

PROSPECTIVE CANDIDATES' HANDBOOK

TOWN OF LUNENBURG
2023 SPECIAL
ELECTION



Prospective Candidates' Handbook

Special Election 2023

Town of Lunenburg

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ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

This handbook is for anyone who is considering putting their name forward in the 2023 Special Election for the Town of Lunenburg. The handbook is intended to provide a high-level overview of the roles and responsibilities of councillors and information on the nomination process. Please note the key dates outlined on pages 13 and 14 to ensure you file your nomination forms on time.

While physical copies of this handbook are available by request to the Returning Officer, please note there are several hyperlinks throughout this document – hyperlinks are only accessible through the electronic version of this handbook.

Questions?

If you have any questions, please contact the Returning Officer:
Kayla Byrne at kbyrne@townoflunenburg.ca or 902-543-4410 x 240

HOW YOUR GOVERNMENT WORKS

Within the Town of Lunenburg, there is a Mayor and 6-member Council, elected every four years by the residents of Lunenburg. The current Council and Mayor were elected to office in October 2020 for a four-year term. The elected Mayor and Council represent residents when they make decisions about municipal matters.

SPECIAL ELECTION 2023

This special election is being held because the Mayor resigned in May 2023. As a result of the special election, whoever is elected will be filling in for the remainder of the four-year term, which is finished in October 2024.

If a current councillor files their nomination papers for the mayor's position, then they must vacate their councillor seat. If this happens then the special election will be held to fill both the mayor's vacancy and the councillor's vacancy. This handbook has been prepared to include information about both the mayor's and a councillor's position.

Updates on whether this special election will be for both positions will be provided as soon as available.

THINKING ABOUT RUNNING FOR COUNCIL?

Before putting your name forward, it's important to figure out whether you have the time for the position, and to make sure the job will meet your expectations.

There are no special qualifications or experience required to be a Council member, however

visionary thinking, strong communication skills (speaking and listening), conflict resolution skills, an ability to be persuasive and accept opposing views are great attributes. 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 the nearest to the needs and expectations of local citizens. This can make a mayor and councillor's job both rewarding and demanding.

As an elected official you can expect to:

- Bring the perspectives of your demographic to the decision-making table;
- Influence changes that benefit your community and ensure its sustainability;
- Put forward new ideas for debate and possible implementation and change;
- Make a positive difference in the quality of life in your community;
- Provide a voice for your community with other levels of government; and
- Be part of a team that makes decisions that affect all aspects of community life.

TIME COMMITMENT

The mayor and councillors, including anyone elected in the special election, will serve until October 2024.

MEETING COMMITMENTS

Regular meetings

Regular 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 organization.

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 and more. 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 that are intended to help you prepare for the decisions and discussions required at the meeting. You will need to 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 very visible in our small community and usually find that they are never "off duty." Residents will often take the opportunity to present their views or ask questions when they run into you in public.

Be sure to take into consideration the time you need for your personal life, your work, volunteer commitments, and other priorities.

DUTIES OF A COUNCILLOR

- Consider and promote the welfare and interests of the Town;
- Abide by the Municipal Government Act;
- Available to interact with the public. This can include emails, phone calls, voicemail and face-to-face interactions;
- Participate in Council meetings;
- Bring the views of residents forward during Council meetings;
- Vote on bylaws, municipal policies, requests for decisions, the municipal budget and other motions made at Council meetings;
- Direct questions and concerns regarding the Town's administration to the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO);
- Stay informed on relevant local issues and local legislation; and
- Attend and participate in community events and functions.

COUNCILLOR'S TIME COMMITMENT

The position of councillor is considered to be a part-time commitment. Typically, councillors can expect to commit 10-12 hours per week performing their duties (this varies according to the time of year, emerging issues, meetings, etc.). Councillors are expected to attend Regular Council meetings (two per month).

Councillors can also expect to attend one or two committee meetings per month. Other special meetings may be called as required.

A councillor may also spend time preparing for meetings, liaising with municipal administration, doing research, meeting with the public and attending public events.

COUNCILLOR REMUNERATION

The annual remuneration for a councillor is: \$15,709.98.

DUTIES OF THE MAYOR

The Mayor is the spokesperson of the Town. They have specific duties that include the duties of a councillor and a few other responsibilities as defined in the Municipal Government Act.

The Mayor is expected to:

- Chair regular Council meetings;
- Attend meetings, public functions, ceremonies and other events, which may occur during evening hours and on weekends;
- Liaise with elected officials from other municipalities and other levels of government regarding municipal issues;
- Communicate Council policy to the media and the public;
- Act as the Town's spokesperson– this includes interviews with the media; and
- Work closely with the CAO to monitor and respond to the organization's outcomes.

MAYOR'S TIME COMMITMENT

The position of mayor is considered to be a part-time commitment. Typically, the mayor can expect to commit 20-25 hours per week to performing their duties (this varies according to the time of year, emerging issues, meetings, etc.). The mayor's time is spent working closely with Council, the Town's administration and community representatives to help develop plans, policies and strategies important to the Town's business. As a regular member of Council, the Mayor is expected to prepare for and attend Council meetings.

The Mayor also sits on a variety of committees. The Mayor may also be required to represent the Town at meetings, ceremonies and other events. Frequent evening hours and weekend work may be required. The Mayor is also the chief spokesperson for the Town in discussions with elected officials in other municipalities, the provincial government, the federal government, and members of the media.

MAYOR'S REMUNERATION

The Mayor's annual remuneration is: \$31,658.12.

COUNCIL POWERS & RESPONSIBILITIES

All powers of municipal governments are delegated from higher levels of government, which gives Council authority over all municipal matters. The Municipal Government Act (MGA) is the key reference for municipal governments in Nova Scotia. The MGA authorizes Council to:

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

The MGA can be found online through the [NS Legislature website](#).

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 one and 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 to. Any direction to Town staff must come from the CAO not Council or individual Council members.

Lunenburg's CAO is Jamie Doyle. Jamie can be reached at cao@townoflunenburg.ca or 902-634-4410 x228.

MEETINGS: WHAT TO EXPECT

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

Council highlights are published on the town website following each Regular meeting. Council highlights summarize decisions and issues from Regular Council meetings.

In camera meetings

Only councillors and other persons specified by Council may attend an in camera meeting; the public cannot observe these meetings. Items discussed in camera must be an exception to disclosure as outlined in the MGA.

Special meetings

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

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 the report staff will make a recommendation to Council for their consideration. Reports typically have background and other relevant information pertaining to the recommendation.

3) Information reports

Sometimes staff will present an information report to update Council on a particular matter.

4) Bylaws

Some bylaws are mandatory while some bylaws are required only if a municipality wants to carry out a certain type of activity. All bylaws must receive two readings by Council; Council votes on the first reading and then must wait at least 14 days before voting on the second and final reading of the bylaw, allowing the public an opportunity to submit comments or questions on any proposed bylaws.

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

5) Policies

Policies are Council statements that determine the conduct of the Town and its departments regarding the services they provide. Policies are approved by Council and implemented by staff. All policies are accompanied by administrative procedures, which are approved by the CAO. For new policies or for amendments to existing policy, Council must first give notice of a policy at a Council meeting and then the policy can be formally approved at the following Council meeting.

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

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.

The Mayor and individual councillors are each appointed to an average of four committees. Meeting times vary and can be monthly or less frequent depending on the organization.

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.

The plan is intended to be a guide for the next 40 years with 35 action items scheduled to be implemented in the first five years of the plan (2020 - 2025). These actions can be found on the Town's [website](#).

BECOME A CANDIDATE

If you are interested in becoming a candidate in the upcoming special election, you must first determine whether you are eligible, and become familiar with the mandated nomination forms.

Eligibility

In order to run for council (mayor or councillor) you must:

- be 18 years of age at the time of nomination
- be a Canadian citizen
- be ordinarily resident of the Town of Lunenburg for 6 months before Nomination Day and continue to reside in Town

Ordinarily resident: A person is not ordinarily resident in a seasonal dwelling generally only occupied between May and October unless the person has no other dwelling place. A person can be ordinarily resident only in one place at a time.

Disqualifications

There are several grounds for disqualifying someone from being a member of council, such as:

- You are a member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA)
- You are a member of a school board
- You have been convicted of any corrupt practice or bribery within five years preceding nomination day

For a complete list, please consult the Municipal Elections Act, (MEA) Section 18.

Once you've determined that you are eligible to serve on Town Council, you're ready to begin the official steps of the nomination process.

NOMINATION PROCESS & OTHER INFORMATION

To officially be nominated for the office of mayor or councillor (if applicable), you will need to complete the forms listed in the table below. Please take note of the timelines.

Form	Purpose	Timeline
1. 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.	You should appoint your official agent as soon as possible. You can file this form with the Returning Officer when you file your Nomination Paper.
2. FORM 17A: Oath or Affirmation of Appointment of an Official Agent	Oath or Affirmation of Appointment of an Official Agent	This oath or affirmation must be made to appoint an Official Agent and is required before any campaign contributions can be accepted. You can file this form with the Returning Officer when you file your Nomination Paper.

3. FORM 15: Appointment of Agent *optional	You can appoint someone to represent you at a polling station. <i>Note:</i> This is typically done in larger communities where there are numerous polling stations. The Town of Lunenburg only has one polling station at Town Hall.	If you choose to appoint an agent, you can file this form with your Nomination Paper
4. FORM 16 Oath or Affirmation of Agent Representing a Candidate *required if you completed FORM 15	Oath or Affirmation of Agent Representing a Candidate	If you choose to appoint an agent, you can file this form with your Nomination Paper
5. 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.	You will need to file this with your Nomination Paper. Please note this could take up to one week to be prepared so plan accordingly. Contact the Returning Officer to request this certificate as soon as possible.
6. FORM 11: Nomination Paper	Nomination paper for mayoral or councillor candidates.	Must be submitted by: July 13 at 4 pm (Mayor) July 18 at 4 pm (Councillor)
7. FORM 12A: Declaration of Candidate Withdrawing from Nomination.	If you've changed your mind, you have one day to withdraw your Nomination.	Must be submitted by: July 14 before 4 pm (Mayor) July 19 before 4 pm (Councillor)
8. 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 voter's lists.	This is due one week after Election Day (Aug. 18)
9. FORM 40: Candidate's Campaign Contributions Disclosure Statement	This form lists the details of all contributions more than \$50 received by a Candidate or Official Agent. This form tracks individual contributions.	This is due no later than 60 days after Election Day (Oct. 11)
10. FORM 41: Association's Campaign Contributions Disclosure Statement *Requirement for this form varies depending on your funding situation.	This form is only required when an association of one or more people established to, a trust established for, or a fund is established to further the election of the candidate.	If required, this is due no later than 60 days after Election Day (Oct. 11)

Deposit

Candidates must pay a \$200 deposit to file their nomination paper.

A full refund will be given to the candidate who was elected or who polled at least half of the number of votes polled by the successful candidate, provided that the candidate removes all their advertising materials, returns or destroys the voter's list, and completes and returns FORM 12.

Half of the deposit will be issued to a candidate who polled less than half of the number of votes polled by the successful candidate, provided that the candidate removes all their advertising materials, returns or destroys the voter's list, and completes and returns FORM 12.

Official agent

Your official agent is responsible for handling your campaign finances and for preparing and filing your campaign disclosure forms following your election. Official agents may also attend polls on your behalf as scrutineer. You can act as your own official agent but cannot act as a scrutineer at the polls during advance voting or on election day.

You can change your official agent any time before ordinary polling day, in writing delivered to the Returning Officer. If you are acting as your own official agent, you can subsequently appoint an official agent before the close of nominations on nomination day.

The official agent must keep track of any campaign contributions and open a bank account for this purpose. Any contributions must be kept separately from personal funds.

Your official agent can also act on your behalf in some situations, like filing your nomination paper.

If you have any question about the nomination process, please contact the Returning Officer.

Campaign finances

The law is that a candidate has a responsibility to disclose the names of the donors of more than \$50 to their campaign, and the amount of the contributions. All candidates must file a financial disclosure form, even if they had no contributions to their campaigns.

Contributions

Contributions may only be accepted once an official agent has been appointed, or a candidate has declared they will act as their own official agent. Contributions also include in-kind contributions.

In-kind contributions means a non-monetary contribution in the form of services or property. The value for an in-kind contribution is the price for which services or other property may be sold.

Disclosure, Reporting and Surplus

Within 60 days after Election Day, every candidate must file a Statement of Campaign Contributions and Expenditures and Statement of Campaign Surplus (FORM 40) with the Municipal Clerk.

The date a contribution was received must be recorded.

These forms are made public and posted on the Town's website once received.

Surplus funds can be donated to a non-profit organization or held in trust by the Town of Lunenburg on behalf of the candidate for their use in a future election.

Certificate of taxes and liens from the town

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.

A Certificate of Taxes and Liens from the Town of Lunenburg must be included with your nomination papers. Please note it could take up to one week to receive this certificate. To request a certificate, please contact Kayla Byrne at kbyrne@townoflunenburg.ca or 902-634-4410 x 240.

Nomination Paper

For this form, you will need:

- **At least five qualified electors (residents of the Town of Lunenburg) who will sign the nomination paper and nominate you as a candidate.**
The names of the people who sign your nomination paper must appear on the list of electors and they must be qualified to vote for you. This means that they must be eligible to vote in the special election. You should get more than five people to sign your nomination paper in the event one or more of your nominators is not qualified.
- **The name of your official agent.**
Your official agent is responsible for filing your campaign finance disclosure forms following the election and can act on your behalf at certain times. You can act as your own official agent but cannot act as such at the polls.
- **Complete the Consent and Oath or Affirmation of the Candidate.**
The Returning Officer or another person who is qualified to take oaths must take your Oath or Affirmation. The Oath or Affirmation states that you consent to the nomination, that you are qualified to run, that you have paid your taxes and any charges that are liens on property (council candidates only), and that you will accept the office, if you are elected.

SUBMITTING YOUR NOMINATION FORMS

You become an official candidate by filing your nomination papers in person at Town Hall by making an appointment with the Returning Officer during the specific dates and time listed below.

Mayor

Nomination forms for office of the Mayor can only be filed on the following dates: July 10, 11, 12 & July 13 from 8:30 am – 4 pm.

Nomination forms for office of the Mayor must be filed with the Returning Officer by **July 13, 2023 at 4 p.m.**

Councillor **if applicable*

Nomination forms for office of a councillor can only be filed on the following dates: July 14, 17 & 18 from 8:30 am – 4 pm.

Nomination forms for office of a councillor must be filed with the Returning Officer by **July 18, 2023 at 4 p.m.**

If you cannot personally file the nomination paper during these times, your official agent can complete and file it for you. You must authorize your official agent in writing to do this on your behalf. The written authorization must be filed in advance with the returning officer, or along with your nomination paper.

As soon as you file your nomination paper, the information about your candidacy becomes public information.

WITHDRAWING YOUR NOMINATION

As a nominated candidate you can withdraw from the election by 4 pm on the day following Nomination Day.

Mayor: July 14 before 4 pm.

Councillor: July 19 before 4 pm.

After those respective dates, your name must appear on the ballot.

To withdraw you must:

- **Complete FORM 12A:** Declaration of Candidate Withdrawing from Nomination. Please contact the Returning Officer for a copy of this form.

- Meet in person with the Returning Officer to present your identification with your name and address.
- Return all copies of the List of Electors.
- Submit the necessary campaign disclosure forms.

KEY DATES

July 10, July 11, July 12 & July 13	Nominations papers accepted for Mayor.
July 13	Last day to file nomination papers for Mayor.
July 14	Deadline for candidates for Mayor to withdraw their nomination. Deadline is before 4 pm.
July 14, July 17 & July 18	Nomination papers accepted for Councillor.
July 18	Last day to file nomination papers for Councillor
July 19	Deadline for candidates for Councillor to withdraw their nomination. Deadline is before 4 pm.
August 3	Advance voting begins
August 12	Election Day

ELECTION ADVERTISING & SIGNS

All printed election material must be identified. Every advertisement having reference to an election that is printed, published, broadcast or distributed, either electronically, or in hard copy, must indicate the name of the person on whose behalf the advertisement is published, printed, broadcast or distributed.

Candidates are responsible for all advertisements made on their behalf.

Homeowners may choose to erect a sign on their own property. Signs are not permitted on Town roads or on Town medians or shoulders, and signs placed near roads on private property must not obstruct views or pose a safety hazard to drivers, cyclists, or pedestrians. Election signs and posters are not allowed on telephone or power polls.

There are no rules for when a candidate can begin campaigning, however, the candidate is not considered nominated until they have successfully filed their nomination papers.

ELECTION DAY FOR CANDIDATES

Election Day is Saturday, August 12. Election Day voting hours are 8 am to 7 pm. There will be no paper ballots. Qualified electors may vote by phone or internet, using a unique PIN (Personal Identification Number), starting on Aug. 3 through to August 12. On Election Day, a polling

station will be set up at Town Hall for voters who need assistance.

Unofficial results will be published as they become available after the close of voting stations on Election Day.

AFTER ELECTION DAY

If you have been elected, congratulations! You can expect to be formally sworn in within the first week of the election.

RESOURCES

Town of Lunenburg resources are available online.

- [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](#)