

2025 Municipal Election

Candidate Guide



Information Guide for Candidates

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Information Guide for Candidates

A guide for candidates

Nomination Period closes on September 21, 2025.

Election day is Monday October 20, 2025.

Serving on Town Council can be one of the most rewarding ways to contribute to our community. Council members are elected every four years and set public policy and direction for the Town of Cochrane, adopt bylaws, and set strategic priorities for municipal staff.

Council meetings are held at the Cochrane RanchHouse on the second and fourth Monday of each month and Committee of the Whole meetings are held on the first and third Monday of each month. (Meetings are held only once in July, and December for both Council & Committee of the Whole and no meetings are held in August).

Local Authorities Election Act

The Local Authorities Election Act (LAEA) is the primary legislation that guides the conduct of a municipal or school board election or by-election. Get copies through the Alberta King's Printer www.alberta.ca/alberta-kings-printer or 780-427-4952.

All definitions, procedures and processes outlined in this guide are from the LAEA. If you require clarification on anything, please check the LAEA, contact Cochrane's Director of Legislative Services, call a Municipal Advisor, or seek an independent legal opinion.

All forms, including the notice of intent to run, nomination form and candidate's acceptance, and campaign disclosure statement can be found on the Alberta Municipal Affairs website, or cochrane.ca.

Municipal Government Act

The Municipal Government Act (MGA) is the primary legislation that governs municipalities. Get copies through the Alberta King's Printer www.alberta.ca/alberta-kings-printer or 780-427-4952.

Additional Information

If you require additional information on election planning, voting procedures and other related matters, please contact us directly:

Jaylene Robertson, Director, Legislative & Administrative Services / Returning Officer or
Stacey Loe, Executive Director, Corporate Services / Substitute Returning Officer
Town of Cochrane
Phone: 403-851-2295
Email: jaylene.robertson@cochrane.ca
stacey.loe@cochrane.ca

IMPORTANT: this document is provided for information only – is not an official record of Town of Cochrane policy, procedure or governance.

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Overview of the commitment

	Mayor (One Position)	Councillor (Six Positions)
<p>Hours Some meetings and events occur on evenings, weekends and possible daytime Council & Committee of the Whole meetings. 2 to 5 daytime meetings per month.</p>	<p>Estimated time commitment: Full-time</p>	<p>Estimated time commitment: 15+ hours/ week (<i>more during peak times of the year</i>)</p>
<p>Responsibilities The Mayor and members of Council work together to guide long-term decision-making for the Town of Cochrane.</p>	<p>Chairperson of Council</p> <p>Participate in Committee of the Whole</p> <p>Advisor to Council & Consensus seeker among Council members</p> <p>Liaison with the Executive Leadership Team (Administration) and other levels of government.</p> <p>Ex Officio on various boards and committees</p> <p>Ceremonial responsibilities</p> <p>Mid-Sized City Mayor's Representative</p>	<p>Participate in Council</p> <p>Chairperson of Committee of the Whole</p> <p>Participate in committee meetings</p> <p>Take a turn as Deputy Mayor when scheduled</p> <p>Make sure the powers, duties and functions of the municipality are appropriately carried out.</p>
<p>Remuneration</p>	<p>\$ 105,663</p>	<p>\$ 44,378</p>
<p>Meetings If elected, you are expected to attend all Council meetings. You may not miss more than two Council meetings in a row.</p>	<p>Council: Two times each month, currently on Monday evenings starting at 5:30pm Possibility of changing to daytime meetings.</p> <p>Committee of the Whole: Two times each month, on Monday starting at 6pm.</p> <p>Prep time anticipated at 1 to 2 hours per meeting.</p> <p><i>(One meeting each in July and December, no meetings in August).</i></p> <p>Committees: Intermunicipal Committee – Rocky View County Calgary Regional Metropolitan Board (CMRB)</p>	<p>Council: Two times each month, currently on Monday evenings starting at 5:30pm. Possibility of changing to daytime meetings.</p> <p>Committee of the Whole: Two times each month, on Monday starting at 6pm.</p> <p>Prep time anticipated at 1 to 2 hours per meeting.</p> <p><i>(One meeting each in July and December, no meetings in August).</i></p> <p>Committees: Various days/times; each member of Council sits on a number of Committees & External Partners at a time:</p> <p>All Committees and External Partnership groups are listed in the Procedural Bylaw</p>

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<p>Orientation Check your calendar! This session has already been scheduled; all members of Council are required to attend</p>	<p>Three-day retreat-style orientation for all members of Council (with Executive Leadership Team): Thursday October 23 Friday October 24 Saturday October 25</p>
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Who can run for office?

You can run for the position of Mayor or one of six Town Council positions if you:

- have lived within Cochrane Town boundaries for at least six months before nomination day AND
- are eligible to vote in the 2025 municipal election (Canadian citizen, over 18 years old)

You may NOT run for office if you:

- are a Town employee (unless you take a leave of absence)
- owe property taxes or other debt to the Town (over \$50)
- have been convicted of an offense under the Election Act in the past 10 years

IMPORTANT: *it is your responsibility to ensure you are not in violation of any conditions of eligibility.*

How to run for office

Get prepared!

There's a lot of information available to help you get prepared to run for a seat on Town Council and serve the community as a member of Council:

- Check [Alberta Municipal Affairs](#) for legislation related to municipalities in Alberta
- Check [cochrane.ca](#) for local bylaws, legislation and planning documents
- Read Council agendas and minutes
- Sit in the gallery at Council meetings or watch the Live Stream of meetings on [cochrane.ca](#)
- Talk to Town of Cochrane Executive Leadership

Nomination

Nomination deadline day is September 21, 2025.

Nomination papers must be submitted in person at the Cochrane RancheHouse between January 2, 2025, and noon on Nomination deadline day. At noon on September 22, 2025 the Town of Cochrane publishes the final list of candidates. Any member of the public may ask to see nomination papers after 12pm on September 23, 2025.

Go to [cochrane.ca/Election](#) for official nomination forms and detailed instructions for submitting them.

Campaign advertising

Candidates may use a variety of media to promote their candidacy, within limits set by the Local Authorities Election Act and Cochrane bylaws (Town of Cochrane Election Bylaw & Land Use Bylaw):

- no advertising allowed inside or outside a building used as a polling station
- campaign signs may be displayed on private property only with permission of the owner
- campaign signs on public property is discouraged and will not be permitted prior close of Nomination period
- no campaign signs are allowed on centre meridians on Quigley Drive, Fifth Avenue and Railway, Fifth Avenue and Griffin Road: within 10 m of traffic control devices (stop signs, yield signs, etc.); within 10 m of pedestrian crosswalks
- all campaign literature must be removed by 8pm Wednesday October 22, 2025 (48 hours after the election)

Campaign Expenses & Contributions

The Local Authorities Election Act sets out all requirements respecting campaign expenses and contributions. A brief summary is provided here; however, all candidates are strongly encouraged to read and understand the provisions of the Elections Act.

403-851-2500 [cochrane.ca/Election](#)

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No contributions may be accepted until the nomination period commences (January 1, 2025) AND a candidate has filed their nomination papers*.

During the Campaign Period, following the filing of nomination papers:

- a candidate may contribute up to and including \$10,000 to their campaign (this amount may not be reimbursed to the candidate from the candidate's campaign account at the end of the campaign period)
- a candidate may accept contributions of up to \$5,000 from any person who is ordinarily a resident in Alberta

*The Election Act does provide some exceptions to accepting of contributions prior to the Campaign Period:

- A person may accept up to \$5,000 annually in contributions outside of the Campaign Period, and
- A person may contribute up to \$10,000 annually of their own funds outside of the Campaign Period.

Candidates, or those acting on their behalf, should not directly or indirectly solicit contributions if it is known or ought to be known that the potential contributor:

- Does not ordinarily reside in Alberta,
- Is a prohibited organization, including a corporation or unincorporated organization, or
- Will exceed the contribution limits.

Candidates must not accept contributions from anonymous parties. Any anonymous contributions must be returned to the contributor if the contributor's identity can be established. If the identity cannot be established, the candidate shall donate the funds to a registered charity or to the local jurisdiction.

Bank Accounts & Tracking

A candidate must open a bank account in their name or the name of the campaign as soon as the amount of contributions (including self-funded contributions) exceed \$1,000. Money in this account must only be used to pay for campaign expenses.

Contributions of real property, personal property, goods and services must be assigned a value.

Throughout the campaign, receipts must be issued for every contribution received, and be obtained for every expense incurred. Further, the name and address of a contributor must be obtained, should their contributions during the campaign period exceed \$50 in total.

All campaign records of contributions and expenses must be kept for a minimum of three (3) years following the date disclosure statements are required to be filed (March 1, 2026).

What are allowable Campaign Expenses?

At a basic level, a Campaign Expenses is an expense a candidate makes in the course of their campaign to help get elected. This includes any expense incurred, or nonmonetary contribution received, by a candidate. Examples are:

- Advertising or promotional material,
- The distribution, broadcast or publication of advertising or promotional material in any media or by any other means during a campaign period,
- The payment of remuneration and expenses to or on behalf of a person for the person's services on the campaign, or
- Cost of a meeting space.

More Campaign Expenses & Contributions

Part 5.1 of the Elections Act gives more detailed information regarding Campaign Expenses & Contributions, and includes information on items not covered in this document such as fundraising functions, campaign surplus/deficit, penalties for breaching campaign expense and disclosure requirements, etc.

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Agents, scrutineers, campaigners

You may ask friends and family to help with your campaign or hire staff to support your efforts. If you do, they must also comply with the Election Act and Cochrane bylaws:

- your official agent must be named in your nomination papers; they must not have been convicted of an offense under the Election Act in the past 10 years
- scrutineers observe voting at a polling station on election day on behalf of a candidate. They must provide written notice (signed by the candidate) to the presiding official at the polling station before they may observe proceedings; they must not have been convicted of an offense under the Election Act in the past 10 years. Only one scrutineer per candidate is allowed per polling station
- campaigners must carry proof of identification when campaigning for a candidate

Offenses

The Election Act is very clear about what constitutes an offence under the Act.

Candidates may not:

- supply ballots to voters
- put ballots in or take ballots out of ballot boxes
- destroy or otherwise interfere with ballots
- create any material that shows a ballot marked for any candidate
- make any false statement related to the election or vote

Pecuniary interest

As a public servant, you are responsible for upholding the public interest ahead of any private interests you may have. The Municipal Government Act (MGA) describes pecuniary interest and sets out the procedures you must follow if a matter in which you have a pecuniary interest comes up at a council meeting or a Committee of the Whole meeting. These rules are designed to protect the public interest while ensuring that your ability to work is not adversely affected by your election to council (*source: Alberta Government*).

Find out more: [Pecuniary interest for Municipal Councillors](#)

Election Day

Polling stations close at 8:00pm Monday, October 20, 2025. Candidates, and the community will know who has been elected to serve on Cochrane's Town Council as soon as all votes have been counted. Results will be shared via Town website and Social Media as soon as they are available.

The Town of Cochrane Returning Officer handles implementation of all aspects of Election Day: polling stations, ballots, the voting process, updating of elector register, counting votes and declaring results.

Voting

There are a variety of ways Cochrane residents can vote, provided they have appropriate identification:

- polling stations on Election Day, open 7am-8pm (see below for details)
- special ballots: sent and returned by mail, available upon request
- advance polls: various days/times (see below for details)
- institutional voting: at Big Hill Lodge and Bethany Care Centre
- at home: for incapacitated voters; available upon request

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Advance Polls

Any person authorized to vote on Election Day is authorized to vote at an Advance Vote. The Town of Cochrane's Advance Votes will take place:

Date	Time	Location
TBD	10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.	Spray Lakes Sawmills Sports Centre (Gymnasium) 800 Griffin Rd E, Cochrane AB
TBD	4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.	Cochrane Ranchehouse 101 Ranchehouse Rd, Cochrane, AB
TBD	4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.	Cochrane Ranchehouse 101 Ranchehouse Rd, Cochrane, AB
TBD	10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.	Spray Lakes Sawmills Sports Centre (Gymnasium) 800 Griffin Rd E, Cochrane AB

Voting Stations

Voting Stations have been established for the electors of the Town of Cochrane and will be located on Election Day as follows:

Voting Stations – Monday, October 20, 2025 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.	Address
TBD	
TBD	
TBD	
TBD	
TBD	
TBD	

Media

Members of the media are not allowed to take photos or otherwise record activity inside polling stations.

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After Election Day

Once the votes are counted after election day, the Town of Cochrane Returning Officer declares the official results. Candidates who have been elected are invited to the Council orientation session, so they are prepared to serve on Town Council for the next four years.

Successful candidates are required to sign the Elected Official Code of Conduct Bylaw, agreeing to not engage in actions that could be perceived as damaging to the trust, confidence, and faith of the public.

Candidates who are not successful are thanked for their efforts.

Contributions/expenses disclosure

After the election, all candidates must complete and submit a disclosure form identifying sources and amounts of campaign funding, to the Town on or before March 1, 2026. This includes a candidate who has withdrawn their nomination or was self-funded. The Disclosure Statement Form will be provided on the Town's website in due course. Failure to submit a disclosure statement within the prescribed time, may result in the candidate receiving a fine.

Disclosure Statements should include:

- the total amount of all campaign contributions received during the campaign period that did not exceed \$50 in the aggregate from any single contributor;
- the total amount contributed, together with, the contributor's name and address, for each contributor whose contributions during the campaign period exceeded \$50 in total;
- the total amount of contributions received outside of the campaign period (not exceeding contributions of \$5,000 in total per year, or candidate contributions of \$10,000 in the total per year);
- the total amount from fundraising functions;
- the total amount of other revenue;
- the total amount of campaign expenses;
- an itemized campaign expense report setting out the campaign expenses incurred by the candidate;
- the total amount of money paid by the candidate;
- the total amount of any surplus, including any surplus from previous campaigns; and
- the amount of any deficit.

A candidate who incurs campaign expenses or receives contributions of \$50,000 or more, shall file a review engagement with the disclosure statement. Review engagements are defined in the Chartered Professional Accountants Act.

Within 30 days, a candidate must submit a supplementary statement in the prescribed form to the Town if any information contained within the disclosure statement has changed or is discovered to be inaccurate.

Campaign Surplus

If a Candidate's disclosure statement shows a surplus, within 60-days (April 30, 2026) the candidate:

- shall, with respect to any surplus amount that is \$1,000 or more, donate an amount to a registered charity that results in the surplus being less than \$1,000, and
- may, with respect to any amount that is less than \$1,000,
 - retain all or any portion of that amount,
 - donate all or any portion of that amount to a registered charity, or
 - donate all or any portion to the Town.

A candidate who donates an amount to a registered charity must within 30 days (May 30, 2026) after the 60-day period provided above (April 30, 2026), file an amended disclosure statement showing the surplus has been dealt with.

This section on campaign surplus applies to a candidate whether or not they are elected.

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A registered charity is defined in subsection 248(1) of the Income Tax Act (Canada).

Campaign Deficits

If a candidate's disclosure statement shows a deficit, the candidate shall eliminate the deficit within 60 days (April 30, 2026) after filing the disclosure statement with the Town. For the purposes of eliminating a deficit, a candidate may accept contributions within the 60-day period.

A candidate shall not accept a contribution that exceeds \$5,000 from any individual and may make a contribution from the candidate's own funds that does not exceed \$10,000 for the purpose of eliminating a deficit.

A candidate must, within 30 days (by May 30, 2026) after the expiration of the 60-day period (April 30, 2026), file an amended disclosure statement with the Town showing the deficit has been eliminated.

If you're elected

As a member of Council, it is your duty to establish policy for the Town. The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) — Council's only employee — is an important bridge between Council and Administration. The CAO ensures Council has all the information it needs to make sound policy decisions, and ensures the municipality's work is carried out according to approved policy. Cochrane's CAO provides leadership and direction to approximately 320 full-time, part-time, and seasonal staff.

The CAO is apolitical, overseeing municipal operations and ensuring Council's priorities and strategic goals are achieved in the most effective way. The CAO's training, experience and understanding of Town operations will be an important resource for you.

Congratulations!! If you've made it this far and have read every word of the Candidate Guide to this point, it is a great example of all of the Council agenda packages you will be reviewing during your term as a member of Council.

Orientation

The province requires municipalities to provide, and candidates to attend, an orientation session for new Councils so they may learn their role as elected officials as well as the relevant procedures they will follow.

Administration is preparing a comprehensive Council orientation. In addition to a three-day retreat, Administration is also arranging for a number of information sessions on Fridays in October and November. This will include:

- Council Retreat
 - October 23-25, 2025, at a location to be determined
- Information Session
 - Friday, October 31
 - Friday, November 7

Topics will address:

- roles, responsibilities, and relationships
- organizational structure, department overviews and key issues
- overview of legislative documents (Municipal Government Act, Land Use Bylaw, etc.)
- strategic planning and budget process
- Council meetings, Procedural Bylaw, and electronic agendas
- Council Committee overview
- preparation for the Inaugural and Regular Council Meetings on October 27, 2025
- AB Munis conference registration confirmation

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Budget

The Town's annual budget is one of the most crucial decision-making responsibilities of Council. Department budgets are developed from business plans, which flow from Council's Strategic Plan.

Budget schedule:

- Budget presentation: Monday, October 27, 2025, during the regular meeting of Council
- Budget deliberation: Wednesday November 12, 9:00am-5:00pm
- Budget deliberation: Thursday, November 13, 9:00am-5:00pm
- Budget deliberation: Tuesday, November 18, 9:00am-5:00pm
- Budget deliberation: Thursday, November 20, 9:00am-5:00pm (if required)
- Final Budget Presentation: Monday, December 8, 2025, during the regular meeting of Council

Intramunicipal participation

Elected officials and Executive Leadership benefit from the Town's membership in organizations that provide opportunities to share information and collaborate on issues of interest to municipalities in Alberta and across Canada.

Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM)

FCM pursues common national interests of all Canadian municipalities, especially as they relate to the actions of the federal government. Members of Council have the opportunity to attend annual FCM conferences. More information: fcm.ca

Alberta Municipalities Conference

Urban municipalities in Alberta have opportunities to benefit from services, programs and conferences offered by Alberta Municipalities year-round. The AB Munis conference is usually held in October; members of Cochrane Council are encouraged to attend. More information: auma.ca

Recognizing our organizational commitment to Provincial advocacy, Council will be invited to participate in the 2025 AB Munis Conference. With the municipal election taking place in October, the AB Munis Convention will be held November 12-14, 2025 (Edmonton). Please mark your calendars!

Links, resources

Town of Cochrane Links

- Town of Cochrane election details and forms: cochrane.ca/Election
- Town of Cochrane Bylaws: cochrane.ca/Bylaws
- Town of Cochrane Policies: cochrane.ca/Policies
- Town of Cochrane planning documents: cochrane.ca/Planning

Province of Alberta Links

- [Running for Municipal Office in Alberta: A Candidate's Guide](#)
- [Roles and Responsibilities for elected officials and administrators](#)
- [Municipal Government Act](#)
- [Local Authorities Election Act](#)
- [Municipal Councillor Guidelines for Conflict of Interest](#)
- [Now That You've Been Elected](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions About Municipal Elections](#)