

2025 Municipal Election

The Province requires municipalities in Alberta to hold Elections every four years to determine the Council for the next 4 year period. Occasionally, a by-election may be needed during the term if a vacancy occurs due to a resignation, death, or other circumstances that prevent a current Councillor from fulfilling their duties.

The Council is the governing body of the municipal corporation and the custodian of its powers, both legislative and administrative. The Municipal Government Act provides that council can only exercise the powers of the municipal corporation in the proper form, either by bylaw or resolution.

Village Council is responsible for the growth, direction, and sustainability of the Village of Duchess. Council directs administration in the delivery of services for residents including traffic enforcement, roads and public works maintenance, property assessments, land development, fire, police, and emergency services, and recreational facilities.

A general municipal election will be held on **Monday October 20, 2025**, for the following office within the Village of Duchess. Nomination packages need to be in by **September 22, 2025**.

<i>Office</i>	<i>Number of Vacancies</i>
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<i>Councillors</i>	<i>5</i>
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The Village of Duchess elected Councillors vote on the Mayoral position annually at the Organizational Meeting.

The Village of Duchess is required to follow the procedures outlined in the Local Authorities Election Act (LAEA). Although further policies or bylaws can be created to assist the voters, candidates and scrutineers alike.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE 2025 MUNICIPAL ELECTION PLEASE CONTACT:

Yvonne Cosh, Returning Officer

Donna Billingsley, Sharon Zacharias – Substitute Returning Officers

Village of Duchess

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PLEASE NOTE: The material that follows is provided for information only. This summary is not intended to replace the candidate's responsibility to read and understand this legislation, or to seek appropriate advice from professionals as required. The candidate is responsible for ensuring that their campaign complies with all official statutes and regulations.

CANDIDATE INFORMATION

Role of Council

The Village of Duchess serves as the municipality's governing body and, together with the Chief Administrative Officer, oversees the powers and responsibilities granted under the Municipal Government Act and other relevant legislation, bylaws, and policies. The Council consists of one Mayor, one Deputy Mayor, and 3 Councillors.

The Council's primary role is to guide the municipality's direction by developing policies and programs and making decisions that serve the best interests of Village of Duchess residents and businesses. These policies and programs establish the framework for Administration to manage the Village's daily operations.

According to Alberta's Municipal Government Act, municipalities in the province have six key purposes:

- To provide good governance.
- To foster environmental well-being.
- To promote economic development.
- To offer services, facilities, or other resources deemed necessary or desirable by Council for part or all the municipality.
- To create and sustain safe, viable communities.
- To collaborate with neighbouring municipalities in planning, delivering, and funding intermunicipal services.

The Duchess council fulfills these purposes through its policies, programs and decisions, ensuring they reflect the need of the Village's residents and businesses.

Individuals interested to running for council can consult Alberta Municipal Affairs. "What every Council Member's Handbook" (<https://open.alberta.ca/publications/what-every-councillor-needs-to-know-council-members-handbook>) for detailed information about the roles and responsibilities of municipal councillors in Alberta.

Role of Mayor

The Mayor's primary role is to serve as the official spokesperson for the Village of Duchess and to chair Council meetings. These responsibilities are established under the Municipal Government Act, the Village Council Code of Conduct and the Bylaw Procedure Bylaw.

As the Village spokesperson, the Mayor plays a vital role in communicating Council's decisions, representing Duchess in discussions with other municipalities, and acting on behalf of the village at the provincial and federal levels.

When chairing council meetings, the Mayor must remain impartial and fair to all Councillors, ensuring meetings are conducted in an organized and orderly manner. Additionally, the Mayor often acts as a consensus builder, balancing different priorities and perspectives with council.

Role of Councillor

The Village of Duchess Council consists of 5 councillors who collaborate to set the overall direction of the village through their role as decision makers.

Under the Municipal Government Act (MGA) councillors are responsible for the following 8 duties:

- Considering the welfare and interest of the Village of Duchess as a whole and bringing to Council's attention any matters that would promote the municipalities welfare or interests.
- Encouraging an integrated and strategic approach to introduce full land use planning and service delivery with neighboring municipalities.
- Participating in the development and evaluations of the Villages policies and programs.
- Attending council meetings, committee meetings, and other meetings of bodies which they are appointed by Council.
- Obtaining information from the Chief Administrative Officer regarding the Village operations or administration.
- Maintaining confidentiality for matters discussed in private during Council committee meetings until such matters are addressed in public meetings.
- Adhering to the Village of Duchess Council Code of Conduct Bylaw (Bylaw 471-18) as established by the council.
- Performing any additional duties or functions required by the MGA, other legislation, bylaws, or policies.

As you elected representatives, Councillors are entrusted with serving the interests of the entire municipality. To maintain public trust, Councillors must avoid conflicts or interest in decisions made by the council. They are required to understand and comply with the pecuniary interest and conflict of interest provisions outlined in the Municipal Government Act and abide by the Village of Duchess Council Code of Conduct Bylaw to ensure their decisions do not personally benefit themselves, their families, or their employers.

Role of Chief Administration Officer

The Chief Administrative Officer serves as the administrative leader of the village, responsible for implementing the policies and programs established by council. The CAO also provides advice to Council and ensures it remains informed about the municipality's operations.

The power responsibilities of the CAO are defined in the Municipal Government Act, the Village of Duchess's Chief Administrative Officer Bylaw, and other applicable legislation by laws and policies.

A strong relationship between council and the CAO is crucial for effective municipal administration. Council must have confidence the CAO will execute its decisions, while the CAO must trust Council thoughtfully consider their advice when making decisions.

Training and Orientation

Newly elected Village of Duchess councillors are required to attend a series of orientation sessions to prepare for their term of office on council. Attendance at the orientation sessions is required by the Municipal Government Act.

The following are some of the topics that are required to be covered in the orientation sessions, which will be held after the 2025 municipal election:

- the role of municipalities in Alberta
- the organization and function of municipalities
- budgeting and financial administration
- the roles and responsibilities councillors
- The roles and responsibilities of the Chief Administrative Officer and the Village of Duchess employees

Councillors may attend additional training throughout their term of office as provided for in Council Village of Duchess Remuneration Policy.

The following training options are popular with newly elected councillors in Alberta:

- Elected Officials Education Program (EOEP) (<https://eoep.ca>) Which is offered to councillors from municipalities affiliated with the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) and Alberta Municipalities (AB Munis)
- Emergency Management Training (<https://www.alberta.ca/training-requirements-and-mandatory-exercises>) which is offered through the Alberta Emergency Management Agency (AEMA) and is mandatory for councillors in Alberta
- National Advanced Certificate in Local Authority Administration (NACLAA), (<https://coned.ualberta.ca/public/category/courseCategorymethod=load&certificateld=1031658>) which is offered through the University of Alberta

Time Commitment

Being a Village of Duchess councillor which involves a significant amount of time to be dedicated towards performing the duties of the office. Councillors are expected to do the following:

- prepare for and attend Council meetings and meetings of the boards and committees to which they are pointed by Council
- attend and represent the Village of Duchess at public events such as grand opening, parades, open houses, and public meetings
- Prepare for and attend workshops and other training opportunities provided or facilitated by the Village
- answer emails, letters, and phone calls from residents

Meetings

One of the core duties of the Village of Duchess councillors is to attend council meetings, and meetings of various other boards and committees that a councillor may be appointed to by Council.

Council meetings are generally held on the 3rd Monday of each month beginning at 7:00 PM.

In addition to regular meetings, you will be required to attend special meeting such as budget, committee and board meetings, and various public meetings.

Councillors will be required to prepare for these meetings by reviewing the agenda packages prior to the meetings in order to make informed decisions.

Key Documents, Policies, Bylaws and Legislation

Municipal Government Act (MGA)

Municipalities in Alberta operate under the Municipal Government Act (MGA) which defines their purposes and powers, ranging from small villages with a few hundred residents to large cities with populations exceeding a million. Nearly all functions of the Village of Duchess, including governance, planning and development, taxation and assessment and bylaw enforcement are rooted in the provisions of the MGA.

While Councillors are not required to have an in-depth understanding of the entire MGA, familiarity with its key section is encouraged, as the legislation outlines the scope of what the village of Duchess can and cannot do.

Following the 2025 municipal election, an orientation session will provide to the Village of Duchess councillors, highlighting the most important aspects of the MGA.

Council Code of Conduct Bylaw (Bylaw 471-18)

The Municipal Government Act requires all Alberta municipalities to establish a Council Code of Conduct. In the Village of Duchess all councillors must comply with the standards outlined in the Village's Council Code of Conduct Bylaw.

The bylaw defines the ethical standards expected of Councillors, including how they represent and communicate on behalf of the Village, as well as how they interact with fellow councillors, municipal employees, and the public.

The bylaw also establishes procedures for filing complaints against Councillors suspected of violating the code, processes for investigating such complaints, and mechanisms for imposing sanctions if a breach is confirmed.

Council Procedure Bylaw (Bylaw 524-25)

The Village of Duchess Procedure Bylaw outlines the process for making decisions during Council meetings and providing guidance on how individual Councillors can present their proposals for Council's consideration.

All Councillors especially the Mayor who chairs Council meetings are expected to be familiar with the provisions of the Procedure Bylaw. It is the responsibility of every Councillor to understand that comply with its requirements.

