



Candidate Guide

2024-2028 Term

This resource is provided to assist individuals interested in seeking election in the upcoming general municipal election. The information provided is a general overview, and candidates are still responsible for complying with all relevant provisions of The Local Government Elections Act, 2015, The Local Government Election Regulations, 2015 and The Cities Act. Copies of the Acts may be obtained online at saskatchewan.ca.

Questions about any of the material included in these guidelines, or any other matters related to the election, can be directed to Kaila Lefort, Returning Officer at:

- elections@meadowlake.ca
- 306-236-3622 ext. 208.

Role of Elected Officials

Saskatchewan municipalities need citizens to take on leadership roles as elected officials (Mayor and Council members) to represent the people in the community and provide direction on the policies and programs that will lead to better quality services.

Serving in an elected position is not easy, but being a member of Council offers a lot of personal satisfaction; as it is an opportunity to help shape the future of the municipality.

A municipality is the "front-line" level of government. The municipality's purpose is to:

- Provide good government;
- Provide services and facilities that Council feels are necessary and desirable for all or part of the municipality;
- Provide wise stewardship of public assets;
- Develop and maintain a safe and viable community; and
- Foster economic, social and environmental well-being.

The Council of the City of Meadow Lake is composed of a Mayor and six Councillors elected by their fellow residents to represent and respond to their needs at a local level. City Council operates as a group, and in general terms is responsible for promoting the peace, order and good governance of the City and passing bylaws, budgets, and policies.

- As an elected official, you will:
- Bring your perspective to the decision-making table;
- Influence changes that benefit your community and ensure its sustainability;
- Put forward new ideas for debate and implementation;
- Make a positive difference in the quality of life in your community; and
- Provide a voice for your community with other levels of government.

Council members make decisions by passing resolutions or enacting bylaws. Bylaws are the laws of the municipality. Council establishes policies about what services to provide, how those services will be delivered and at what levels. The City Manager (or administration) is then charged with implementing those policies. Council relies on the support, advice and assistance of the administration through the decision-making process.

KEY STANDARDS AND VALUES FOR COUNCIL MEMBERS

- Honesty
- Objectivity
- Transparency and Accountability
- Confidentiality
- Responsibility
- Leadership and Public Interest
- Respect

How do I make a decision to run?

If you are considering running for Council, but haven't made up your mind yet, consider some of the following:

- Attend and observe Council meetings to familiarize yourself with the local process;
- Make appointments to meet with employees of the City like the City Manager, City Clerk, City Treasurer, etc. to learn about what they do;
- Talk to current and former Councillors to find out more about the commitments and responsibilities that are involved in the role;
- Contact the Returning Officer to learn more about the election process and important dates.

What is the time commitment of being on Council?

Being elected to Council requires a time commitment.

Terms are usually four years, with the next general election scheduled for fall of 2028.

The mayor and all members of Council are expected to attend regular meetings of Council, which normally fall on the 2nd and 4th Monday of every month, committee of the whole meetings when called, as well as meetings of any boards or committees they may be appointed to, community events, meeting with residents and community organizations, and other business such as conferences, seminars, workshops, and conventions for training and discussion. There is one Committee of the Whole budget meeting scheduled for a Saturday in October which all members of Council are expected to attend.

Members of Council don't just attend meetings, they must take sufficient time ahead of meetings to familiarize themselves with the agenda items. This involves plenty of reading and reviewing, including independent research.

In an average month, a Councillor can expect to spend about 20 hours per month on their duties.

What does a Councillor get paid?

The 2024-2028 term annual indemnity for the role of Councillor is set at \$12,870.00, with CPI increases to be made annually based on provincial rates. An additional amount of \$200 per month is paid for the role of Deputy Mayor. Per diem rates and an electronic allowance are also available. To see the full scope of Council remuneration, check out Council Indemnities policy no. 200-12-001 on our website here: <https://meadowlake.ca/p/bylaws-and-policies> or contact the Returning Officer for a copy of the policy.

What are the responsibilities of a Council member?

Members of Council must take an Oath of Office in the prescribed form prior to carrying out any power, duty or function as a member of Council. A Public Disclosure Statement must be completed and signed which is required at the time of filing the nomination paper. This statement must be reviewed and updated annually.

The Oath of Office and Public Disclosure Statement are accessible public documents.

All decisions of Council must be made at a meeting open to the public with a majority of Council members present. At these meetings, it is important for Council members to listen to each other and collectively reach decisions that are in the best interest of the municipality. A member of Council, including the Mayor, does not have the authority to make independent decisions on behalf of the municipality, such as committing the municipality to expenditures or directing the activities of municipal employees.

What are Conflict of Interest rules for Council members?

A conflict of interest occurs when a Council member's private interests, or a closely connected person's interests may, or may appear to, be affected by a Council decision. A financial interest is always a conflict of interest. If as a Council member you think you may have a conflict of interest, you must:

- Declare the nature of the interest before any discussion occurs;
- Leave Council chambers; **and**
- Not vote or discuss the matter with other Council members before, during, or after the matter is considered or decided.

You can find more information on conflict of interest rules by searching "conflict of interest" on www.saskatchewan.ca.

Candidate Eligibility

- A candidate in a municipal election must be at least 18 years of age on election day; **and**
- At the time the nomination is submitted:
 - is a Canadian citizen;
 - has been a resident of the City of Meadow Lake for at least 3 consecutive months; and
 - has been a resident of Saskatchewan for at least 6 consecutive months.

In addition, the following are disqualified from being nominated or elected to hold office as a Councillor:

- A judge of a court;
- A person engaged as an auditor or solicitor of the municipality; or
- An employee of the City who has not first obtained a leave of absence.

Elector Eligibility

To nominate a candidate, or vote on election day, an elector must meet the following qualifications on *Election Day*:

- At least 18 years of age;
- A Canadian citizen;
- A resident of Saskatchewan for at least 6 months;

and

- Either one of the following:
 - A resident of the City for at least 3 months; or
 - The owner of assessable land within the City for at least 3 months.

The following is a summary of the rules of residence, as set out in *The Local Government Election Act, 2015*:

- The residence of a person is the place at which they reside and to which, when they are absent from that place, that person has the intention of returning. The place they typically call "home".
- A person does not lose residency if they are temporarily absent.
- As long as the person remains in Saskatchewan, a person does not lose residency until they acquire another residence.
- A person who is not a full-time student cannot have more than one residence in Saskatchewan. If they have more than one home in Saskatchewan, the person shall elect one of those as their residence.
- Active members of the Canadian Armed Forces are deemed to have ordinary residence at the place where they reside, or at the place they have moved from if that place is in Saskatchewan, for the duration of their service.
- Full-time students are deemed to have residence at the place where they study and the place they have moved from when the places are in Saskatchewan.

Nomination Process

Nomination Papers

Nominations may be filed during regular business hours at City Hall on or before Nomination Day between the hours of 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. (Visit meadowlake.ca/p/elections for a list of important dates and deadlines).

The nomination form has a front and back portion and candidates must ensure that the following has been entered:

- The candidate's name and street address must appear on the front of the nomination form together with the office they are running for.
- Five (5) eligible electors who meet the qualifications as noted must sign the front of the form and include their street address (or the street address of the land owned within the City).
- The back of the form (Candidate's Acceptance) must show the name of the candidate, as it will appear on the ballot, as well as the office that they are running for. Ballots will be printed alphabetically by surname. Titles will not be placed on the ballot.
- Candidates may include the name by which they are commonly known in brackets, and this information will also be printed on the ballot.
- The back of the form must be dated and signed by the candidate in the presence of two (2) witnesses. **Please ensure that this is completed before handing the form. Incomplete forms will not be accepted.**
- The witnesses do not have to be electors or residents of the community - however they must be of legal age (18 or over).
- Candidates are also required to submit a Public Disclosure Statement along with their nomination form. Statements are available online or from the Returning Officer.

Nomination forms may be submitted to a Nomination Officer at City Hall, to the attention of the Returning Officer as follows:

- in person at City Hall (120 1st Street E)
- by mail to Box 610, Meadow Lake, SK, S9X 1Y5
- by fax to 306-236-4299
- by email to elections@meadowlake.ca.

PLEASE NOTE: Once nomination papers have been filed they may be reviewed by any member of the public, and may be posted to the City website.

Forms will be reviewed by the Nomination Officer or Returning Officer to determine completeness only, not correctness. Incomplete forms will not be accepted. Candidates submitting complete forms will receive a receipt and may request a copy of the submitted form for their records.

Nomination Withdrawals

A candidate may withdraw their nomination by filing a written notice with the Returning Officer or the Nomination Officer any time after they have filed their nomination until 24 hours after the close of the nomination period.

Going to the Polls

A number of advance polls are generally held in the week or so before Election Day.

A notice confirming dates, times and locations for the Election Day poll and Advance Polls will be posted in the local newspaper and City website after the close of the Nomination Period, providing there are more candidates than open positions, resulting in an election.

Mail-in Ballots

The City has adopted a bylaw to provide for mail-in ballots for voters who are not otherwise able to vote on Election Day or during one of the advanced poll dates. Any person requesting a mail-in ballot must provide proof of identity to the Returning Officer and sign a voter declaration form to be issued a ballot kit. A registry of mail-in ballot voters will be kept and may be inspected by the Candidates or Agents while the poll is open on Election Day. The Mail-in Ballot Bylaw was updated in 2020 to allow for contactless (electronic) voter registration.

Candidate Advertising

Please ensure each advertisement states the name and address of the authorizing individual, as this is required under provincial legislation. If signs are being put up, please contact City Hall to determine where they may be placed. Keep all campaign materials **at least 100 metres away** from Polling Places while the polls are open. All signs must be removed within 7 days after the election date. The City's Election Sign Policy is available for further information regarding the placement of signs.

Please be aware that signs or decals on vehicles and buttons worn on clothing are considered to be advertising and may also not be visible within a polling place or within 100 meters of a polling place.

Candidate Profiles

Candidates are encouraged to submit profiles with their nomination papers for publication on the City's website. Profiles must be submitted to the Returning Officer before the close of the nomination period.

These profiles may include contact information, a photo of the candidate and a short profile statement up to 150 words. Statements must be limited to information about the candidate and the candidate's platform. If no profile information is provided, only the name of the candidate will be listed.

Candidates / Agents

Each candidate may appoint up to two agents who may be present to observe the election proceedings. The agent(s) must be appointed using the prescribed form, available from the City Clerk's office. In order to be present at the polling place or for the counting of ballots each candidate and/or agent will be required to make a declaration of secrecy.

Candidates have the option to have either themselves or an agent present for the counting of the ballots. These individuals must be in the polling area before the doors close at 8 pm. Once the doors are closed no one is allowed inside.

A Candidate or agent is permitted to **observe, but not interfere** with the process of the election. While at the poll, Candidates or agents shall not:

- talk to or question electors or attempt to influence their voting decision in any way;
- make their objection directly to the elector if they object to that elector voting — the objection must be made to the Deputy Returning Officer and if possible before a ballot has been given to elector so that the DRO has an opportunity to discuss the voter registration form with the elector;
- attempt to determine how an elector has voted or will vote, or communicate to anyone how an elector has voted or will vote; or
- canvass or solicit votes in within 100 metres of the polling place.

When the polls are open, a Candidate or agent may object to a person's entitlement to vote if they have reason to believe that person is not entitled to vote. In such cases, the Deputy Returning Officer will reconfirm the details of the voter declaration form with the voter.

- If the voter indicates the declaration is correct, the objection will be noted in the poll book, including the name of the agent making the objection, and initialed by the DRO. The voter will still be issued a ballot and is still entitled to vote.
- If the voter indicates the declaration is not correct, the information will be noted in the poll book and no ballot will be issued.

After the Election

Ballots and Results

Ballots will be counted, and unofficial results will be released following the close of polls on Election Day. Candidates that were not present for the ballot counting will be contacted and advised of the unofficial results at this time. Official results will be issued and posted at City Hall the following day at 9:00 a.m.

Sections 158-160 of *The Local Government Election Act, 2015* guide the actions of the Returning Officer with respect to situations which automatically require a recount and those which may be requested by a voter or candidate.

Any voter or candidate in the municipality in which the vote was taken may request a recount after the returning officer has declared the official results of the vote by delivering to the returning officer, within four days of the declaration of the results of the vote, a notice in the prescribed form requesting a recount if the difference between the number of votes cast for any elected member, and the candidate having the next highest number of votes is less than the number of ballots "counted but objected to" plus all rejected ballots (except those on which no vote was made).

Assumption of Duties

The elected candidate will assume their duties at the meeting of Council on November 18th 2024 during the first Council Meeting post Election. Elected candidates will be required to sign an oath prior to assuming their duties. An orientation session will also be held for all members of Council, including Mayor, whether new to office or returning from the previous term.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION RESOURCES

<http://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/municipal-administration/elections>

www.meadowlake.ca/p/elections

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS? CONTACT THE CITY'S RETURNING OFFICER

Kaila Lefort, Returning Officer
elections@meadowlake.ca
306-236-3622 ext. 208