that is vital to the financial health of local government. Property assessment is the process of establishing a dollar value for property for property tax purposes. Property taxes are the municipality's primary source of revenue. A property tax is a levy on the value of a property. Like assessment, taxation is complex. Information on property assessment can be found at http://publications.gov.sk.ca/details.cfm?p=80131

What is *The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*?

The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, also referred to as LAFOIP sets out the right of access to a municipality's documents and a right of privacy with respect to personal information. Information on the types of information, municipality's responsibilities and the process can be found at https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/municipal-administration/tools-guides-and-resources/access-to-information.

What type of training is available for municipal administrators?

There are a number of training opportunities available through the Ministry of Government Relations, the Urban Municipal Administrators Association (UMAAS), or the Rural Municipal Administrators' Association of Saskatchewan (RMAA) administrator association.

In an election year, the Ministry of Governments Relations conducts a number of workshops throughout the province on election procedures to assist administrators. Typically in an assessment revaluation year, the ministry delivers a workshop on Assessment and Property Tax. Also, in conjunction with UMAAS or RMAA, the ministry conducts training sessions throughout the province on topics such as Tax Enforcement, Bylaw Enforcement, Community Planning, Financial Statements and Local Improvements to name a few.

The Municipal Leadership Development Program (MLDP) is also available to both administrators and council members. The MLDP is a series of modules or workshops developed exclusively for elected and appointed municipal leaders in Saskatchewan. The modules target specific issues of importance to urban, rural and northern municipalities. Mayors, reeves, councillors and municipal staff benefit from this program that is designed to strengthen local government leadership. More information about MLDP is available at http://mldp.ca/.

Please contact UMAAS or RMAA to obtain further information on training needs and/or requirements.

What other resources are available?

The attached **Resource Index** provides links to materials and information on topics common to most municipalities. Materials can be found at www.saskatchewan.ca and searching the topic of interest. The ministry encourages using the website as a starting point.

Where to obtain further information?

For more information, contact a Municipal Advisor at the Ministry of Government Relations at 306-787-2680.

Resource Index

A
Access the Municipal Directory
- Update information or find contact information for another municipality at http://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/municipal-administration/municipal-directory

Animal Control
- Learn about *The Stray Animals Act and dangerous animals – section 374-380 of The Municipalities Act*

B
Building Standards and Licensing
- Find information on building standards, licensing and regulations at https://www.saskatchewan.ca/business/housing-development-construction-and-property-management/building-standards-and-licensing

Bylaws
- Municipal Bylaw guide, sample bylaws, community planning bylaws and bylaws in other municipalities can be found at https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/municipal-administration/tools-guides-and-resources/bylaw-samples

C – D
Community Planning, Land Use, and Development
- Information on tools and services to help with planning and development can be found at http://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/municipal-administration/community-planning-land-use-and-development

E
Elections
- Includes an election guide and information on election procedures, schedules, running for office, election procedures, newly elected council members, voting and submitting a municipality's election results can be found at http://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/municipal-administration/elections

Establishing Additional Service Areas in Rural Municipalities
- Download the handbook for councils who wish to establish Additional Service Areas (ASAs) in their RM at http://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/municipal-administration/tools-guides-and-resources/municipal-administrator-resources

Establishing Special Services Areas in Rural Municipalities
- **A Special Service Area** may **only** be designated at the time of restructuring by Minister's Order. Municipalities involved in a potential restructuring may wish to contact Municipal Advisory Services for further information at 306-787-2680.

F - G - H

Federal Gas Tax Program
- Learn about the federal gas tax program and how it works at https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/municipal-administration/funding-finances-and-asset-management/funding/federal-gas-tax-program

Financing Tools Available to Municipalities
- View the various financing tools available to help fund infrastructure, development or services at http://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/municipal-administration/tools-guides-and-resources/financing-tools-available-to-municipalities

Funding, Finances and Asset Management
- Learn about budget preparation, capital works planning and other financial issues involved in managing municipalities at http://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/municipal-administration/funding-finances-and-asset-management

Goods and Services Tax (GST)
- Information on GST and how it applies to municipalities can be found at http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/E/pub/gp/rc4049/rc4049-16e.pdf

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L

Legislation for Municipalities
- The Acts and Regulations administered by the Ministry of Government Relations including *The Municipalities Act* can be found online at Publications Saskatchewan at http://www.publications.gov.sk.ca/ department.cfm?d=313

M

Municipal Administrator Resources
- Learn about the roles, responsibilities and legislative requirements for administrators at http://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/municipal-administration/tools-guides-and-resources/municipal-administrator-resources

Municipal Expropriation Guide
- Guide to assist in understanding the expropriation provisions of *The Municipal Expropriation Act* can be found at http://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/municipal-administration/tools-guides-and-resources/municipal-expropriation-guide

Municipal Government Sustainability Self-Assessment Tool
- Assess the sustainability of a municipality and help find areas for improvement. Self-assessment tool can be found at http://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/municipal-administration/tools-guides-and-resources/municipal-government-sustainability-self-assessment-tool

Municipal Growth Readiness Checklist
- Determine a municipality's growth readiness and what actions are needed to improve it at http://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/municipal-administration/tools-guides-and-resources/municipal-growth-readiness-checklist

Municipal Information Dataportal (MID)
- Learn about the MID and how it can help your municipality manage assets at http://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/municipal-administration/tools-guides-and-resources/municipal-information-dataportal

Municipalities Today
- Electronic newsletter for local governments. Read the newsletter at http:// www.saskatchewan.ca/government/municipal-administration/tools-guides-and-resources/municipalities-today

N - O
Nuisances
- Information about municipal legislation related to weed control and untidy and unsightly properties can be found at http://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/municipal-administration/tools-guides-and-resources/nuisances

P - Q
Petitions
- Learn about petitions, referendums and audits at http://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/municipal-administration/tools-guides-and-resources/petitions

Provincial Disaster Assistance Program
- Learn about the program and the steps in applying for assistance after a natural disaster caused by events such as severe weather or flooding can be found at www.saskatchewan.ca/government/municipal-administration/funding-finances-and-asset-management/designate%20and%20apply%20for%20municipal%20provincial%20disaster%20assistance%20funding

Public Health and Welfare

- Learn how municipalities are working to establish safe, healthy communities through management of water, health and the environment at http://www.saskatchewan.ca/ government/municipal-administration/tools-guides-and-resources/public-health-and-welfare

R - S

Records Disposal and Retention Guide

- Guide to learning how to make decisions regarding the retention and disposal of municipal records can be found at http://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/municipal-administration/tools-guides-and-resources/records-disposal-and-retention-guide

Roads and Streets Construction and Maintenance

- Information on roads, streets, construction, leases and maintenance related to municipalities can be found at http://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/municipal-administration/tools-guides-and-resources/roads-and-streets-construction-and-maintenance

Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM)

- Information on SARM and the services it provides to rural municipalities can be found at https://sarm.ca/

Rural Municipal Administrators of Saskatchewan (RMAA)

- Information on RMAA can be found at http://rmaa.ca/index

Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association (SUMA)

- Information on SUMA and the services it provides to its members can be found at https://suma.org/

T - U - V - W

Taxes and Service Fees for Municipalities

- Learn about property assessments, tax tools, mill rate returns, tax enforcement and more at http://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/municipal-administration/taxation-and-service-fees

Tendering and Procurement Requirements

- Learn about municipal procurement and tendering at http://www.newwestpartnershiptrade.ca/ government_mash_sector.asp and posting tenders at https://sasktenders.ca

Urban Municipal Administrators Association of Saskatchewan

- Information on UMAAS can be found at http://www.umaas.ca/

X - Y - Z

Government Relations Acronyms List

ASA	Additional Service Area		**MCDP**	Municipal Capacity Development Program
BEM	Basic Emergency Management		**MERT**	Municipal Elections Return Tracking
BCF-CC	Building Canada Fund – Communities Component		**MLDP**	Municipal Leadership Development Program
CA	*The Cities Act*		**MR**	Mill Rate
CAO	Chief Administrative Officer		**MRS**	Municipal Revenue Sharing
CAR	Civic Addressing Registry		**MFC**	Municipal Financing Corporation of Saskatchewan
CIT	Communities in Transition		**NBC**	National Building Code of Canada
CWWF	Clean Water and Wastewater Fund		**NBCF**	New Building Canada Fund
DFAA	Public Safety Canada's Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements		**NCGP**	Northern Capital Grants Program
EPT	Education Property Tax		**NECB**	National Energy Code for Buildings
EMFS	Emergency Management and Fire Safety		**NFC**	National Fire Code of Canada
EOC	Emergency Operations Centre		**NMRS**	Northern Municipal Revenue Sharing
ERF	Emergency Response Fund		**NWSP**	Northern Water and Sewer Program
FCM	Federation of Canadian Municipalities		**OCP**	Official Community Plan
GIL	Grants-in-Lieu of Taxes		**PDA**	*The Planning and Development Act, 2007*
GR	Government Relations		**PDAP**	Provincial Disaster Assistance Program
GST	Goods and Services Tax			
GTF	Gas Tax Fund		**PIPP**	Public-Industry Partnership Program
INAC	Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada		**PPSTN**	Provincial Public Safety Telecommunications Network
LGA	Local Government Authority			
LGEA	*The Local Government Election Act, 2015*		**PST**	Provincial Sales Tax
OH	Organized Hamlet		**PTIC**	Provincial Territorial Infrastructure Component
MA	*The Municipalities Act*			
MAIP	Municipal Administrator Internship Program		**PTIF**	Public Transit Infrastructure Fund

PSAB	Public Sector Accounting Board	**VIPER**	Voice Internet Protocol for Emergency Response
PSAP	Public Safety Answering Point	**WSA**	Water Security Agency
RGC	Readiness for Growth		
RMA	Road Maintenance Agreements		
RMAA	Rural Municipal Administrators' Association		
SARM	Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities		
SAMEO	Saskatchewan Association of Municipal Enforcement Officers		
SAMA	Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency		
SBOA	Saskatchewan Building Officials Association		
SMA	Saskatchewan Municipal Awards		
SMB	Saskatchewan Municipal Board		
SMHI	Saskatchewan Municipal Hail Insurance		
SSA	Special Service Area		
SSBA	Saskatchewan School Boards Association		
SUMA	Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities' Association		
TAPD	Transit Assistance for People with Disabilities		
TCA	Tangible Capital Asset		
TLE	Treaty Land Entitlement		
TSASK	Technical Safety Authority of Saskatchewan		
UBAS	*The Uniform Building and Accessibility Standards Act*		
UMAAS	Urban Municipal Administrators' Association		