CAO Handbook

FOR ALBERTA MUNICIPAL CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS

May 2017

ALBERTA MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS | GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA
# Table of Contents

Introduction .................................................................................................................. 2

Purpose of the Handbook ............................................................................................ 2

Understanding the Political System .............................................................................. 2

  * Role of Alberta Municipal Affairs ................................................................. 2
  * Provincial Government Legislation ............................................................... 2
  * Domestic Trade Agreements ............................................................................. 5
  * Fundamental Role of a Municipal Council .................................................... 6
  * Responsibilities and Duties of the CAO ......................................................... 6

The Multi-Faceted Role of the CAO ............................................................................ 8

I. Responsibilities to Council ......................................................................................... 8

  * Role as Advisor .................................................................................................. 8
  * Council Decisions ............................................................................................... 8
  * Implementing Council Decisions ...................................................................... 11

II. Administrative Head .................................................................................................. 16

  * Organizational Leadership ............................................................................... 16
  * Human Resource Management ....................................................................... 16
  * Records Management ....................................................................................... 16
  * FOIP .................................................................................................................. 17
  * Risk Management/Insurance ......................................................................... 17
  * Information Technology ................................................................................... 17

III. Public Engagement .................................................................................................. 18

  * Liaison with the General Public ..................................................................... 18
  * Public Access to Information .......................................................................... 18
  * Delegations ........................................................................................................ 18
  * Transparency and Accountability .................................................................... 19
  * Petitions ............................................................................................................. 19
  * Public Participation Policy .............................................................................. 20

IV. Financial Management ............................................................................................. 20

  * Revenues ........................................................................................................... 20
Expenses ........................................................................................................................................... 20
Budget ............................................................................................................................................... 20
Financial Statements ......................................................................................................................... 21
Investments ......................................................................................................................................... 21
Borrowing and Debt ............................................................................................................................ 21
Annual Audit ......................................................................................................................................... 21
Grants .................................................................................................................................................. 21
V. Planning and Development .............................................................................................................. 22
   Subdivision Authority ....................................................................................................................... 22
VI. Assessment and Taxation ............................................................................................................... 23
   Property Tax Recovery ...................................................................................................................... 24
VII. Public Services ............................................................................................................................. 24
Resources and Supports ...................................................................................................................... 27
Introduction

Purpose of the Handbook

The purpose of this guide is to provide a quick reference to the roles and responsibilities of a municipal chief administrative officer (CAO) and to the legislation that affects municipalities. This booklet contains information on legislative requirements for council minutes, bylaws, public access to information, financial reporting, budget preparation, and information on provincial legislation that impacts municipal activities, just to name a few. The main purpose is to provide a quick reference to the most commonly asked questions concerning the roles and responsibilities of municipal administrators.

This handbook should be viewed as a supplement to the Municipal Government Act (MGA) and other legislation affecting municipalities, and should not be construed as legal advice for any specific factual situation. It is recommended to always consult a specific piece of legislation directly for guidance and, if necessary, discuss your particular situation with your municipal lawyer. In the event of any inconsistency between the information presented here and any Act or Regulation, the Act or Regulation shall prevail.

Note: Proposed amendments to the MGA that were not proclaimed at the time of writing are not reflected in this document.

CAOs have a very multi-faceted role. Some of these roles may be familiar to you but many may be new and at first might even feel a bit uncomfortable. This guide won’t answer every question you will have, but you are not alone! There are many sources of information and assistance available to you. Consider this guide as your roadmap to where help can be found.

Understanding the Political System

Role of Alberta Municipal Affairs

Alberta Municipal Affairs works with Alberta municipalities, other government departments and local organizations to achieve well-managed, collaborative, safe and accountable local government for Albertans.

Alberta Municipal Affairs is responsible for establishing the legislative framework for local government and provides information about the roles and responsibilities of municipalities under
the MGA. It also provides information to taxpayers and electors within this framework. However, the department does not intervene in matters within the authority of local governments. Municipalities have the autonomy to manage their own affairs and to make decisions that they think will best meet the needs of their communities within the parameters established in their enabling legislation. In other words, municipalities have flexibility in how they operate but must follow the standards established in legislation.

The autonomy and independence afforded to municipalities under the MGA is balanced with requirements for transparency and public accountability, recognizing that municipalities are accountable to their citizens first and foremost.

For more information on Municipal Affairs please visit the website at www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca.

**Provincial Government Legislation**

A CAO in the province of Alberta should be familiar with numerous pieces of legislation and have a fundamental understanding of how this legislation pertains to municipal government, with a working knowledge of the most relevant pieces. A CAO should always review all statutes and regulations in order to understand the responsibility of the municipality. While this is not a complete list, the legislation that is most pertinent to municipal government is as follows:

• **Municipal Government Act (MGA)**

The Municipal Government Act (MGA) is the legislative framework in which all municipalities and municipal entities across the Province of Alberta operate. It is the most important Act with which the CAO should be familiar. The MGA provides the governance model for cities, towns, villages, municipal districts, specialized municipalities, and other forms of local government. It lays the foundation for how municipalities operate, how municipal councils function, and how citizens can work with their municipalities. The current MGA is one of Alberta’s largest pieces of legislation, containing 18 parts and more than 700 sections.

The MGA contains three major “themes” or areas of focus:
- governance;
- planning and development; and
- assessment and taxation.

• **Local Authorities Elections Act (LAEA)**

The Local Authorities Election Act governs municipal elections by establishing procedures around campaigning, voting and counting of votes.

• **Cemeteries Act**

Awareness of this Act and its associated regulations may be necessary as some municipalities own and operate cemeteries. This legislation controls the disposition of human remains, ensures cemeteries meet requirements of local authorities, and protects consumers who invest in pre-need cemetery supplies and services.
• **Emergency Management Act (EMA)**

The *Emergency Management Act (EMA)* is the legislation that governs measures taken during an emergency and requires municipalities to establish an emergency plan. It outlines the roles and responsibilities of the Minister of Municipal Affairs, the provincial government, and local authorities. The EMA provides the authority for the granting of additional powers during a state of emergency or a state of local emergency and governs the coming into force, expiration, and termination of these states of emergency.

• **Employment Standards Code**

The *Employment Standards Code* establishes Alberta’s minimum standards of employment in many areas including payment of wages, hours of work, overtime, vacation and holidays, leaves and termination of employment. It establishes the processes by which an employee can seek recourse if the standards have not been met.

• **Forest and Prairie Protection Act**

The *Forest and Prairie Protection Act* enables the protection of the forests and prairies of Alberta from wildfire. This legislation makes the chief elected official, each councillor and the chief administrative officer, by virtue of their offices, fire guardians in and for the municipal district except that part of the municipal district that is within a provincial forest protection area.

• **Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act**

The *FOIP Act* establishes the legislative framework for the Government of Alberta’s general policy on access to information and the protection of personal information in the public sector. It provides for public accountability through a right of access to records under the control of public bodies and mandates how a public body is to collect, use and disclose an individual’s personal information.

• **Highways Development and Protection Act**

The *Highways Development and Protection Act* delineates the responsibilities and powers of the authorities that oversee the various categories of highways and roads in Alberta. It also prohibits and limits certain developments near provincial highways and roads.

• **Interpretation Act**

This act sets out guidelines for interpreting legislation (various presumptions, definitions, rules of statutory interpretation and construction) that apply to all Alberta Acts and regulations, and who can act under legislation.

• **Oaths of Office Act**

This act applies to oaths of allegiance, official oaths and judicial oaths. It provides that any person required by statute to make an oath is permitted to make a solemn affirmation instead of taking an oath.
• **Occupational Health and Safety Act**

The OHS Act sets out the framework for health and safety in Alberta’s workplaces, including municipalities.

• **Peace Officers Act**

This legislation establishes the roles of peace officers (non-police) in Alberta and allows different levels of government the opportunity to obtain peace officer status for community safety enhancement and specialized law enforcement needs. This act establishes the requirement for authorization of employers and appointment of peace officers including the application process, suspension/cancellations, employer liability and responsibility, the role of the Director of Law Enforcement, oversight process and the mechanism for public complaints. It also establishes the offences and penalties under the Act.

• **Safety Codes Act**

The *Safety Codes Act* establishes a unifying framework for the administration of 10 safety disciplines which each have their own safety codes and standards. The Public Safety Division of Alberta Municipal Affairs administers the framework established in the *Safety Codes Act*, including development of building codes and standards adopted in Alberta, providing advice and technical support related to the Act to the public, industry, all municipalities and the Safety Codes Council, monitoring the work of municipalities, corporations and agencies that administer the Act or provide services under the Act, and managing agencies under contract to provide services such as permits and inspections for municipalities that do not administer the Act in their jurisdiction.

• **Traffic Safety Act**

This Act promotes safety on the province’s highways, the definition of which includes any street, road, sidewalk or bridge that the public is ordinarily entitled or permitted to use.

• **Weed Control Act**

The *Weed Control Act* is the enabling legislation which defines the actions municipalities in Alberta must take with respect to weed control, issuances of notices and the conditions necessary for appeal.

**Where can you obtain copies of these Acts and Legislation?**

Alberta Queen’s Printer is the official publisher of Alberta’s laws and the Alberta Gazette, and partners with Government of Alberta ministries to produce and distribute various government publications. The most current legislation is available for purchase, viewing or printing at [www.qp.alberta.ca](http://www.qp.alberta.ca). The Office of the Queen’s Printer is located in Suite 700; Park Plaza Building 10611 - 98 Avenue NW in Edmonton.

**The Alberta Gazette**

The *Alberta Gazette* is the "official newspaper" of the Government of Alberta. It consists of two parts, Part I and Part II, and is published twice per month by Alberta Queen's Printer. It includes
new and amending Regulations, assorted government notices, and private sector public notices that are required by Statute to be published.

**Domestic Trade Agreements**

Alberta municipalities are party to two trade agreements: the New West Partnership Trade Agreement (NWPTA) and the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT). Through these agreements, the province has sought to reduce trade barriers, enhance labour mobility and open investment opportunities for Albertans and Alberta businesses. The Canadian Free Trade Agreement (CFTA) will come into effect on July 1, 2017 and replace the existing Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT) that has been in force since 1995.

More information on how the procurement practices of Alberta municipalities are impacted by these trade agreements is available at [economic.alberta.ca/trade-agreements.asp](http://economic.alberta.ca/trade-agreements.asp).
Fundamental Role of a Municipal Council

As described in the MGA, Council’s responsibilities are comprised of:

Developing and evaluating the policies and programs of the municipality [s. 201(1)(a)]

Council’s primary role is to ensure that services are provided to citizens and property owners. This involves establishing policies about what programs and services are to be delivered, the level of those services, and the budgetary requirements for those services to be delivered. Council is also responsible for ensuring that these programs and services meet their objectives and deliver the desired outcomes.

Ensuring that the powers, duties and functions of the municipality are appropriately carried out [s. 201(1)(b)]

Council is accountable to the public for the decisions it makes. Council is also responsible for ensuring that the municipality operates in an open and transparent manner.

Carrying out the powers, duties and functions expressly given to council under the Act or any other legislation [s. 201(1)(c)]

Council is responsible for ensuring that the municipality acts within its enabling legislation. A municipality can be taken to court by any person if it acts outside its legal authority. As well, council is responsible for ensuring that the municipality meets all requirements established in legislation, such as the requirement to hold public hearings on certain matters, develop a budget and levy taxes, appoint an auditor, etc. The legislation establishes minimum requirements; however, council can go beyond these minimums, provided that they act within their legislative authority.

It is important to note that council carries out the above duties through their CAO, whose responsibility it is to implement the policies and directives of the council.

The MGA provides municipal government with natural person powers for the purpose of exercising their authority. Natural person powers give municipalities similar flexibility to that of individuals and corporations in managing their organizational and administrative affairs. These powers may help a municipality – without the need for more specific legislative authority – enter into agreements and acquire land and equipment. For example, if a municipality has authority to establish a public transit system, it may use natural person powers to contract services and purchase buses. It is important to be aware that natural person powers are not an independent source of authority for a municipality to act in a particular area.

Responsibilities and Duties of the CAO

Municipal councils are required by legislation to establish by bylaw a position of chief administrative officer (CAO) and appoint one or more persons to carry out the powers, duties and functions of the position [s. 205]. In doing so, council recognizes its fundamental role of setting policy and allowing administration to implement the policy.
The CAO is the administrative head of the municipality and council’s advisor on its operations and affairs [s. 207] and is responsible for the administration, operation, financial management, and human resource management of a municipality. The CAO is responsible for the implementation of council’s decisions and takes care of the everyday work of managing a municipality. Section 208 of the MGA provides the list of the major administrative duties that a CAO must perform.

There are other duties and responsibilities detailed in other sections of the MGA. For example, the CAO is required to determine the sufficiency of any petitions that are submitted to a municipal council [s. 226(1)]. It also requires that the CAO reports the resignation of a councillor at the first council meeting after receiving it in writing [s. 161]. The examples in this guide are only a partial list of what is required in legislation. It is incumbent upon you as a CAO to obtain a copy of the MGA from the Queen’s Printer website and to read and understand these duties.

Every municipality should have a position description that clearly outlines the CAO’s duties and responsibilities. An effective position description defines the responsibility of the job, as well as the results that the CAO is expected to deliver.

Council should also have a defined process in place for completing the CAO’s performance evaluation. Performance evaluations must be conducted annually [s. 205.1]; they are an opportunity for council to provide feedback to the CAO on performance strengths and on areas that may require improvement.

In every municipality in Alberta, the CAO reports directly to council. All other municipal employees report to the CAO except for the rare occasions where a designated officer bylaw has passed specifying that the position reports directly to council. However, this does not preclude other municipal employees, such as the public works manager, from making presentations directly to council, if council wants such a presentation and directs this through the CAO.
The Multi-Faceted Role of the CAO

I. Responsibilities to Council

Role as Advisor

A key role of the CAO is to advise council and make recommendations regarding all facets of municipal operations. Performing the role of an advisor does not mean telling council what to do or telling councillors what they want to hear. What it does mean is ensuring that council is advised in writing of its legislative responsibilities under the *MGA [s. 208(1)(o)]*, and providing information on current trends, best practices and the approaches that other municipalities are using in similar circumstances.

The CAO is the primary advisor to and liaison with the council. While it is the council that has final decision-making authority, council should be able to rely on the CAO for well-founded advice and expertise. Council should count on their CAO to obtain the necessary background information, conduct required research and collect any other relevant facts that will assist them in their decision making role. While it may not be the CAO that will do all of this, he or she is responsible for ensuring that the information gets back to council in a well-organized and understandable format. The CAO should also be proactive in identifying potential drawbacks (and benefits) when a council is discussing a particular issue and is intent on making a decision. He or she should be in a position to advise on potential legal and financial consequences and in terms of the potential impact on the community.

The CAO is the contact person if members of council have concerns about how the administration is functioning or about the actions and general conduct of the municipal staff.

Council Decisions

Council meetings are a critical part of the municipality’s operations being the place where council publicly deliberates and decides the direction that the municipality will take. Indeed, a council meeting held in public at which there is a quorum present is the only place that council is able to make decisions that will bind the municipality [*s.181*]. Given the importance of these meetings, it should be no surprise that the CAO will have a key role to play.

The CAO or the CAO’s designate is required to attend all meetings of council. While in attendance you are tasked with a few responsibilities. You must ensure that the minutes are
recorded in the English language, without note or comment [s. 208(1)(a)] and that the names of all of the members of council who are present are recorded [s. 208(1)(b)].

For an in depth guide to preparing meeting minutes, please see Guide to the Preparation of Minutes.

You will also have other responsibilities associated with council meetings. Municipalities have the authority under the Act to establish a procedural bylaw [s. 145] to provide a standard format for council and committee meetings and to make it easier for members of council, staff, the media, and the public to understand the decision-making process. A procedural bylaw should name and describe the responsibilities of council committees, provide for the order of business and method of distributing the agenda for council meetings, set rules regarding the proceedings at regular meetings of council, and describe how items may be put on the council agenda.

Optimally, the agenda is distributed to council members, attendees and the recording secretary well in advance of the meeting, so that they will be aware of the subjects to be discussed, and are able to prepare for the meeting accordingly. As the public should have access to the agenda package at the same time as council, many municipalities also post the agendas for the upcoming meeting on their municipal website.

Council may request various reports from administration be presented at a meeting. This may include a financial report, a report regarding the status of a project, or a report about options that are available for any number of issues. When an agenda item requires a decision of council, the CAO is charged with ensuring that all information required has been identified and any recommendations provided (if required) be attached to the agenda. This could be in the form of a report or a request for decision (RFD). A request for decision includes a background sentence or paragraph, a statement of the problem or issue, any findings or conclusions, any recommendations for action, policy implications, financial impact, other impacts that may be specific to the situation, and should list who has prepared or reviewed the information.

It is also recommended to use an action list to track and report to council on the status of actions taken on resolutions from previous meetings. The list would normally include any unfinished business which has been raised at a previous meeting which has not been completed. The items would remain on the action list until they are finalized.

For more information on agenda preparation as well as a sample agenda, RFD and action list, please see the document entitled A Guide For Preparing A Council Meeting Agenda.

The CAO may be asked to call a special meeting of council from time-to-time. The chief elected official has the privilege of making such requests. Alternatively, a majority of the council may also put forth such a request [s. 194]. In either case, the CAO is compelled to give proper notice of a special meeting to council and to the public.

Generally speaking, all council meetings, including council committees, must be conducted in public [s. 197(1)]. However, there are limited exceptions to this rule. Council is entitled to discuss matters within one of the exceptions to disclosure in Division 2 of Part 1 of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act [s. 197(2)]. Please note that even though council
may hold discussion on such matters in camera, no resolutions or decisions of any kind may be made except in public [s. 197(3)].

For more information, please see In Camera Discussions of Council.

Councillors are on council to make decisions, and that means voting on all resolutions and bylaws unless they are required or permitted to abstain from voting [s. 183(1)]. If there is a public hearing on a proposed bylaw or resolution, councillors must abstain from voting on the bylaw or resolution if they were absent from all of a public hearing, and they may abstain if they were absent for a part of a public hearing [s. 184]. Councillors must also abstain from voting on matters in which they have a pecuniary (monetary) interest [s. 169 – 173].

For more information on pecuniary interest, please see the document entitled Pecuniary Interest for Councillors.

Bylaws and Policies

Councils may act only through resolution or bylaw [s. 180(1)]. Many municipalities do not fully understand the difference between a policy, which is considered a standing resolution of council, and a bylaw. The general rule is that if the municipality requires the authority to enforce something, such as limits on the number of animals allowed on a property, or the rate to be paid for utilities, a bylaw is required. Other items that simply set out a process for how administration will do something, or what the municipality’s stance on a certain topic is, can be addressed with a policy. The MGA also states when certain matters must be addressed by bylaw. If the MGA is not explicit on whether a bylaw is required, council may deal with the matter by a resolution, which approves a policy.

The following provides some examples of important bylaws and policies a municipality should have in place where applicable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bylaws</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Procedural Bylaw</td>
<td>- Sets the guidelines and structure for council meetings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Details the responsibilities and expectations of the meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>chair, council members, the CAO, other staff and the public.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Empowers the meeting chair to ensure council meetings are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>orderly, respectful and efficient.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax Rate Bylaw</td>
<td>- Provides the authority for municipalities to levy municipal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>taxes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utility Bylaw</td>
<td>- Provides the authority for municipalities to collect utility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>fees, set rates and required deposit amounts, and impose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>penalties for late payment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- The utility bylaw can also provide details on expected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>service levels and when arrears will be transferred to the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tax roll.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

  
Land-use Bylaw

- Sets the parameters by which land can be developed.
- Establishes when and where permits are required for land improvements.
- Details the procedure for appealing decisions on land use.

**Policies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Snow Removal Policy</th>
<th>Sets council’s priorities, service levels, and guidelines for snow removal to ensure safe traffic movement within a municipality.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Credit Card Policy</td>
<td>Establishes proper checks and balances to protect municipal credit cards from misuse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council Remuneration Policy</td>
<td>Establishes when and for what council will be reimbursed for expenses and details compensation for council’s attendance at board meetings and other meetings with external stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unbudgeted Expenses Policy</td>
<td>Establishes a procedure for authorizing and verifying expenses not included in the budget and required under section 248(2) of the MGA.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A municipal bylaw is no different than any other law of the land, and can be enforced with penalties, challenged in court and must comply with higher levels of law. Municipal bylaws are often enforceable through the public justice system, and offenders can be charged with a criminal offence for breach of a bylaw.

It is important to note that bylaws should be enforced. If a bylaw cannot or will not be enforced, then it should be repealed. For instance, if a municipality has an animal control bylaw and does not have the necessary resources to enforce it appropriately, then it should not exist.

For more information on bylaws, please see Basic Principles of Bylaws.

Policy is the collective decisions which council makes on a particular subject area over a period of time. When council makes a decision on any matter it is setting or making policy. Implementation of the council policy is the role of the CAO. In short, council sets the policy and staff carries out the directions of that policy.

Written policies should be indexed and placed in a binder format with the original in a safe and copies sent to councillors and every applicable department. Policies should be updated on a regular basis to ensure accuracy and consistency. Once a policy has been approved and adopted by council, it should be cross referenced with the council meeting and/or motion number where it was adopted.

**Implementing Council Decisions**

When a council makes a decision, whether it is about adjustments to a program, changes in structure or budgets, it is the CAO that must ensure these changes are implemented. While it may not be the CAO who actually makes the changes, he or she is responsible for making the change happen through the staff of the municipality.
As such, the *MGA* makes it very clear that a council must not exercise a power or function or perform a duty that is specifically assigned to the CAO [s. 201(2)]. If the relationship between a council and the administration of a local government is going to work, the key is to have both groups understand, appreciate and respect the roles that each has to play, especially regarding the difference between council’s policy making role and the CAO’s role of implementing policy direction. Without this, it is inevitable that difficulties will be encountered. As a starting point, it is helpful for council members and the CAO to recognize some of the fundamental differences between each others’ roles. The following table illustrates some of the differences between the council and the CAO of a local government.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Council</th>
<th>Chief Administrative Officer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elected by citizens of the municipality every four years.</td>
<td>Hired and appointed by the local government based on professional expertise and / or experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generally speaking role is part time.</td>
<td>Role is typically full-time but may be part time in summer villages or smaller municipalities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus is on the four year mandate: may have been elected on basis of a particular platform and to make changes.</td>
<td>Focus should be on the long-term (beyond the four year election mandate).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulfills the “political” function: interaction with and responding to the community, interaction with other levels of government.</td>
<td>Fulfills the “administrative” function: implements the decisions of the council and manages the day-to-day operations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council provides policy direction and makes the substantive decisions for the municipal corporation.</td>
<td>Provides advice / recommendations to council, implements policy directions and decisions of the council.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides specific directions to the CAO.</td>
<td>Ensures that the council’s decisions are carried out; provides specific directions to other staff members; in charge of personnel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensures that the local government continues to meet the community’s needs and that the administration is providing the public with the best service it can.</td>
<td>Coordinates / oversees the day-to-day operations and administration of the local government; responsible for employee professional development training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develops and approves the budget for the local government.</td>
<td>Assists council by preparing budget documents and ensures that the budget is being properly administered (money is being allocated as per the adopted budget of the municipality).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The relationship between the council and the administration can become strained when there is a misunderstanding of these roles, particularly when one group attempts to take on the role of the other. For instance, a council member may try to direct staff that reports to the CAO or in other instances, the CAO may inappropriately respond to the media on behalf of the municipality. These types of situations may be further complicated by different personalities, different agendas and varying points of view.
Examples of Role Confusion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Council</th>
<th>CAO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Directing members of staff to do certain things.</td>
<td>Becoming involved in political debate or political activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Becoming involved in the day to day operations of the municipality.</td>
<td>Setting budgets without Council’s input during the budget process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiring and firing employees.</td>
<td>Setting policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reprimanding individual municipal staff.</td>
<td>Becoming the spokesperson for Council.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are actions that can be taken to promote a greater understanding of each other’s roles. A CAO may wish to consider the following activities and strategies to foster greater role understanding and teamwork:

1. **Orientation of Newly Elected Council**

   After a general election or by-election, a new council and/or councillor should be provided with an orientation that provides, at a minimum, the following:
   - role of municipalities in Alberta;
   - municipal organization and functions;
   - key municipal plans, policies and projects;
   - roles and responsibilities of council and councillors;
   - the municipality’s code of conduct;
   - roles and responsibilities of the chief administrative officer and staff;
   - budgeting and financial administration; and
   - public participation.

   An orientation session for municipal elected officials is very beneficial to a councillor’s term on council. Orientation sessions provide an opportunity for councillors to seek clarification, add to their knowledge about the municipality’s structure and activities, and provide an overview for municipal government. Councillor orientation should serve as a reference for elected officials by way of assisting them in identifying those areas with which they should be familiar.

2. **Joint Planning Session/Strategic Planning**

   Council and administration could consider engaging in a general planning/strategic planning session. Such a session would provide an opportunity to identify priorities for the local government, examine possible changes to local government policies, bylaws, operations, structures and services, and assist in identifying potential amendments to bylaws. In addition, particular services could be examined, if necessary (e.g., recreation, fire service, public works). Planning sessions can also be used to review the financial situation of the local government, with a view to the annual budget development and adoption process.

   This type of planning session should provide an opportunity for the local government organization to establish priorities for the year and for the longer term. It can also serve as a forum through which a common vision / direction can be established not only between the
council and the administration but also among the council members themselves. It may also serve as an opportunity for the council members and the senior administration of a municipality to share and discuss ideas in more relaxed setting and to build more of a teamwork environment. Any initiatives or reports resulting from strategic planning sessions would be brought to a council meeting for further discussion and adoption.

3. Recognition of the Role of the Elected Official

The CAO of a municipality also has to contribute to establishing a healthy relationship with the council. As with the council members, the CAO and senior administration must respect and value the role that the elected officials have in local government. The administration has to recognize that they are not the policy-makers. Rather, the administration is there to provide the information and support required for the council members to make well-informed and thought-out decisions. This means providing thorough, well-researched and accurate information to council members.

4. Accessibility to All Council Members

While CAOs all have different styles, it is important that they be accessible to council members on an ongoing basis. Being able to respond to council members’ questions on a timely basis will go a long way toward strengthening trust and the overall relationship between the council and the administration. It should be noted, however, that not all issues or questions can be resolved by the CAO. Such matters may require a broader discussion as well as a decision from the entire council. This is where a CAO must use his or her professional judgment in terms of whether or not to address the issue themselves or have the matter raised as an item on the regular council meeting agenda or, if the matter is of a more urgent nature, at a special meeting.

5. The Importance of Neutrality

It is important for a CAO to treat all council members in a neutral manner. The CAO must stick with the facts and avoid taking sides with council members. It is advisable that the CAO suggests the involved council members try and resolve the issue between themselves or at the council table.

Being neutral also means sharing information with all members of council. When decisions are being made by council, it is critical that all members have access to the same information. The job of the CAO is to ensure that all council members have all of the information they need to make the best decisions for the community. As noted previously, regular updates from the administration at committee or council meetings can be very beneficial as everyone hears the same information.

6. Protocols for Ongoing Communication

To assist with the informal interaction that can potentially take place between council members and the CAO, it may be helpful to have a discussion about how this should occur. Protocols may be established to address the manner in which councillors bring issues they are concerned about to the attention of the CAO. The CAO may then have to determine whether the matter can be addressed by the administration or dealt with by the whole council at a regular, special meeting or a closed meeting. While not all interactions between the council and the CAO should be formalized, it may be helpful to agree on some basic
protocols in terms of keeping council members informed of issues between regular meetings and providing councillors the opportunity to bring concerns to the attention of administration.

7. Well-Defined Reporting Relationships

Having clearly defined administrative policies, bylaws and an organizational chart that specifies the reporting relationship of the municipal staff to the CAO and the CAO to council will help in terms of ongoing communication and in minimizing the potential for misunderstanding and conflict. If the appropriate reporting relationships appear to be creating difficulties, consideration should be given to having a working session involving the affected parties to develop acceptable protocols.
II. Administrative Head

Organizational Leadership

Organizational leadership is a management approach that works towards what is best for individuals and what is best for a group as a whole simultaneously. In his or her capacity as head of the administration, the CAO is responsible for directing a team of department heads, supervisors, technicians and support staff in order to manage the affairs of the municipality and to deliver services. In smaller municipalities, the CAO may take on other roles or functions as well. The important point to be noted is that the CAO leads the administration and is ultimately the individual who should be accountable to the council for the administration and how it performs. A CAO must play a strong leadership role, regardless of the size of the local government they are administering.

Leadership means fostering teamwork and a positive work environment among staff members, ensuring that employees are able to take part in professional development training programs, ensuring that staff have appropriate resources to work with, addressing issues that affect employees as they arise and making well-informed and fair decisions.

To strengthen these leadership skills, there are a number of courses that are offered through the Local Government Administrators Association (LGAA), Society of Local Government Managers (SLGM), as well as educational institutions.

Human Resource Management

Quality human resource management is essential to the successful operations of a municipality.

It is advised that the CAO implements strong policy and procedures to ensure consistency and equity is bestowed upon all those who work for the municipality or apply to work for the municipality. Policies and procedures should be in place for items such as staff recruitment, personnel, job descriptions, evaluations, and development.

For example, every facet of employment should be covered in the municipality's personnel policy. As well, each employment position in the municipality must have an appropriate job description that identifies the associated tasks of that position and sets out the expectations the municipality will have of this position.

In addition to a municipality's internal documents, it is imperative that a CAO be familiar with Alberta's employment standards and ensure that all municipal policies adhere to provincial and federal legislation. Information on Employment Standards can be found at; https://work.alberta.ca/employment-standards.html. Standards for Occupational Health and Safety matters can be found at https://work.alberta.ca/occupational-health-safety.html.

Records Management

A CAO is required to ensure all bylaws, minutes of council meetings and other official records and documents of the municipality are kept safe [s. 280(1)]. An area that requires much attention is a municipality's records management and protection of information.
For information about best practices for records management, please refer to *Retention and Scheduling of Municipal Records*.

**FOIP**

The *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act* applies to public bodies in Alberta. Public bodies include all provincial government departments, agencies, boards and commissions. It also includes local public bodies such as municipalities, universities, school boards and others. As the CAO for a public body, you are required to understand this legislation and assist others with its application and use.

The protection of personal information is of the utmost importance. To acquire training on this legislation or access additional information, you are encouraged to visit the FOIP website at [https://www.servicealberta.ca/foip/](https://www.servicealberta.ca/foip/).

**Risk Management/Insurance**

Most Alberta municipalities obtain comprehensive insurance coverage through one of two member-owned reciprocal insurance exchanges. MUNIX is operated through the Alberta Municipal Services Corporation, which is available to members of the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA). The Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMDC) operates Jubilee Insurance Agencies Ltd.

These insurers are governed under *The Insurance Act* and provide coverage that the insurance industry typically does not at lower rates than conventional insurance. The insurer is the best source of information on reducing risk and identifying areas to include in your municipal risk management policy. Insurers offer training and other resources to assist you with risk identification, making claims, loss control and current trends in the insurance industry.

More and more municipalities are adopting risk management policies or strategies. Generally, risk management strategies seek to minimize the effects and liability risks for a municipality. This involves identifying potential hazards and implementing the appropriate measures to reduce or eliminate them in your community. Effective risk management also reduces the possibility that critical municipal infrastructure or systems will experience a failure and leave the municipality unable to provide services to residents.

Other issues to consider are ensuring that your municipality has the right insurance coverage with a view to budget considerations. Your coverage should be reviewed regularly to ensure it is appropriate, current and cost effective.

**Information Technology**

The information technology (IT) that is utilized by a municipality must support the protection of municipal documents and information. Again, a municipality should have policies in place that address IT priorities which could include: access, use, modification, inspections, replacement, etc. To understand the existing IT infrastructure for the municipality, it is suggested that you review current contracts and support agreements to better understand what is in place and whether these are in compliance with the municipal policies.
III. Public Engagement

Liaison with the General Public

The CAO acts as the main liaison between the council and the citizens of the municipality. He or she has an obligation to meet with the general public on any matters that deal with bylaws, policies or procedures that have been established by the council as well as programs and activities involving the community. In his or her role as CAO, meeting and dealing with the public could be an everyday occurrence. This could include having to meet with a citizen who may or may not approve of a recent decision of council. It is important that the CAO listen to the citizen’s concerns, and provide the relevant background information that would assist in clarifying the situation.

It is not the CAO’s mandate to debate the outcome of the council decision; rather it is the CAO’s duty to carry out council policies or directives. If one or more members of the public are dissatisfied after meeting with the CAO and wish to further query a council decision, the mayor and council should be briefed, so that other alternatives can be explored, such as arranging for the member of the public to attend a council meeting as a delegation.

Public Access to Information

Public access to local government information is clearly defined in the MGA and the FOIP Act. The general rule to follow is that documents approved or adopted in a public meeting of council should be open for inspection or examination by the public, (e.g. bylaws, contracts for services, policy statements, agreements for rezoning or subdivisions). Documents/information should only be excluded from the public if they fall within the exceptions in Division 1 Part 2 of the FOIP Act for in camera meetings.

According to legislation, the following are considered public documents:

- Adopted minutes of regular and special council meetings;
- Audited financial statements;
- Budget adopted by a municipality;
- Copies of all bylaws of the municipality; and
- Tax assessment roll.

However, a municipality may choose to have additional documents available as well, which could be identified by policy or in their procedural bylaw. For example, it is considered best practice to post the agenda of an upcoming council meeting on the municipal website.

For frequently asked questions regarding how FOIP affects municipalities, please visit www.servicealberta.ca/foip/documents/faq-municipalities.pdf.

Delegations

In local government, a citizen has the right to be heard by members of council at either a committee meeting or a regular session of council. Citizen delegations can be a valuable means of ensuring that council remains accountable to the voting public. When citizens are engaged in a community issue, it can significantly influence policy and decision-making of council. Citizen
groups can be helpful in providing alternatives and potential solutions to matters of concern within the community.

The procedural bylaw should include rules or guidelines which outline the process as to the manner in which a citizen or citizen delegation can appear before a council committee or regular session. For example, it could specify the length of time that a delegation is allocated at a meeting as well as the requirement for the delegation to provide administration with the background materials on the issue to be presented to council a certain number of days before the meeting. The citizen’s input and participation is very important in assisting council with determining direction of development and long term vision for the community. Public consultation can lead to mutually acceptable solutions and promotes a sense of ownership within a community.

**Transparency and Accountability**

The *MGA* includes provisions related to the transparency and accountability of council as well as its local boards and committees, including the conduct of meetings and the public’s right to attend them [*s. 198*]. Transparent decision making processes may be seen as part of the foundation of the good governance of a municipality.

A key transparency rule for municipalities is the requirement that all municipal meetings be open to the public, with the exception that portions of the meeting be closed to the public for a limited number of exceptions, for consideration of matters as provided for in *FOIP*.

Municipalities must also follow the requirements when a bylaw, resolution, meeting, public hearing or something else is required to be advertised to the public [*s. 606*]. For example, if a municipality proposes to make a resolution to transfer or grant an estate or interest in land for less than market value, the proposal must be advertised [*s. 70*]. Further, council must hold a public hearing to obtain public input on matters that have a significant impact on the citizens and property owners in the municipality. For example, a land use bylaw or a bylaw amending the land use bylaw requires a public hearing [*s. 639*]. Appendix 1 of *Basic Principles of Bylaws* outlines the sections of the *MGA* that require a public hearing and/or advertising.

Additionally, council can seek public input or hold a “town hall” meeting on any other matter it chooses, even where public participation is not required by legislation. A public meeting may be a good idea when council is considering major changes that have a direct impact on citizens; for example, a new way of delivering a municipal service or to gauge public interest in a new capital project such as a recreation centre.

**Petitions**

The electors of a municipality may petition the locally elected council for a new bylaw or a bylaw to amend or repeal an existing bylaw or resolution on any matter within the jurisdiction of the council under the *MGA* or any other enactment, subject to some limitations. Locally elected councils may also be petitioned to hold a public meeting [*s. 229*], for a public vote on an advertised bylaw or resolution [*s. 231*], or for local improvements [*s. 393*].

The CAO of the municipality is responsible for determining the sufficiency of the petition in accordance with section 225 of the *MGA* within 30 days of the date when the petition has been filed [*s. 226(1)*].
Public Participation Policy

Public participation policies recognize the important role that the public plays in the decision-making process. Receiving public input enables council to provide comprehensive information on a proposal to citizens and obtain their input on the proposal before making a final decision. Knowing the views of the public will assist council to make the best possible decision on behalf of all citizens and ratepayers in the municipality.

For additional information on public engagement, please see the Public Input Toolkit for Municipalities.

IV. Financial Management

The management of the municipality’s finances is one of, if not the most, important responsibilities of the CAO position. Financial records and information are often requested by council, the municipal auditor, financial institutions, residents and other levels of government. It is critical to maintain current and accurate financial records.

Revenues

Municipalities generally have multiple sources of revenue including property taxes, fees and charges for programs and services provided by the municipality, rates charged for providing utilities such as water, sewer and solid waste and grants from other levels of government. It is important to ensure that the rates and fees charged are sufficient to offset the expense of providing the service(s), where possible.

All revenues received must be receipted and deposited into a financial institution as directed by council. [s. 208(1) (g)(h)].

Expenses

All municipalities have expenses for the goods and services the municipality spends money on. Every expense must be accurately recorded in the accounting records. A municipality may only spend money that has been duly authorized by council; included in the budget, for an emergency or legally required to be paid [s. 248].

Budget

A municipality must adopt an annual budget [s. 243, s. 245]. The budget must include both operating and capital components and at minimum, an interim budget must be passed by December 31st of each preceding year. Municipalities are now required to budget for amortization.
The budget is the most important policy decision that council makes each year. Program and policy decisions are a council responsibility. Annual revenues must be sufficient to cover planned expenditures. The Minister may establish the budget for a municipality that has a financial deficiency.

Financial Statements

Alberta municipalities must complete and publish annual audited financial statements by May 1 of each year in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles for municipal governments [s. 276]. A signed copy of the financial statements and the financial information return must be sent to the Minister of Municipal Affairs [s. 278]. For more information on reporting requirements, please visit www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/financial-reporting-requirements.

Investments

A municipality may only invest in the following: Government securities; Bank securities; or securities offered by a corporation (A grade); or other, if approved by the Minister [s. 250 & Investment Reg.].

Borrowing and Debt

In order for a municipality to borrow funds it must pass a borrowing bylaw prior to the commencement of the project. Alberta Capital Finance Authority (ACFA) provides favorable interest rates and amortization terms. Sample bylaws, loan calculator and debt limit worksheets can be found on the ACFA website www.acfa.gov.ab.ca. The MGA specifies advertising requirements for borrowing bylaws based on the type of bylaw and length of borrowing term [s. 251 – 259]. Municipal debt and debt servicing limits are set out in the Debt Limit Regulation. Municipal debt and debt service limits are intended as a simple benchmark calculation.

Annual Audit

The auditor appointment is a council responsibility [s. 280]. The auditor must be independent and a professional accountant. The financial statements must be prepared in accordance with Public Sector Accounting Board standards and the ministry has an oversight role in ensuring that financial audits are completed each year.

Grants

There are a number of grants available to municipalities. The link to the grant portal is available at www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/municipal-grants-web-portal.
V. Planning and Development

The authority for municipal planning, subdivision and development control is established in Part 17 of the MGA. The purpose of this Part is set out in section 617 of the MGA. To summarize, it means that municipalities may adopt plans and land use bylaws and make planning decisions to achieve the beneficial use of land without infringing on the rights of individuals except to the extent necessary for the greater public interest. In addition, the Subdivision and Development Regulation (AR 43/2002), authorized by section 694(1) of the MGA provides for the administration of subdivision applications, subdivision and development conditions, registration and endorsements of subdivision and setbacks for provincial appeals.

Statutory plans [s. 631-638] allow municipal councils to establish general development policies for all or part of the municipality. Legislation provides for four types of statutory plans:

1. Two or more municipalities may adopt an intermunicipal development plan (IDP) in respect of land where a consensus on use and development is desired. Such a plan typically relates to the fringe area of urban and rural municipalities or to shared natural features such as lakes.
2. The municipal development plan (MDP) establishes policies for land use in the entire municipality. Municipalities with a population of 3500 or more are required to adopt a municipal development plan. Municipalities with a population of less than 3500 are encouraged to do so.
3. Municipalities may adopt area structure plans (ASP) to establish the general land use, transportation, and servicing framework for specific areas undergoing substantial new development.
4. Municipalities may adopt area redevelopment plans (ARP) to outline proposals for addressing planning issues when rejuvenating existing developed areas.

The land use bylaw, LUB [s. 639 – 640] is the means of regulating the use and development of parcels of land. The MGA defines “development” as an excavation or stockpile, construction, renovation or repairs to a building, a change in the use of land or intensity in the use of land. All municipalities are required to adopt a land use bylaw. The land use bylaw divides the municipality into districts, prescribing permitted and/or discretionary uses for each district. The bylaw establishes development standards within each district and provides for a system for issuing development permits.

Subdivision Authority

The MGA requires all municipalities to establish a subdivision authority [s. 623] to exercise powers and duties on behalf of the municipality. The subdivision authority is responsible for receiving, processing, and deciding on subdivision applications. A subdivision authority may include any or all members of council, a designated officer, a municipal planning commission, or any other person or organization.

Development Authority

The MGA requires all municipalities to establish a development authority [s. 624] to exercise powers and duties on behalf of the municipality. The development authority is responsible for receiving, processing, and deciding on development permit applications. A development authority may include one or more of: a designated officer, a municipal planning commission, or any other person or organization. Most municipalities assign decision making and administrative
responsibilities to staff. In many municipalities, decisions involving discretionary authority are referred to a municipal planning commission, MPC [s. 626].

Subdivision and Development Appeal Board (SDAB)

Municipalities are required to establish an SDAB [s. 627 - 630, 678 - 688] to hear appeals from the decision of the subdivision or development authority. Municipal employees, persons who carry out subdivision or development duties or who are members of the municipal planning commission, may not be appointed to the appeal board.

Further information regarding Planning and Development is located at www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/am_planning_and_development.

VI. Assessment and Taxation

The CAO of a municipality must ensure that assessments, assessment rolls and tax rolls for the purpose of Parts 9 and 10 are prepared [s. 208(1)(m)]. Property assessment is the process of assigning a dollar value to a property for taxation purposes. In Alberta property is taxed based according to value. This means that the amount of tax paid is based on the value of the property.

Each municipality is responsible for ensuring that each property owner pays his or her share of taxes. Property assessment is the method used to distribute the tax burden among property owners in a municipality.

Property taxes are a primary source of revenue for municipalities. Property taxes are used to finance local programs and services, such as:

- Road construction and maintenance
- Parks and leisure facilities
- Police and fire protection

Often the terms “assessment” and “taxation” are considered to be interchangeable. However, assessment and taxation are very different. Although one impacts the other, each is a distinct and independent process.

“Assessment” is the process of estimating a dollar value on a property for taxation purposes. This value is used to calculate the amount of taxes that will be charged to the owner of the property. “Taxation” is the process of applying a tax rate to a property’s assessed value to determine the taxes payable by the owner of that property.

Each year, municipal councils determine the amount of money they need to operate their municipality. From this amount, the council then subtracts known revenues (for example, licences, grants, and permits). The remainder is the amount of money the municipality needs to raise through property taxes in order to provide services for the year.

This revenue requirement is then used to calculate the tax rate. The tax rate is the percentage of assessed value at which each property is taxed in a municipality. The revenue requirement is divided by the assessment base (the total value of all assessed properties in the municipality).

The tax rate calculation is expressed in the following formula:
Revenue requirement / Assessment base = Tax rate

The tax rate is applied to each individual property assessment using the following formula:

\[ \text{Property assessment} \times \text{Tax rate} = \text{Taxes payable} \]

This formula means that the assessed value of the property in dollars is multiplied by the tax rate set by the municipality. The result is the amount of taxes to be paid for each assessed property.

A municipality may adjust its tax rate on a yearly basis depending on its revenue requirement. The tax rate a municipality chooses to set depends on the assessment base in the municipality and the amount of money it needs to generate using the property tax.

If the council requires more revenue to run the municipality and the assessment base in the municipality has remained the same, the council will have to increase its tax rate to generate the additional revenue.

If the assessment base in a municipality increases, and the tax rate remains the same, more tax dollars will be collected compared to the previous year. To collect the same amount of revenue, council would reduce its tax rate to reflect the increased assessment base.

A sample property tax bylaw is available at
www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/documents/ms/Tax_Rate_Bylaw_Template_-_Blank.doc

For more in depth information regarding assessment and taxation, the link to the Guide to Property Assessment and Taxation in Alberta is:
www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/1538#Overview

Property Tax Recovery

The tax recovery process is an important means through which a municipality maintains its fiscal health. Similarly, it is important to recognize that the purpose of the tax recovery process is to provide a means through which the municipality receives the taxes to which it is entitled. As such, a CAO must ensure that the tax recovery process and public auctions held to recover taxes are carried out in accordance with Part 10 of the MGA [s. 208(1)(n)].

For more information on the tax recovery process, please see the document entitled Tax Recovery – A Guide for Alberta Municipalities.

VII. Public Services

Municipalities in Alberta provide a variety of services to their citizens. It is the role of municipal employees under the direction of the CAO to carry out delivery of these services. Every municipality does not provide the same services to their community. While all municipalities provide services, the type and level of these services may vary from one municipality to another.
The list of services provided below is not exclusive. Depending on the size, structure, and the financial resources of the community, other services may be available or services may be offered through intermunicipal partnerships or agreements.

Fire Protection

A council may establish, operate and maintain a fire department in order to offer fire protection inside and outside the municipal boundaries. Firefighters may be volunteer or paid employees. Fire protection may include: firefighting, fire prevention, and responding to emergencies. The Municipal Affairs Office of the Fire Commissioner provides technical advisory services to Alberta communities and organizations that deliver fire and emergency response and prevention services for citizens. If a municipality does not directly provide fire protection services, a regional agreement or fee-for-service may be established with neighbouring municipalities.

Emergency Preparedness and Response

Alberta’s municipalities are responsible for preparing and approving emergency plans and programs. When an emergency event exceeds the capabilities of a municipal response to an emergency event or there is a significant threat to life and property, the Alberta Emergency Management Agency (AEMA) coordinates the Government of Alberta’s support to the municipality by linking them with resources to help manage an emergency or disastrous event.

The province maintains emergency management programs for specific hazards and risks, and delivers emergency services that complement programs implemented by communities.

The AEMA leads the coordination, collaboration and co-operation of all organizations involved in the prevention, preparedness and response to disasters and emergencies. This ensures the delivery of vital services during a crisis. These organizations include government, industry, municipalities and first responders.

The AEMA website is located at www.aema.alberta.ca/index.

Streets, Roads and Sidewalks

Municipalities offer transportation infrastructure. This infrastructure may include municipal trails, sidewalks, and roads. Municipalities are responsible for maintaining their infrastructure in various ways including maintaining asphalt, repairing sidewalks, painting crosswalks, installing traffic signs, and cleaning streets.

Snow Removal

Snow removal is an essential service that municipalities provide to their citizens. Snow plowing operations involve the removal of snow and ice from streets to provide for the passage of vehicles and citizens in a safe manner. During snow plowing operations, it is the primary function of the operation to keep primary and secondary streets open to the public and provide access to priority streets. At all times, emergency vehicle passage is a high priority.

Water Supply

Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) is responsible for the drinking water and wastewater programs for large public systems in Alberta. The department considers the establishment of

Sewage Collection and Disposal

Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) regulates the Municipal Wastewater and Storm Water Management Program to ensure environmental protection. Regulatory frameworks, standards and guidelines are designed to assure environmentally acceptable wastewater discharge and acceptable storm water management practices. Municipal systems are regulated by AEP and private sewage systems are regulated by Municipal Affairs. More information is available at aep.alberta.ca/water/programs-and-services/municipal-wastewater-and-storm-water-management-program/default.aspx.

Solid Waste Collection and Disposal/Waste Management

A council may provide solid waste collection and disposal services. Many municipalities provide regular garbage collection for their residents. Other services may include: bulk garbage collection, access to landfill sites, and collection of recyclables.

Recreation and Cultural Programs

Municipalities can enhance the quality of life of their citizens through the provision of a diverse range of recreation and leisure activities. Councils offer a wide range of programs which may include, but are not limited to the following: fitness programs, senior programs, youth programs, children programs, and family and community support services (FCSS). Municipalities often operate recreation facilities such as swimming pools, arenas, outdoor sports facilities (soccer and softball fields), walking trails, and skate parks.

Shared Services

Regional cooperation is increasing in importance as communities aim to provide services in cooperation with neighbouring communities. Whatever the reasons are for sharing services the benefits are the same - a supportive and thriving community. Examples of shared services include transportation, water and wastewater, solid waste, emergency services, recreation, and any other services, where those services benefit residents in more than one of the municipalities that are parties to the framework.
Resources and Supports

The role of the CAO is a challenging one. The roles, rules, issues and challenges that this guide touches on are really just the tip of the iceberg.

Always remember that assistance is available to help you respond to problems you may encounter. The following contact list should help you decide where to turn when you have questions.

Some of the most popular links for CAOs are below:

**Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties**

The AAMD&C is a progressive Association of elected rural Councils, representing the interests of rural Albertans, and committed to excellence in meeting the diverse and changing needs of its membership.

**Alberta Emergency Alert**

An emergency or disaster can occur anytime, anywhere. Some allow time to prepare; others occur swiftly and with little or no warning. Albertans have faced several unexpected disasters in the recent past. These events remind us that this province is not immune to tragedy -- that's why Alberta has a broadcast warning system used to warn the public of a life threatening emergency or disaster.

**Alberta’s Peer Network**

The Peer Network for Dispute Resolution is a partnership that has created a group of peer mentors who municipal leaders can contact to obtain advice and/or assistance to help address local issues. Partnering organizations, including AAMDC, the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association, the Local Government Administration Association, and the Alberta Rural Municipal Administrators Association each have two mentors representing their association. Other partners that help guide the program include Alberta Municipal Affairs, the Society of Local Government Managers, and the Alberta Arbitration and Mediation Society.
Alberta Rural Municipal Administrators’ Association

ARMAA is a fraternal organization which brings together the senior administrative staff of Alberta’s rural Municipalities for the purpose of improving the professional service delivery to all Albertans.

Alberta Urban Municipalities Association

The AUMA is an association of the urban municipalities in Alberta. It provides leadership in advocating local government interests to the provincial government and other organizations, and provides services that address the needs of its membership.

Federation of Canadian Municipalities

The FCM is the national voice of municipal government representing 90% of Canada’s municipal population. It actively advocates to have the needs of municipalities and their citizens reflected in federal policies and programs.

Fire Commissioner’s Office

The Fire Commissioner’s Office promotes all aspects of fire protection to reduce deaths, injuries and property losses due to fire in Alberta. The three main program areas are advisory services, fire statistics and public fire safety education/information programs.

Government Finance Officers Association

The Alberta GFOA has over 600 members and serves a pivotal role in ensuring the financial well being of local governments in our province.

Local Government Administration Association (LGAA)

The Local Government Administration Association (LGAA) is an organization whose membership is made up of municipal, administrative personnel. The purpose of the Local Government Administration Association is to advance the interest of municipal employees through networking and to serve as spokesman for its members to the provincial government and liaise with other agencies and organizations in the area of municipal administration.

Municipal Financial Return and Sample Financial Statements

The MGA requires that every Alberta municipality prepare an annual financial information return and annual audited financial statements. Both must be submitted to Alberta Municipal Affairs by May 1 of each year.

The financial information return templates, including municipal and excluded functions (gas and electrical) and the accompanying manual are now available for downloading. The financial information return templates require Microsoft Excel Version 7 or newer to complete. If returning files to Municipal Affairs by email, the completed files must be saved in Microsoft Excel Version 7 format.
**Municipal Internship Program**

The Municipal Internship Program is a partnership between Alberta Municipal Affairs and Alberta municipalities and planning service agencies. The objective of the program is to encourage recent post-secondary graduates to consider a career in municipal administration, land use planning or finance.

The program offers interns the opportunity to gain hands-on experience in a municipal organization for a 12-month (Administrator or Finance Officer) or 24-month (Land Use Planner) period. Municipalities and planning service agencies are a wealth of knowledge, experience and expertise, and interns are eager to learn from this experience and be supported as they establish themselves in the municipal field.

**Municipal Population Lists**

Official population lists for the Province of Alberta from 1913 to the most current.

**Municipal Services Branch**

The Municipal Services Branch facilitates responsive, accountable and transparent local government in Alberta communities by helping build municipal capacity, encouraging regional collaboration, carrying out strategic policy research and development, and by implementing the Government of Alberta’s Municipal Sustainability Strategy (MSS).

The branch helps to build the capacity of municipalities through advisory support in areas such as governance, finance and land-use planning, the provision of training and internship programs, and other tools that help municipalities operate effectively.

Municipal co-operation is a significant priority, and is fostered through dispute resolution training and assistance, support for regional services commissions, and support for regional planning initiatives. The branch also facilitates processes involved in voluntary municipal restructuring, such as dissolution or amalgamation of municipalities. Municipal review and inspections are carried out at the request of councils or in response to electors’ petitions.

**Society of Local Government Managers**

The professional Society of Local Government Managers regulates the practices of local government managers and ensures its members act in the best public interest.