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**CITY OF PETERBOROUGH**

**Report COU06-009  
Councillor Information  
Frequently Asked Questions**

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## **1. What is the composition of the City of Peterborough Council?**

The Council of the City of Peterborough is composed of the Mayor and 10 Councillors. The ten (10) Councillors are elected to represent five (5) wards within the municipality (two (2) per ward). The Mayor is elected by all of the citizens of the City of Peterborough (elected at large).

## **2. What is the governance structure in the City of Peterborough?**

The basic governing structure of the municipality consists of two components – the elected Council and the Municipal staff.

The Council combines both executive and legislative responsibilities. It proposes policies, passes laws (known as by-laws) and appoints and directs the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). The CAO is the only employee who reports directly to Council. The Council as a whole makes decisions (according to majority vote) on policies. Individual Councillors do not have any authority to make decisions on behalf of Council.

The day-to-day running of the municipality is handled by staff (the municipal civil service) lead by the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), organized into departments that reflect the responsibilities being exercised by the municipality. Staff take direction from their supervisors or directors based on administrative directives.

Councillors and staff have to operate within the legislation that is provided to municipalities by the Provincial Government. The municipality is in existence because the Provincial Government has legislated that it be through the Municipal Act, 2001. Therefore, the Council cannot act outside its spheres of jurisdiction unless authority has been provided by the province through the various Acts of the Legislature.

The City of Peterborough is considered a single tier municipality and not part of the County of Peterborough.

## **3. What is the defined role of the Mayor and Council?**

According to the Municipal Act, 2001, the role of Council and the Head of Council is defined as follows:

### **Role of council**

**224.** It is the role of council,

- (a) to represent the public and to consider the well-being and interests of the municipality;
- (b) to develop and evaluate the policies and programs of the municipality;
- (c) to determine which services the municipality provides;
- (d) to ensure that administrative practices and procedures are in place to implement the decisions of council;
- (e) to maintain the financial integrity of the municipality; and
- (f) to carry out the duties of council under this or any other Act. 2001, c. 25, s. 224.

### **Role of head of council**

**225.** It is the role of the head of council,

- (a) to act as chief executive officer of the municipality;
- (b) to preside over council meetings;
- (c) to provide leadership to the council;
- (d) to represent the municipality at official functions; and
- (e) to carry out the duties of the head of council under this or any other Act. 2001, c. 25, s. 225.

### **Role of Administration**

**226.** It is the role of the officers and employees of the municipality

- (a) to implement council's decision and establish administrative practices and procedures to carry out council's decision;
- (b) to undertake research and provide advice to council on the policies and programs of the municipality; and
- (c) to carry out other duties required under this or any Act and other duties assigned by the municipality

## **4. How long is the term of Council?**

The term for Council is now four years in length, as amended by the *Budget Measures Act, 2006*. This change will become effective on December 1, 2006.

## **5. What is the salary of Members of Council?**

### Mayor (Full time Position)

- Salary in 2007 is \$60,800.00
- Car allowance of \$426.00/month
- The Mayor may buy into the OMERS pension plan

### Councillors

- Salary in 2007 is \$24,895.00

## **6. How many meetings of Council are members required to attend?**

Meetings are held every Monday evening at City Hall, from approximately 5:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. The inaugural meeting for the newly elected Council will take place on Monday December 4, 2006.

The City of Peterborough has three standing committees of Council that assist council in discharging its responsibilities. All members of Council serve as members of the Planning Committee and Committee of the Whole. There is a three-week cycle of meetings as follows: Planning Committee, Committee of the Whole and City Council. The Audit Committee meets quarterly and has 5 members of Council on it.

The Mayor chairs the meetings of City Council. The Mayor has traditionally appointed a member of Council to chair the Planning Committee and the Committee of the Whole for the term of Council.

All meetings of Council (including standing committees) are conducted in accordance with the Procedural By-Law (By-Law 97-108 as amended) which represents the rules of conduct of a meeting of Council, and Council members.

The Mayor has traditionally appointed both a First and Second Deputy Mayor who assume the duties of the Mayor in his/her absence.

In the event of a holiday falling on a Monday, the scheduled meeting will take place on the Tuesday evening. There is a two-week break in the schedule in both July and August.

The Council meeting schedule is issued to Members of Council in early Fall of each year and is also posted on the City website.

**7. What is the time commitment/requirement of Council members in addition to the weekly meetings?**

It is necessary for Members of Council to prepare for the weekly meeting by reading the agenda and accompanying reports. It may also be necessary for a Member of Council to complete research on certain issues prior to the meeting, or to be in contact with the public and/or City staff.

A Member of Council must be readily available to the public and is required to provide personal contact information, including a residential telephone number.

Members of Council are assigned an email account, as well as voice mail and personal mailbox for both internal and external correspondence and communication.

It is also necessary for Members of Council to attend special functions and on occasion municipal conferences.

Council members must understand issues relating to all functional areas of the City operations. This includes:

- Community Services
- Finance and Administration
- Human Resources
- Legal Services
- Social Services
- Planning and Development
- Utility Services

**8. Are there any other Committees that I would be required to serve on as a Councillor?**

Council appoints individuals to various boards and committees on an annual basis, and it is possible for Members of Council to also serve on such committees which they have expressed a personal interest. Members of Council are generally appointed to Committees that are specific to their Ward responsibilities.

In the term of Council from 2003-2006, the average number of Committees that Council members sat on was five (5) to six (6), however, some Council members served on as many as eight (8) Committees, while others served on no more than two (2). As Head of Council, the Mayor would sit on additional Committees.

## **9. What level of computer proficiency is required?**

Correspondence is circulated through the City's e-mail, and it is necessary for Members of Council to access e-mail and to respond to inquiries from staff and the public using this system.

It may also be necessary to conduct research using the Internet regarding various issues and concerns that are being addressed by Council or requested by constituents.

Basic word processing skills may also be required if the Council member intends to prepare reports or letters personally.

Councillors are provided with computers for City business at the beginning of their term of Council.

## **10. Do I need to have a financial background in order to fulfill my duties with regards to budgets and other financial decisions the Council may be required to make?**

An extensive financial background is not necessary to run in the November 2006 Municipal Election, but there are several key concepts/requirements that candidates should be aware of and understand. The City of Peterborough has a multi-million dollar budget for the operation of many departments. The City operates programs in many areas, such as Social Services, Social Housing, Transportation, Public Works etc. Councillors must understand the implication of financial decisions when reviewing the municipal budget – operating and capital budgets and tax rate implications.

The Friday prior to every Council meeting, Councillors will receive an agenda package that contains staff reports, correspondence, etc. Each Council Report will contain a Budget and Financial Implications section that outlines how the Report recommendations will affect the City financially.

Using this information, Councillors make decisions on whether or not to approve the recommendations, which could either allocate financial resources that have already been approved or pre-approve funds that hadn't already been included in prior years budgets.