

PROSPECTIVE COUNCILLOR INFORMATION SESSION



TOPICS COVERED

- ✓ Councillor Roles & Responsibilities
- ✓ Boards & Committees
- ✓ Councillor Communication
- ✓ Councillor Benefits
- ✓ Nominations
- ✓ Election



COUNCILLOR ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

COUNCILLORS **CANNOT:**

- Make decisions or allocate funds on behalf of the municipality.
- Directly oversee or direct the work of Administrative staff.*
- Fire or discipline Administrative staff.*
- Directly deal with resident or ratepayer concerns on behalf of the municipality.

COUNCILLORS **CAN:**

- Persuade other members of Council to adopt their viewpoint.
- Provide direction to Administration through policies, bylaws, and resolutions of Council.
- Discuss staff performance issues with the CAO.
- Assist residents and ratepayers with concerns and direct them to the correct avenues.

A full outline of Roles & Responsibilities can be found in the **Candidate Information Guide**.

**the CAO is Council's only employee*

BYLAWS & POLICIES

Municipalities are governed by a series of policies and bylaws. Council can only make decisions as allowed by these policies and bylaws, and other applicable legislation, including provincial, such as the **Municipal Government Act**.

To amend a Bylaw or Policy, Council must go through a series of legislated steps and receive a Council majority vote in order for the changes to be enacted.

SIGNIFICANT BYLAWS:

- ✓ Land Use Bylaw
- ✓ Municipal Development Plan
- ✓ Council, Board, and Committee Meeting Procedure Bylaw
- ✓ Bylaw Establishing the Position of the Chief Administrative Officer

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Every year, Council reviews and amends the County's **Strategic Plan**.

This document guides Council's decision-making and the work of County employees, providing direction and ensuring that work carried out throughout the municipality aligns with the goals outlined by Council.

The Strategic Plan outlines the County's Vision, Mission, and Values, and includes strategies and goals determined by Council.

The CAO guides the strategic planning process, walking Councillors through the necessary steps to create and implement a successful Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan is reviewed yearly as some items near completion and new priorities emerge.

Example of Current High Priority Strategies

GOAL	STRATEGY
Citizen Attraction	Encourage the development of residential land (ref. 5.1a)
Citizen Attraction	Promote Saddle Hills County to existing and prospective residents, commercial investors, and business owners (ref. 5.1b)
Quality of Life	Promote and expand outdoor recreational opportunities for residents and visitors (ref. 5.2a)
Economic Diversification	Consider an innovation and research centre for agricultural sector advancement (ref. 5.3a)
Infrastructure	Strive to provide all residents and businesses to have access to broadband internet (ref. 5.4a)
Infrastructure	Provide access to treated water to all residences and businesses (ref. 5.4b)

TIME COMMITMENTS

Councillors elected during the 2025 Municipal Election will serve a 4-year term.

The time commitment for Councillors depends on their position and board and committee appointments, but is generally considered a part-time commitment.

EXPECTATIONS:

- ✓ Councillors are expected, and in some cases legislated, to take certain training, as outlined by the MGA and other applicable policies and bylaws.
- ✓ Councillors are expected to attend Council Meetings, held on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month. In December, there is only one meeting.
- ✓ Councillors are expected to attend meetings for the Boards and Committees to which they are appointed. Councillors appointed as alternates are expected to attend all meetings when the main appointee cannot be present.
- ✓ Councillors will also be expected to attend conferences and events held by the municipality and other local organizations, as appropriate.

BOARDS & COMMITTEES

Councillors are appointed to several Boards and Committees during the County's Organizational Meeting, each year.

INTERNAL BOARDS:

Council creates internal Boards and Committees related to specific issues affecting the community. These dedicated groups, comprised of appointed Councillors and members of the community, research and provide insight on current problems and help to develop solutions, passing their recommendations to Council for review.

EXTERNAL BOARDS:

Council also appoints Councillors to sit on a variety of external Boards and Committees, such as with partner organizations and neighbouring municipalities, to gather knowledge and provide insight on issues affecting Saddle Hills County.

A full outline of Roles & Responsibilities can be found in the **Candidate Information Guide**.

COUNCILLOR/STAFF COMMUNICATION

Council's only employee is the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO).
Council are responsible for the hiring and review of this position **only**.
All other positions are hired and overseen by the CAO.

Council determines the Organizational Chart, as advised by the CAO, and can add or amend positions within, as appropriate.

All Council communications to staff should go through the CAO. Administration will provide regular updates to Council through CAO Reports presented at Council Meetings.

Councillor/Staff Communications are outlined in
Policy AD59 Council/Administration Communication Policy.

MEDIA RELATIONS

The only official spokesperson for the County is the Reeve. In instances where the Reeve is unavailable, they may designate this responsibility to the Deputy Reeve, CAO, or another Councillor or staff member, as appropriate.

Administrative staff are subject-matter experts and will often speak to, or answer questions asked by, the media, about subjects relevant to their department and expertise. These queries are reviewed by the Communications Department and CAO.

Staff will only provide factual information and not offer opinions on Council decisions. Should an opinion or reasoning be required that has not been explicitly stated by Council, this will be reviewed with the CAO and Reeve before speaking to the media.

All media requests should go through the CAO or Communications Department. Councillors should forward all requests for comment on County matters or Council decisions, to the Reeve, or designate.

COUNCILLOR BENEFITS

Councillors receive remuneration for their service to the County, as outlined in **Policy AD14 - Payments and Benefits to Council, Committee, and Board Members**

OUTLINE OF BENEFITS:

- ✓ Councillors receive a monthly 'Base Rate'.
- ✓ Councillors are reimbursed mileage costs, at a rate set by Council.
- ✓ Councillors receive honorariums for any Council, Board, or Committee meetings they attend on behalf of Saddle Hills County. These must be authorized by Council in order to be eligible.
- ✓ Councillors are eligible for the County's benefits program, including Life Insurance, Accidental Death & Dismemberment, Dependent Life, Health/Vision, and Dental.
- ✓ Councillors are also eligible for 4 special leave days and a \$1,000 flexible spending account.
All premiums are employer paid.

Councillors are required to submit timesheets each month, outlining the meetings attended and any mileage or expenses accrued.

NOMINATIONS

NEW FOR 2025

Candidates who intend to run in the 2025 Municipal Election must file a **Notice of Intent to Run** as a candidate, and can only accept campaign contributions and incur campaign expenses once this has been filed with the Returning Officer and they are added to the Register of Candidates.

FINAL DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF NOMINATION PAPERS:
September 22, 2025 (Nomination Day), at 12 p.m. (Noon)

Nomination and Candidate Information forms must be filed with the Returning Officer.

In order to sign Nomination Papers, the person:

- Must be 18 or older on Nomination Day
- Must be a Canadian Citizen (Permanent or Temporary Residents are not eligible to vote or sign nomination papers)
- Must reside in Alberta and have their place of residence located in Saddle Hills County on Election Day.

ELECTION

ADVANCE VOTE: October 13, 2025 | 10 a.m. - 8 p.m. | Saddle Hills County Admin Building

ELECTION DAY: October 20, 2025 | 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.

Bonanza Hall, Gundy Hall, Savanna Rec. Plex, Saddle Hills County Admin Building, Woking Hall

SPECIAL BALLOTS:

This year, Saddle Hills County voters have the option to vote by Special Ballot (i.e. mail-in ballot) during the 2025 Municipal Election. Special Ballots are used when an elector, whose name is contained in the permanent electors register, is unable to vote at the Advance Vote or on Election Day. If you require a Special Ballot, you must complete a **Special Ballot Application Form**. The deadline for Special Ballot Applications is October 17, 2025.

SCRUTINEERS:

On Election Day, a candidate may appoint **one** Scrutineer to represent them at each voting station. If a candidate wishes to appoint a scrutineer, they must do so by providing written notice to the Returning Officer.

The Scrutineer may observe, but not interfere in, the Election Process at one, or more, Voting Stations. A candidate may act as their own Scrutineer. Scrutineers may also observe the counting of the votes, but must be in the Voting Station prior to 8 p.m. on Election Day.

No one will be permitted to enter Voting Stations after 8 p.m. to ensure the integrity of the count.

ELECTION RESULTS:

All Ballot Boxes are kept in the control of the Presiding Deputy Returning Officer for each Voting Station until the close of the vote. The boxes are sealed after the ballots are counted and stored in a sealed and protected area until such time as the contents are legislated to be destroyed.

Unofficial results will be released on the County website as soon as possible after votes are counted. Official Results will be released at noon on Friday, October 24, 2025.