

## RUNNING FOR COUNCIL IN 2021

In Alberta, Local Governments elections are held every four (4) years. It's only several months until Municipal elections are held (October 2021), and if you are thinking of running for Village Council, now is the time to begin planning.

For the Village of Chauvin, Council is structured as follows. Voters select up to five (5) candidates from the ballot. Present members do not automatically stay on Council. They must submit nomination papers on nomination day as do new candidates. The five (5) elected Councillors hold an organizational meeting once a year to decide who will serve as Mayor and Deputy Mayor, as well as determining who will sit on various committees.

To be a candidate, you must be at least eighteen (18) years of age as of the nomination day in September, a Canadian citizen, and a resident of the village for at least six (6) months prior to nomination day.

You are qualified to run if you are not in debt to the Village for anything over five hundred dollars (\$500.00), and your property taxes are less than fifty dollars (\$50.00) in arrears. If you are a Village employee, you must take a leave of absence to run and serve.

Pick up a nomination form at the Village Office. It must be signed by at least five (5) qualified voters.

The nomination period is critical. Nominations open January 1st 2021 until September 20th 2021 at noon. You can file the nomination yourself, or have someone file your completed nomination form during that time. No late nominations are accepted. Once nominations are submitted, the returning officer determines if each nomination is valid. When nominations end on Sept 20th, an office can be filled by acclamation, or an election held if there are enough candidates. When nominations close, a candidate has twenty-four (24) hours to decide to withdraw if there will still be enough on the ballot to fill all vacancies.

A term of Council is four (4) years between fixed election dates. Councillors are expected to attend regular and special meetings of Council, as well as serve on any committees assigned during the annual organizational meeting. Serving on Council is a significant part-time job. Members spend many hours each month taking part in scheduled meetings and attending various functions as assigned. Meeting dates are set by Council and can be changed by motion. Currently Village Council's regular meetings are the second Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m.

Some committees have lots of work and meet regularly and the Councillor is expected to be an active participant. Some require a Council Representative as an observer, to be able to bring back information to Council when motions are required. Some committees only meet as necessary, and may have no activity in the course of a year.

For 2021, the Mayor and Councillors are paid one hundred dollars (\$200.00 minimum) per month. This covers attendance of committee meetings and functions on behalf of the Village and for the performance of duties. When representing the Village, outside of the Village boundaries, Mayor and Council are reimbursed according to a schedule adopted annually. The total amounts reflect honorarium salary, benefits, and allowances. About a third (1/3) of the honorarium salary is considered expenses and is therefore, not taxable.

It is important to make only promises you can keep while campaigning. Village Council has limited power and authority which it cannot overstep, regardless of the desire of the members. It is governed by the Municipal Government Act, as well as a number of provincial laws and regulations.

Council's role is not to run the Municipality directly. That is the job of the Chief Administrative Officer and the staff. It is up to Council to set and approve the budget, set out plans and objectives, and set policies for the local government to follow. New Councillors must get up to speed quickly on a wide variety of topics, such as the numerous agreements between local Municipalities, which include such things as waste handling, local social services, and municipal planning.

The Village of Chauvin has developed an informative Councillor Orientation Manual which answers many of the questions of a potential candidate. Please stop by the Village office and we would be happy to share this with you or visit our website.