



THE POWER AND THE GLORY: DUTIES OF CIVIC POLITICIANS

Saskatchewan's municipalities are representative democracies. This means that we elect representatives to act on our behalf, to hear our concerns, and to ensure that the local government works for our community's best interests as a whole.

In Saskatchewan we elect councils to govern our municipalities. In urban municipalities, we elect councillors and a mayor. In rural municipalities, we elect councillors and a reeve. Together, they are responsible for bringing forth sustainable government and positive changes to communities. Therefore, they must:

- represent the public and consider the well-being and interests of the municipality
- help develop and evaluate the municipality's policies, services and programs
- participate in council meetings
- ensure that decisions of council are put into effect
- maintain the financial integrity of the municipality
- keep in confidence matters discussed in private at council meetings, until the matter is discussed publicly

In addition to the above duties for everyone on council, the mayor or reeve must also preside over meetings of the council, sign all bylaws that council passes, and sign many agreements into which the municipality enters.

Being a member of a local council is demanding work. Even so, the job in communities big or small is considered a part-time job. People on council often have day jobs in addition to their duties on council. However, in bigger cities the job of mayor is considered a full-time job. The mayor will often have an office and an assistant.

Because councillors attend council meetings, committee meetings, and community events, they often have to arrange their day-job schedules around these commitments. While councillors are not obliged to attend community events, a councillor can be removed from office for repeatedly failing to attend council meetings.

Perhaps the most important responsibility of our elected representatives is to hear the voices of everyone in the community. Remember: Governments are not put in place to impose their views upon us. As citizens, we democratically choose our governments to reflect our wishes for society.



THINK

True or False

1. ____ The job of mayor is full-time for every municipality in Saskatchewan.
2. ____ Elected officials must see that the financial integrity of their municipality is maintained.
3. ____ The pay for mayor, reeve, and councillors is determined by the provincial government.
4. ____ Every person on council must sign any bylaw that is passed for it to come into effect.
5. ____ A mayor of a city, town, or village, and a reeve of a rural municipality have the same duties as a councillor but with added responsibilities.