

What does a Councillor do?

What is a Municipal Council's main function?

- The Council of every municipality is essentially responsible for making policy and high-level governance decisions about the municipality. They adopt broad strategies, pass bylaws and policies, and adopt budgets which determine tax rates, fees, and set programming and service levels. The administration of all these instruments is then left to the staff to carry out in accordance with the approved documents of Council.

What should I expect as a Municipal Councillor?

- As a Council member, you are expected to be in-tune with your community's needs and seen as a representative who makes decisions in the best interest of the Town of Oxford. You will be an important point of contact by members of your community who will have issues and opinions to share on how the community should be run/changed. You will bring ideas to Council to consider. In many cases your role will be to share information about municipal and provincial programs and regulations or to provide contact information for other agencies.

What is the compensation for Oxford Municipal Councillors?

- Council remuneration is paid monthly. Effective April 1, 2020 annual remuneration is:

Mayor – \$9,010.68

Deputy Mayor - \$4,205.28

Councillor – \$4,205.28

How much power will I have as a Councillor?

- Individual Councillors have little power of their own. Their power is in one of seven votes cast by Council members, who by majority vote, decide what the community will look like and what projects will be undertaken. The responsibility and authority of Municipalities is set out in the Municipal Government Act and several other less significant pieces of legislation (<https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/legc/statutes/municipal%20government.pdf>). For example, the water utility rates and operating regulations are set by the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board by application approved and submitted by the Town. Council has one employee, that being the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). The CAO directs all other staff.

What kind of topics will I be voting on?

- As a Councillor you can expect to be involved in votes that set annual budgets – both operating and capital, and adopt strategies on a wide range of things including planning and land zoning, economic development, recreation assets and programming, emergency management, as well as solid waste. Council is also responsible to decide what Municipal laws will be set (Bylaws) and gives the CAO direction on how to administer the affairs of the Town through policy adoption and direction through motions of various sorts.

As a Councillor, how often do I attend meetings?

- All of Council generally attends, at a minimum, two evening Council meetings per month. There are a few other external and internal committees that you may be asked to sit on which meet as often as monthly. Check out the Council Meetings and Proceedings Policy for more information (<https://town.oxford.ns.ca/policies/622-council-meetings-and-proceedings-policy-signed-november-2018/file.html>).

General Information

- Currently our Council meetings have been virtual and can be viewed online. All past approved minutes are also posted online for the public. We encourage everyone to join our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/131654913523> and watch the live meetings that are posted there via Zoom. This is a great way to examine the discussions, decisions and understand what the role of a Councillor is.

The conduct of an individual Councillor is governed by a Code of Conduct

(<https://town.oxford.ns.ca/policies/958-code-of-conduct-for-elected-municipal-officials-cao/file.html>)

that is adopted by Council itself and certain legislated provisions such as in the Conflict of Interest Act and the Municipal Government Act

(<https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/legc/statutes/municipal%20government.pdf>).