



# CANDIDATE INFORMATION GUIDE

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Town of Lunenburg  
2024 Municipal Election



# Candidate Information Guide

## MUNICIPAL ELECTION 2024

Information for residents interested in running for mayor or councillor in the Town of Lunenburg.

### About this guide

This guide has been prepared for residents interested in running for the Town of Lunenburg Council. The information contained in this document is intended to accompany the [Province of Nova Scotia's Candidates Guide to Municipal and School Board Elections](#), produced by Nova Scotia's Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

We hope you find the guide helpful, and we welcome your questions and requests for additional information. You can contact the Returning Officer at [kbyrne@townoflunenburg.ca](mailto:kbyrne@townoflunenburg.ca) or 902-634-4410 x 240.

### How your government works

In the Town of Lunenburg, residents elect a mayor and a six-member Council every four years. The mayor and councillors represent residents in making decisions about municipal matters.

Local governments are responsible for community-focused services and infrastructure, such as maintaining local roads, managing waste, overseeing public parks and recreation, and ensuring local land use planning and development. They also handle local by-laws and community programs. In contrast, provincial governments address broader issues like healthcare, education, and transportation infrastructure, while the federal government focuses on national and international matters, including defence, immigration, and trade policies.

### Thinking about running for Council?

Before putting your name forward, figuring out whether you have the time for the position and ensuring the job meets your expectations is important.

There are no special qualifications or experience required to be a Council member. However, great attributes are visionary thinking, strong communication skills, conflict resolution skills, and an ability to be persuasive and accept opposing views. You likely already have skills, knowledge and abilities that are transferable to the elected official's role. Think about your volunteer experience, community involvement, work experience, membership in different organizations and the roles you play in your family life.

## Expectations

Of all levels of government, municipal government is closest to the needs and expectations of local citizens, making the roles of mayor and councillor rewarding and demanding.

As an elected official, you can expect to:

- Represent the perspectives of your demographic in decision-making.
- Influence changes that benefit your community and ensure its sustainability.
- Introduce new ideas for debate and potential implementation.
- Make a positive impact on the quality of life in your community.
- Provide a voice for your community in interactions with other levels of government.
- Be part of a team that makes decisions affecting all aspects of community life.

## Meeting commitments

### Regular meetings

Currently, Regular Council meetings are held on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. In the months of July and August, Council only meets on the second Tuesday of the month.

### Special meetings

Special meetings of Council may be called throughout the year when Council needs to address an item before its regularly scheduled meeting.

### Board and committee meetings

The mayor and individual councillors are each appointed to an average of four internal and external committees. Meeting times vary and can be monthly or less frequent, depending on the committee.

More information about Council committees is available here:

<https://townoflunenburg.ca/committees-of-council.html>

### Socials and other events

You may be asked to attend local fundraisers, give welcome speeches at events, and represent the Town at industry-related social functions. Time commitments in this area are usually heavier for the mayor and will also depend on the interest and availability of various Council members.

## Other commitments

### The work

Every Council meeting has an agenda. The agenda package typically includes reports and correspondence intended to help you prepare for the decisions and discussions required at the

meeting. You must have time to thoroughly read the information before attending meetings. You will also want to have some time to meet occasionally with the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), who is Council's only employee and who is charged with the task of implementing Council's policies and programs.

### Your life

Council members are highly visible in our small community and often find they are never truly off duty. Residents may approach you in public to share their views or ask questions.

Consider the time you need for your personal life, work, volunteer commitments, and other priorities.

## Duties of a councillor

The councillor position is part-time, typically requiring a commitment of 10-15 hours per week, though this can vary with the time of year, emerging issues, and meetings.

Duties of all Council members, including the mayor, include:

- Comply with the Municipal Government Act.
- Promote the welfare and interests of the Town.
- Be accessible to the public through emails, phone calls, and face-to-face interactions.
- Actively participate in meetings.
- Represent residents' views during meetings.
- Vote on bylaws, municipal policies, requests for decisions, the municipal budget, and other municipal items.
- Direct questions and concerns about the Town's administration to the CAO.
- Stay informed on relevant local issues and legislation.
- Attend and participate in community events and functions.

## Councillor remuneration

The annual remuneration for a councillor is \$17,564. You are paid bi-weekly.

## Duties of the mayor

The mayor's role is part-time, typically requiring 20-25 hours per week, though this can vary with the time of year, emerging issues, and meetings.

The mayor serves as the Town's spokesperson and has additional responsibilities beyond those of a councillor. These include:

- Chairing regular Council meetings.

- Attending various events, including meetings, public functions, and ceremonies, often in the evenings and on weekends.
- Liaising with officials from other municipalities and levels of government on municipal issues.
- Working with the Town's communications staff to handle media interviews and represent the Town publicly.

## **Mayor's remuneration**

The mayor's annual remuneration is \$35,393. You are paid bi-weekly.

## **Council powers & responsibilities**

All powers of municipal governments are delegated from higher levels of government, granting Council authority over municipal matters. In Nova Scotia, the Municipal Government Act (MGA) is the primary reference for municipal governments. Some of the items the MGA authorizes Council to do are:

- Develop and evaluate programs, policies, and service levels.
- Set annual operating and capital budgets.
- Sell and lease municipal property.
- Pass bylaws for municipal purposes.
- Create boards and committees of Council.

## **Individual powers of the mayor or a council member**

Your individual influence on the future of the Town of Lunenburg will depend on your ability to persuade other members of Council to adopt your point of view. All decisions of Council are made through a majority vote of those present at a public Regular Council meeting. Each member of Council, including the mayor, represents one vote. At a typical meeting, provided all seven Council members are present, at least four of the seven Council members must vote in favour of a decision for it to pass. A tie vote is considered a defeated vote.

Individual councillors, including the mayor, do not have the ability to commit the Town to expenditures, nor can they personally direct the activities of Town employees. Any promise you make during your campaign can only be carried out if you convince a majority of Council that it is a good idea.

## **Council and Town staff**

The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) is Council's only employee.

The CAO is responsible for implementing the programs and policies of the Town and is the

administrative leader of the organization, the person to whom all other employees of the Town ultimately report. Any direction to Town staff must come from the CAO, not Council or individual Council members.

Lunenburg's interim CAO is Hilary Grant. Hilary can be reached at [cao@townoflunenburg.ca](mailto:cao@townoflunenburg.ca) or 902-634-4410 x228.

## What to expect at meetings

The best way to get a feel for Council meetings is to watch them. Meetings are open to the public, live-streamed through Zoom, and recordings are archived on the Town's [YouTube channel](#).

[Council Highlights](#) are published on the Town website following each Regular meeting. Council highlights summarize decisions and issues from Regular Council meetings.

## Regular meeting agendas

All Regular agendas and minutes are available on the [Town's website](#). Here are some agenda items you can expect to see frequently:

### 1) Minutes

The meeting minutes are the official record of Council's Regular meetings. Minutes are approved by Council and archived on the [Town's website](#).

### 2) Staff reports requesting a decision of Council

At the beginning of each report, staff will provide a clear recommendation for Council's consideration. These reports will include comprehensive background information and relevant details to ensure councillors have sufficient information to make informed decisions on the recommendations presented.

### 3) Information reports and requests for direction

In municipal operations, requests for direction and information reports serve different purposes. Municipal staff submit a request for direction to ensure both Council and staff are clear on outcomes and directives, seeking explicit guidance or decisions from the Council on specific issues or initiatives. On the other hand, municipal staff present an information report to update the Council on particular matters, providing updates, progress reports, or background information without requiring immediate action or decisions.

### 4) Bylaws

A bylaw is a local rule made by a municipality to manage activities and behaviours within the community. Bylaws cover issues like noise control, parking rules, and animal

control.

Some bylaws are mandatory, while others are required only if a municipality engages in specific activities. All bylaws must undergo two readings by Council. The first reading is followed by a vote, after which there must be a minimum 14-day waiting period before the second and final reading. This waiting period allows the public to submit comments or questions on the proposed bylaws. Additionally, before passing a bylaw, Council hosts a public hearing during a Regular Council meeting, allowing members of the public to present their feedback in person.

All bylaws can be reviewed on the [Town's website](#).

## 5) Policies

Policies are statements made by Council that guide the conduct of the Town and its departments in delivering services. These policies are approved by Council and then implemented by staff. For new policies or amendments to existing ones, Council must first give notice at a Council meeting. The policy can then be formally approved at the next Council meeting.

All policies can be found on the [Town's website](#).

## Closed sessions (in camera meetings)

Council can only meet in closed sessions (in camera sessions) to discuss specific issues permitted by the MGA. Anything discussed in these sessions is confidential, and Council cannot make binding motions during them. Only councillors and individuals specified by Council or the CAO may attend these sessions. The public cannot observe these sessions.

## Boards & committees

The mayor and councillors are appointed on an annual basis to various committees (both internal and external). These appointments are reviewed each year in the fall.

Council's current committee obligations can be found on the [Town's website](#).

## Strategic priorities & planning

Managing our vibrant and dynamic community involves balancing a broad range of competing priorities, all of which are important. The [Comprehensive Community Plan](#), approved by Council in 2020, is the current strategic plan for the Town.



## Who can run in a municipal election?

If you are considering running in the municipal election, there are a few criteria you need to meet to qualify. These criteria are set by the Municipal Elections Act (MEA).

To run as a candidate, you must be:

- 18 years of age at the time of nomination;
- a Canadian citizen; and
- Ordinarily resident, meaning you must have lived in the Town of Lunenburg for six months before nomination day (March 10, 2024) and continue to live there.

*Ordinarily resident:* A person is not considered ordinarily resident in a seasonal dwelling that is typically used between May and October unless they have no other place of residence. An individual can only be ordinarily resident in one location at a time.

There are several disqualifications, too. For example, you cannot be a council member if you are a member of the Legislative Assembly or a volunteer member of a Town committee. For a complete list of disqualifications, consult section 18 of the Municipal Elections Act (MEA).

After you've read the above qualifications and disqualifications and have determined that you are eligible to serve, you can appoint your official agent or choose to serve as your own official agent.

## Appointing your official agent

Your official agent handles your campaign finances and prepares and files your campaign disclosure forms after the election. They may also act as scrutineers at polling locations on your behalf. You can choose to be your own official agent but cannot act as a scrutineer during advance voting or on election day.

The selection of an official agent must be in writing and submitted to the Returning Officer by appointment, where your agent must be present to swear or affirm an oath.

Candidates can accept contributions only after appointing an official agent or declaring themselves as their own agent. The official agent is responsible for tracking all campaign contributions and opening a dedicated bank account.

You can appoint your official agent before the nomination period by scheduling an appointment with the Returning Officer and submitting Form 17. At the appointment, your official agent must be present to swear or affirm an oath.

You can change your official agent anytime before election day (October 19, 2024) by submitting a written notice to the Returning Officer using Form 17A. If you initially act as your own official



agent, you can appoint an official agent later, but this must be done before the close of nominations on nomination day.

Official agents do not require specific qualifications and do not need to reside within the Town of Lunenburg.

## **Deposit**

Candidates must pay a \$200 deposit when submitting their nomination papers. They will get a full refund if they are elected or receive at least half the votes of the winning candidate. To get the refund, they must remove all advertising materials, return or destroy the lists of electors, and submit FORM 12.

## **Campaign Finances**

Candidates must disclose the names of donors who contribute more than \$50 and the amount given. Candidates must file a financial disclosure form, even if they receive no contributions.

## **Contributions**

Contributions include in-kind contributions, which are non-monetary donations of services or property. The value is based on the market price of these services or property.

## **Disclosure, Reporting, and Surplus**

Within 60 days after Election Day (Dec.19, 2024), every candidate must file a Campaign Contributions Disclosure Statement (FORM 40) with the Municipal Clerk. The date each contribution was received must be recorded. These forms are public and posted on the Town's website. Surplus funds can be donated to a non-profit organization or held in trust by the Town of Lunenburg for future use by the candidate for a future election.

## **Certificate of Taxes and Liens**

All municipal taxes and liens must be fully paid to qualify for Council nomination. Nomination papers must include a Certificate of Taxes and Liens from the Town of Lunenburg, which may take up to one week to process. To request a certificate, contact the Returning Officer.

## **How do I become an official candidate?**

You become an official candidate by filing your nomination papers with the Returning Officer. You can file your nomination papers only during available nomination appointments, which need to be made in advance:

Beginning **Aug. 19, 2024**, contact the Returning Officer (902-634-4410 x 240 or

kbyrne@townoflunenburg.ca) to make an in-person appointment to file your nomination papers.

Appointments will be available during regular business hours (8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.) between **Aug. 29** and **Sept. 9, 2024**.

Walk-in appointments will be accepted on **Sept. 10** during regular business hours. This is the final day to file nomination papers to run in the 2024 Election.

If you cannot file the nomination paper yourself, your official agent can do it for you. You must provide written authorization for your agent to file on your behalf. This authorization must be submitted either in advance to the Returning Officer or along with the nomination paper.

Once you file your nomination paper, your candidacy information becomes public.

### **Making your candidacy official checklist**

All candidate forms must be completed and submitted to the Returning Officer by nomination day (Sept. 10, 2024).

- Make an in-person appointment to file your nomination.
- Have valid photo identification.
- Have a Certificate of Taxes and Liens.
- Have all relevant forms completed, including having five qualified electors sign your nomination paper (FORM 11).
- Have a \$200 filing fee/deposit.

### **Withdrawal of nomination**

As a nominated candidate, you can withdraw from the election by 4 p.m. following nomination day (Sept. 11, 2024). In doing so, you forfeit your deposit.

To withdraw from being a nominated candidate, the following must occur:

- You must appear before the Returning Officer and present identification with your name and address.
- You must return or destroy all copies of the list of electors.
- You must submit the necessary campaign disclosure forms.

No candidate can withdraw their name after Sept. 11. After this date, all candidates' names must appear on the ballot.

## Candidate forms

Form	Purpose
FORM 17: Appointment of an Official Agent	Form to appoint an Official Agent for a Candidate or for a Candidate to declare themselves to act personally as their Official Agent. This is required before any campaign contributions can be accepted.
FORM 17A: Oath or Affirmation of Appointment of an Official Agent	Oath or Affirmation of Appointment of an Official Agent
FORM 15: Appointment of Agent <i>*optional</i>	You can appoint someone to represent you at a polling station.  <i>Note:</i> This is typically done in larger communities with numerous polling stations. The Town of Lunenburg only has one polling station at Town Hall.
FORM 16 Oath or Affirmation of Agent Representing a Candidate  <i>*Required if you completed FORM 15</i>	Oath or Affirmation of Agent Representing a Candidate.
FORM 3: Certificate of Taxes and Liens	To qualify for nomination to Council, you must ensure that all municipal charges that are taxes and liens that are due have been fully paid.  This applies even if you do not own property or owe taxes.
FORM 11: Nomination Paper	Nomination paper for mayoral or councillor candidates. You need five qualified electors to sign this form.
FORM 12A: Declaration of Candidate Withdrawing from Nomination.	If you've changed your mind, you have one day to withdraw your Nomination.
FORM 12: Affidavit re: Removal of Advertising Materials and Returning of Lists of Electors	Affidavit confirming the removal of advertising materials and the return or destruction of all lists of electors.
FORM 40: Candidate's Campaign Contributions Disclosure Statement	This form lists the details of all contributions over \$50 received by a Candidate or Official Agent. This form tracks individual contributions.

## Important dates

Date	Event	What does it mean?
Aug. 29 – Sept. 9, 2024	Nomination appointments	Candidates may make an appointment with the Returning Officer to file their official nomination papers.
Sept. 10, 2024	Nomination Day	Last day to file nomination papers.
Sept. 11 Before 4 pm	Change of particulars Withdrawal of candidate	Final day that candidates can make changes to their nomination information or withdraw from the election.
Oct. 10, 2024 – Oct. 18, 2024	Advance voting	During advance polling days, residents can vote electronically at any time.
Oct. 19, 2024	Election day (ordinary polling day)	The last day for residents to vote. Voting closes at 7 p.m.
Oct. 26, 2024	Affidavit of Removal of Signs and Destruction of List of Electors due	Affidavit of Removal of Signs and Destruction of List of Electors, Form 12, is due to the Clerk. This document confirms that all advertising has been removed and all copies of the lists of electors have been destroyed
Oct. 29, 2024	Last day for application for a recount	This is the deadline to apply for a recount.
Dec. 19, 2024	Campaign finance disclosure form due	The Statement of Campaign Contributions is due.

## Election Advertising & Signs

All election materials must clearly show the name of the person responsible for them. Any advertisement related to the election, whether in print, online, or broadcast, must state who is behind it.

Candidates are accountable for all advertisements made for them.

Homeowners can put up election signs on their own property. However, signs are not allowed on Town roads, medians, or shoulders. Signs near roads must not block views or create safety hazards for drivers, cyclists, or pedestrians. Election signs and posters are also not allowed on telephone or power poles.

There are no rules on when candidates can start campaigning, but they are not officially nominated until their papers are successfully filed.

## After election training and orientation

A complete schedule has yet to be finalized, but new Council members can expect the following training and orientation opportunities:

- Swearing in ceremony
- Municipal facilities tour
- Staff meet and greet
- Meeting procedures workshop

The Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing provides an orientation session for new councillors a few weeks after the election. This session is scheduled for **November 4 and 5** at the Halifax Convention Centre.

## Resources

Town of Lunenburg resources are available online, including:

- [Bylaws](#)
- [Policies](#)
- [Council meeting agendas and minutes](#)
- [Council Highlights](#)
- [Community Comprehensive Plan \(CCP\)](#)
- [Current budget](#)

Provincial resources are also available online:

- [Municipal Government Act](#)
- [Municipal Elections Act](#)
- [Municipal Guide for Candidates](#)
- [New Municipal Councillors Guide](#)