



Prospective Candidates' Handbook

**Municipal Election 2024
Town of Mahone Bay**

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About This Handbook

This handbook is intended to provide a high-level overview of the roles and responsibilities of councillors and information on the nomination process for those considering running in the 2024 Town of Mahone Bay municipal election.

Please note the key dates outlined on page 15 to ensure you file your nomination forms on time.

While physical copies of this handbook are available by request to the Returning Officer or Assistant Returning Officer, please note there are several hyperlinks throughout this document that are only accessible through the electronic version of this handbook.

Questions?

If you have any questions, please first contact:

Assistant Returning Officer: Brendan Wright at election@townofmahonebay.ca or 902-521-2487

Or, Returning Officer: Eric Levy, Deputy CAO at the same email address or 902-624-8327.

Council Structure

The current Town of Mahone Bay Council was elected in October 2020 for a four-year term. The Council consists of a Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors. The current Council has seven (7) members.

The Town of Mahone Bay Council is elected “at-large” meaning there are not electoral districts and each Council Member is elected to be a representative of the entire town when they make decisions on Town matters.

Considering Running?

Before putting your name forward, it’s important to consider whether you have the time, and whether the job will meet your expectations.

There are no special qualifications or experience required to be a Council member, however visionary thinking, strong communication skills (speaking and listening), conflict resolution skills, an ability to be persuasive and accept opposing views are great attributes. You may already have skills, knowledge and abilities that are transferable to the elected official’s role. Think about your volunteer experience, community involvement, work experience, membership in different organizations and the roles you play in your family life.

You may choose to run for Mayor or Councillor.

The candidate running for Councillor who receives the most votes at the polls will be appointed Deputy Mayor on their consent. If the candidate does not consent, the candidate with the next highest number of votes may be appointed.

Expectations

Of all levels of government, municipal government is the nearest to the needs and expectations of local citizens. This can make a Mayor and Councillor's job both rewarding and demanding.

As an elected official you can expect to:

- Bring the perspectives of your demographic to the decision-making table;
- Influence changes that benefit your community and ensure its sustainability;
- Put forward new ideas for debate and possible implementation and change;
- Make a positive difference in the quality of life in your community;
- Provide a voice for your community with other levels of government; and
- Be part of a team that makes decisions that affect all aspects of community life.

Council Term

The mayor and councillors, including anyone elected in the special election, will serve until October 2028.

Meeting Commitments

Regular Meetings

Regular meetings are held on the second Tuesday and fourth Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. In the months of August, there are no Regular Council Meetings.

Special Meetings

Special meetings of Council may be called throughout the year when Council needs to address an item before its regularly scheduled meeting.

Board and Committee Meetings

The Mayor and individual Councillors are each appointed to Committees of Council (<https://www.townofmahonebay.ca/committees.html>) and external committees. Meeting times vary and can be monthly or less frequent depending on the organization.

Socials and Other Events

You may be asked to attend local fundraisers, give welcome speeches at events, and represent the Town at industry related social functions and more. Time commitments in this area are

usually heavier for the mayor and will also depend on the interest and availability of various Council members.

Other Commitments

The Work

Every Council meeting has an agenda. The agenda package typically includes reports and correspondence that are intended to help you prepare for the decisions and discussions required at the meeting. You will need to have time to thoroughly read the information before attending meetings. You will also want to have some time to meet or correspond occasionally with the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), who is Council's only employee, and who is charged with the task of implementing Council's policies and programs.

Your Life

Council members are very visible in our small community and usually find that they are never "off duty." Residents will often take the opportunity to present their views or ask questions when they run into you in public.

Be sure to take into consideration the time you need for your personal life, your work, volunteer commitments, and other priorities.

Duties of a Councillor

- Consider and promote the welfare and interests of the Town;
- Abide by the Municipal Government Act and other relevant legislation, including but not limited to the legislation in the link. (<https://beta.novascotia.ca/government/municipal-affairs-and-housing/legislation>) ;
- Available to interact with the public. This can include emails, phone calls, voicemail and face-to-face interactions, social media;
- Participate in Council and Committee meetings;
- Bring the views of residents forward during Council meetings;
- Vote on bylaws, municipal policies, staff recommendations/direction, the municipal budget and other motions made at Council meetings;
- Direct questions and concerns regarding the Town's administration to the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO);
- Stay informed on relevant local issues and local legislation; and
- Attend and participate in community events and functions.

Councillor's Time Commitment

The position of councillor is considered to be a part-time commitment. Typically, councillors can expect to commit 10-12 hours per week performing their duties (this varies according to the time of year, emerging issues, meetings, etc.).

Councillors are expected to attend Regular Council meetings (two per month), Committee meetings (as scheduled), Other special meetings (as scheduled), and Special Events.

The time commitment of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are higher as reflected in the next section on Council Remuneration.

Council Remuneration

The annual remuneration is as follows

Mayor:	\$22,762.74
Deputy Mayor:	\$13,777.14
Councillor:	\$11,980.54

Council remuneration is subject to annual Cost of Living Increases.

Duties of the Mayor/Deputy Mayor

The Mayor is the spokesperson of the Town. They have specific duties that include the duties of a Councillor and a few other responsibilities as defined in the Municipal Government Act. The Deputy Mayor will act in the absence or inability of the Mayor or in the event the office of the Mayor becomes vacant.

The Mayor is expected to:

- Chair regular Council meetings;
- Attend meetings, public functions, ceremonies and other events, which may occur during evening hours and on weekends;
- Liaise with elected officials from other municipalities and other levels of government regarding municipal issues;
- Communicate Council policy to the media and the public;
- Act as the Town's spokesperson– this includes interviews with the media; and
- Work closely with the CAO to monitor and respond to the organization's outcomes.

Mayor's Time Commitment

The position of Mayor is considered to be a part-time commitment. Typically, the Mayor can expect to commit 20-25 hours per week to performing their duties (this varies according to the time of year, emerging issues, meetings, etc.). The Mayor's time is spent working closely with Council, the Town's administration and community representatives to help develop plans, policies and strategies important to the Town's business. As a regular member of Council, the Mayor is expected to prepare for and attend Council meetings.

The Mayor also sits on a variety of committees. The Mayor may also be required to represent the Town at meetings, ceremonies and other events. Frequent evening hours and weekend work may be required. The Mayor is also the chief spokesperson for the Town in discussions with elected officials in other municipalities, the provincial government, the federal government, and members of the media.

Council Powers & Responsibilities

All powers of municipal governments are delegated from higher levels of government, which gives Council authority over all municipal matters. The *Municipal Government Act (MGA)* is a key reference for municipal governments in Nova Scotia. The MGA authorizes Council to:

- Develop and evaluate programs, policies and service levels;
- Set annual operating and capital budgets;
- Sell and lease municipal property;
- Pass bylaws for municipal purposes; and
- Create boards and committees of Council.

The MGA and other applicable legislation can be found at:

<https://beta.novascotia.ca/government/municipal-affairs-and-housing/legislation>

Individual Powers of the Mayor or a Council Member

All decisions of Council are made through a majority vote of those present at a public Regular Council meeting. Each member of Council, including the mayor, represents one vote. At a typical meeting, provided all seven Council members are present, at least four of the seven Council members must vote in favour of a decision for it to pass. A tie vote is considered a defeated vote.

Individual Councillors, including the Mayor, do not have the ability to commit the Town to expenditures, nor can they personally direct the activities of Town employees. Any promise you make during your campaign can only be carried out if you convince a majority of Council that it is a good idea.

Council & Town Staff

The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) is Council's one and only employee.

The CAO is responsible for implementing the programs and policies of the Town; and is the administrative leader of the organization, the person to whom all other employees of the Town ultimately report to. Any direction to Town staff must come from the CAO not Council or individual Council members.

Mahone Bay's CAO is Dylan Heide. Dylan can be reached at dylan.heide@townofmahonebay.ca or at 902-624-8327

Meetings: What to Expect

The best way to get a feel for Council meetings is to watch them. All Council meetings are open to the public. Meetings are live-streamed on the Town of Mahone Bay YouTube Channel <https://www.youtube.com/@TownofMahoneBayInc>

Closed Session Meetings (In-Camera)

Only Councillors and other persons specified by Council may attend a closed session meeting; the public cannot observe these meetings. Items allowable in closed session are outlined in the *Municipal Government Act 22(2)*

Special meetings

Special meetings of Council may be called throughout the year when Council needs to address an item before its regularly scheduled meeting.

Regular Meeting Agendas

All Regular agendas and minutes are available on the [Town's website](#). Here are some agenda items you can expect to see frequently:

Minutes

The meeting minutes are the official record of Council's Regular meetings. Minutes are approved by Council and archived on the [Town's website](#).

Staff Reports

Staff Reports to Council are the primary vehicle for staff to make recommendations to Council or to respond to a Council request. Typically, these reports are researched and vetted by staff to ensure Council is getting the best, unbiased information they can for formulate a decision. The report generally has background, analysis, financial analysis, climate analysis, links to strategic plans, and ending with a staff recommendation based on the information presented. Recommendations can ask Council for direction or for a decision on a recommended course of action.

Bylaws

Some bylaws are mandatory while some bylaws are required only if a municipality wants to regulate a certain type of activity. All bylaws must receive two readings by Council; Council votes on the first reading and then must wait at least 14 days before voting on the second and final reading of the bylaw, allowing the public an opportunity to submit comments or questions on any proposed bylaws or attend a public hearing on the bylaw.

All of the Town of Mahone Bay's current bylaws can be reviewed on the [Town's website](#).

Policies

Policies are Council statements that determine the conduct of the Town and its departments regarding the services they provide. Policies are approved by Council and implemented by staff. For new policies or for amendments to existing policy, Council must first give notice of a policy at a Council meeting and then the policy can be formally approved at the following Council meeting.

All current policies can be found on the [Town's website](#).

Boards & Committees

The Mayor and Councillors are appointed every two years to various committees (both internal and external).

The Mayor and individual Councillors are each appointed to an average of four or five committees. Meeting times vary and can be monthly or less frequent depending on the organization.

Council's current committee obligations can be found on the [Town's website](#).

Strategic Priorities & Planning

The [Town of Mahone Bay Strategic Plan](#), approved by Council in 2020, is the current strategic plan for the Town.

Early in the mandate of a new Council, there will be a strategic planning exercise that will help Council create a plan for the next four year.

Become a Candidate

If you are interested in becoming a candidate in the upcoming election, you must first determine whether you are eligible, and become familiar with the mandated nomination forms.

Eligibility

In order to run for Council (Mayor or Councillor) you must:

- be 18 years of age at the time of nomination
- be a Canadian citizen
- be ordinarily resident of the Town of Mahone Bay for 6 months before Nomination Day and continue to reside in Town

Ordinarily resident: A person is not ordinarily resident in a seasonal dwelling generally only occupied between May and October unless the person has no other dwelling place. A person can be ordinarily resident only in one place at a time.

Disqualifications

There are several grounds for disqualifying someone from being a member of council, such as:

- You are a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA)
- You are a member of a school board
- You have been convicted of any corrupt practice or bribery within five years preceding nomination day

For a complete list, please consult the *Municipal Elections Act*, (MEA) Section 18.

Once you've determined that you are eligible to serve on Town Council, you're ready to begin the official steps of the nomination process.

Nomination Process & Other Information

To officially be nominated for the office of mayor or councillor (if applicable), you will need to complete the forms listed in the table below. Please take note of the timelines.

Necessary forms will be available on the Town of Mahone Bay website nearer to Nomination Day. For reference, forms can also be found at:

https://www.novascotia.ca/just/regulations/regs/melforms.htm#TOC1_21

Form	Purpose	Timeline
1. FORM 17: Appointment of an Official Agent	Form to appoint an Official Agent for a Candidate, or for a Candidate to declare themselves to act personally as their Official Agent. This is required before any campaign contributions can be accepted.	You should appoint your official agent as soon as possible. You can file this form with the Returning Officer when you file your Nomination Paper.

<p>2. FORM 17A: Oath or Affirmation of Appointment of an Official Agent</p>	<p>Oath or Affirmation of Appointment of an Official Agent</p>	<p>This oath or affirmation must be made to appoint an Official Agent and is required before any campaign contributions can be accepted.</p> <p>You can file this form with the Returning Officer when you file your Nomination Paper.</p>
<p>3. FORM 15: Appointment of Agent *optional</p>	<p>You can appoint someone to represent you at the polling at Town Hall</p>	<p>If you choose to appoint an agent, you can file this form with your Nomination Paper</p>
<p>4. FORM 16 Oath or Affirmation of Agent Representing a Candidate</p> <p>*required if you completed FORM 15</p>	<p>Oath or Affirmation of Agent Representing a Candidate</p>	<p>If you choose to appoint an agent, you can file this form with your Nomination Paper</p>
<p>5. FORM 3: Certificate of Taxes and Liens</p>	<p>To qualify for nomination to Council, you must ensure that all municipal charges that are taxes and liens that are due have been fully paid.</p> <p>This applies even if you do not own property or owe taxes.</p>	<p>You will need to file this with your Nomination Paper. Please note this could take up to one week to be prepared so plan accordingly. Contact the Returning Officer to request this certificate as soon as possible.</p>
<p>6. FORM 11: Nomination Paper</p>	<p>Nomination paper for mayoral or councillor candidates.</p>	<p>Must be submitted by: September 10, 5pm</p>
<p>7. FORM 12A: Declaration of Candidate Withdrawing from Nomination.</p>	<p>If you've changed your mind, you have one day to withdraw your Nomination.</p>	<p>Must be submitted by: September 10, 5pm)</p>
<p>8. FORM 12: Affidavit re: Removal of Advertising Materials and Returning of Lists of Electors</p>	<p>Affidavit confirming the removal of advertising materials and the return or destruction of voter's lists.</p>	<p>October 26, 5pm</p>
<p>9. FORM 40: Candidate's Campaign Contributions Disclosure Statement</p>	<p>This form lists the details of all contributions more than \$50 received by a Candidate or Official Agent. This form tracks individual contributions.</p>	<p>Form 40 must be delivered to the Municipal Clerk within 60 days of Election Day by the Official Agent.</p>
<p>10. FORM 41: Association's Campaign Contributions Disclosure Statement</p>	<p>This form is only required when an association of one or more people established to, a trust</p>	<p>Form 40 must be delivered to the Municipal Clerk within 60</p>

*Requirement for this form varies depending on your funding situation.	established for, or a fund is established to further the election of the candidate.	days of Election Day by the Official Agent.
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Deposit

Candidates must pay a \$200 deposit to file their nomination paper.

A full refund will be given to the candidate who is elected or who polled at least half of the number of votes polled by the lowest polling successful candidate, provided that the candidate removes all their advertising materials, returns or destroys the voter’s list, and completes and returns FORM 12.

Half of the deposit will be issued to a candidate who polled less than half of the number of votes polled by the lowest polling successful candidate, provided that the candidate removes all their advertising materials, returns or destroys the voter’s list, and completes and returns FORM 12.

Official agent

Your official agent is responsible for handling your campaign finances and for preparing and filing your campaign disclosure forms following your election. Official agents may also attend polls on your behalf as scrutineer. You can act as your own official agent but cannot act as a scrutineer at the polls during advance voting or on election day.

You can change your official agent any time before ordinary polling day, in writing delivered to the Returning Officer. If you are acting as your own official agent, you can subsequently appoint an official agent before the close of nominations on nomination day.

The official agent must keep track of any campaign contributions and open a bank account for this purpose. Any contributions must be kept separately from personal funds.

Your official agenda can also act on your behalf in some situations, like filing your nomination paper.

If you have any question about the nomination process, please contact the Assistant Returning Officer.

Campaign finances

The law is that a candidate has a responsibility to disclose the names of the donors of more than \$50 to their campaign, and the amount of the contributions. All candidates must file a financial disclosure form, even if they had no contributions to their campaigns.

Contributions

Contributions may only be accepted once an official agent has been appointed, or a candidate has declared they will act as their own official agent. Contributions also include in-kind contributions.

In-kind contributions means a non-monetary contribution in the form of services or property. The value for an in-kind contribution is the price for which services or other property may be sold.

Disclosure, Reporting and Surplus

Within 60 days after Election Day, every candidate must file a Statement of Campaign Contributions and Expenditures and Statement of Campaign Surplus (FORM 40) with the Municipal Clerk.

The date a contribution was received must be recorded.

These forms are made public and posted on the Town's website once received.

Surplus funds can be donated to a non-profit organization or held in trust by the Town of Mahone Bay on behalf of the candidate for their use in a future election.

Certificate of taxes and liens from the town

To qualify for nomination to Council, you must ensure that all municipal charges that are taxes and liens that are due have been fully paid.

A Certificate of Taxes and Liens from the Town of Mahone Bay must be included with your nomination papers. Please note it could take up to one week to receive this certificate. To request a certificate, please see the Nomination Package for form.

Nomination Paper

For this form, you will need:

- **At least five qualified electors (residents of the Town of Mahone Bay) who will sign the nomination paper and nominate you as a candidate.**

The names of the people who sign your nomination paper must appear on the list of electors and they must be qualified to vote for you. This means that they must be eligible to vote in the election. You should get more than five people to sign your nomination paper in the event one or more of your nominators is not qualified.

- **The name of your official agent.**

Your official agent is responsible for filing your campaign finance disclosure forms

following the election and can act on your behalf at certain times. You can act as your own official agent but cannot act as such at the polls.

- **Complete the Consent and Oath or Affirmation of the Candidate.**

The Returning Officer or another person who is qualified to take oaths must take your Oath or Affirmation. The Oath or Affirmation states that you consent to the nomination, that you are qualified to run, that you have paid your taxes and any charges that are liens on property (council candidates only), and that you will accept the office, if you are elected.

Submitting Your Nomination Forms

You become an official candidate by filing your nomination papers in person at Town Hall by making an appointment with the Assistant Returning Officer or Returning Officer during the specific dates and time listed below.

Nomination forms can only be filed, by appointment on the following dates: August 29 & 30, September 3, 4, 5,6, 9. Nomination Day is September 10 between 9:00 am and 5:00pm, and papers can be filed without an appointment.

It is strongly recommended that candidates file their nominations early so that any potential problems can be resolved prior to the deadline.

If you cannot personally file the nomination paper during these times, your official agent can complete and file it for you. You must authorize your official agent in writing to do this on your behalf. The written authorization must be filed in advance with the returning officer, or along with your nomination paper.

As soon as you file your nomination paper, the information about your candidacy becomes public information.

Withdrawing Your Nomination

As a nominated candidate you can withdraw from the election by 4 pm on the day following Nomination Day, September 11, 2024.

After those respective dates, your name must appear on the ballot.

To withdraw you must:

- **Complete FORM 12A:** Declaration of Candidate Withdrawing from Nomination. Please contact the Returning Officer for a copy of this form.
- Meet in person with the Returning Officer to present your identification with your name and address.

- Return all copies of the List of Electors.
- Submit the necessary campaign disclosure forms.

Key Dates

August 29 & 30, 2024 September 3-6, 2024 September 9, 2024	Early filings of nominations.
September 10, 2024	Nomination.
Sept 11, 2024	Change of particulars. Withdrawal of candidate.
October 10, 2024	Advance voting begins.
October 19, 2024	Election Day.
October 22, 2024	Official addition
October 26, 2024	Affidavit of Removal of Signs and Destruction of List of Electors due.
October 29, 2024	Last day for application for a recount.
December 18, 2024	Candidate's Campaign Contributions Disclosure Statement.

Election Advertising & Signs

All printed election material must be identified. Every advertisement having reference to an election that is printed, published, broadcast or distributed, either electronically, or in hard copy, must indicate the name of the person on whose behalf the advertisement is published, printed, broadcast or distributed.

Candidates are responsible for all advertisements made on their behalf.

Homeowners may choose to erect a sign on their own property. Please consult the town's signage policy for rules regarding signage on town land by clicking [here](#).

There are no rules for when a candidate can begin campaigning, however, the candidate is not considered nominated until they have successfully filed their nomination papers.

Election Day for Candidates

Election Day is Saturday, October 19, 2024. Election Day voting hours are 8 am to 7 pm. There will be no paper ballots. Qualified electors may vote by phone or internet, using a unique PIN (Personal Identification Number), starting on October 10 through to October 18. Town Hall staff will be available during regular business hours (Monday to Friday, 9:00am to 4:00pm) to assist voters during advanced polling days.

On Election Day, a polling station will be set up at Town Hall for voters who need assistance.

Unofficial results will be published as they become available after the close of voting stations on Election Day.

After Election Day

If you have been elected, congratulations! You can expect to be formally sworn in within the first week following the election.

Town of Mahone Bay resources are available online.

- [Bylaws](#)
- [Policies](#)
- [Council meeting agendas and minutes](#)
- [Plans Reports and Studies](#)

Provincial resources are also available online.

- [Municipal Government Act](#)
- [Municipal Elections Act](#)
- [Municipal Guide for Candidates](#)
- [New Municipal Councillors Guide](#)