



City of Chestermere Inspection: Report Summary

The Inspector's Methodology

The inspector was appointed in May 2022 and submitted his report on September 1, 2022. The inspector conducted 55 interviews and responded to almost 300 emails. The report details the inspection process, which includes the following:

- Reviewed city documents: background and audit reports, organization structure(s), position descriptions, strategic planning documents, related studies and documents.
- Reviewed ministry-provided materials relating to publicly submitted concerns.
- Reviewed available minutes of council meetings from October 2021 after the election, and a broad selection of council and committee meetings via video link on the city's website.
- Conducted individual interviews with all members of council and senior administration.
- Conducted follow-up interviews with each council member to provide an opportunity to respond to possible report content relating to them.
- Interviewed the mayor one-on-one for 9.5 hours total.
- Interviewed a variety of former city employees and members of the public who asked.

Summary of the Inspection Report

A full copy of "A Report on the Inspection of the City of Chestermere" by George B. Cuff & Associates is at: [Municipal inspection reports | Alberta.ca](https://municipalinspectionreports.alberta.ca). The report makes 16 recommendations and identifies 25 instances of irregular, improper and improvident management, including at least 17 legislative infractions. Key concerns include:

- An improper process for handling code of conduct complaints.
- Improper and irregular contact between council members and staff.
- Improper and irregular treatment of staff by members of council.
- Irregular and improper actions in both hiring and terminating of CAOs and others.
- Multiple examples of improper (unauthorized) council member actions in contravention of section 180(1) of the *MGA* (a council may only act by resolution or bylaw).
- Creating an irregular, three-CAO model to administer the municipality.
- Irregular and improper council member actions to complete administrative duties.
- Creating a strategic advisory group that created a less distinct separation between administration and council.
- Irregular and improper mayor's actions to include only certain council members in discussions and information sharing.
- Irregular (late) filings of audited financial statements.

Minister's Decisions

Based on the report and comments from council members and senior administration, Municipal Affairs Minister Rebecca Schulz considers that the City of Chestermere is managed in an irregular, improper, and improvident manner. Under section 574 of the *MGA*, the Minister issued several directives requiring the city to take action on areas of concern. A copy of the Ministerial Order and the Minister's reasons are online at: [Alberta.ca/municipal-inspection-reports](https://alberta.ca/municipal-inspection-reports).

Next Steps

The city must report to the Minister on its actions to address the directives within set timelines. The Minister and ministry will monitor the city's progress. Upon request, the ministry can provide support such as advice, training, and potential grants to resolve intra-council disputes.

If the directives are not completed to the Minister's satisfaction and certain conditions are met, the Minister may issue further orders under section 574(2) of the *MGA*, including:

- a) suspending the council's authority to make bylaws on any specified matter;
- b) making bylaws on all or any matters for which council's authority is suspended;
- c) removing a suspension of bylaw-making authority, with or without conditions;
- d) withholding provincial funding to the municipal authority pending compliance;
- e) repealing, amending and making policies and procedures on municipal authority;
- f) suspending the powers of a development or subdivision authority, with a person to act in its place;
- g) requiring or prohibiting any other action as needed so an order is complied with; and
- h) dismissing the council, any member, or the chief administrative officer.

To help monitor the city's progress and provide support, an Official Administrator (OA) will supervise council until at least the end of 2023. The current OA will continue to serve until a new OA is appointed.