



Candidate's Guide

2026 Municipal Councillor By-Election

WHAT IS LOCAL GOVERNANCE ALL ABOUT?

Local governance is about providing services to residents within a responsible budget and time frame. Local government exists, primarily, as a service provider. These services have a direct impact on the health, safety and quality of life for the residents of your community.

These services include (but are not limited to):

- ✓ Drinking, sewage and storm water;
- ✓ Household and commercial waste, compost, recycling;
- ✓ Recreational activities, facilities, trails;
- ✓ Roads, and other transportation infrastructure;
- ✓ Property taxes, local improvement charges; and
- ✓ Plans, plans and more plans!

WHO SHOULD RUN FOR LOCAL MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS?

There are many residents in a community eligible to run for local elections, but a better question could be 'Who should run and what are some of the qualities most needed?'

Local councils are traditionally best served by residents who:

- ✓ Have a sincere desire to make a positive difference in their community;
- ✓ Have a willingness to talk to, listen to and understand the public and their interests;
- ✓ Bring energy and enthusiasm to Council and to the community;
- ✓ Are patient - change takes time;
- ✓ Have the time to commit to their responsibilities;
- ✓ Are team players who work well with others and accept various opinions; and
- ✓ Have passion for the community.

WHAT IS THE TIME COMMITMENT NECESSARY TO BE A LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIAL?

If elected to your local council, it does mean a significant commitment of time. It is important not to underestimate the amount of time required to be a dedicated and effective council member.

When elected, you will serve a term of office (typically 4 years, however, approximately 2 years remaining in the current term) and during this time you will need to prepare for and attend:

- ✓ Regular and special council meetings (1-4/month);
- ✓ Meetings of council committees;
- ✓ Meetings of other organizations as a representative of council; and
- ✓ Community events.

The preparation for these meetings can take double the amount of time as the meetings themselves!

HOW CAN I PREPARE TO BE A LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIAL?

To better understand and prepare for the election and potentially the position of a local elected official there are a number of activities you can undertake.

You can:

- ✓ Attend existing council meetings and see how they operate;
- ✓ Review a copy of the council's strategic plan and annual budget;
- ✓ Speak to past mayors and councillors; and
- ✓ Research areas of importance and become more involved in the activities of the community.

You should also develop a platform when running for a position on a council. A platform consists of the ideas, goals and beliefs you are campaigning for. It lets the voters know what position you have on issues.

When developing your platform, you should:

- ✓ Do research on prevalent issues;
- ✓ Talk and listen to the residents including youth and elders;
- ✓ Make only factual statements that you believe in;
- ✓ Take a stand on issues, but do not make promises;
- ✓ Do not limit yourself to one issue; and

- ✓ Commit to standing behind certain community, territorial or national projects and issues.

WHAT ARE THE BASIC DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS ARE ACCOUNTABLE FOR?

If elected, it is important to remember that you have requested and received the trust of the electorate. It will be your duty to keep the electors informed as to how you are discharging the trust and confidence they placed in you.

It will also be your duty as an elected official to act for the whole municipality, not just the district from which you were elected. You will have a duty to strive to improve the finances, health, security and quality of life in your municipality as a whole.

You will have a personal responsibility to fulfill the obligations of the office with impartiality and integrity to the best of your ability. To do this:

- ✓ Become informed about the problems which face your municipality today;
- ✓ Become informed about your council's legal powers and limitations to solve these problems;
- ✓ Make decisions without fear, favour or evasion - and always in the best interest of the whole municipality;
- ✓ Resist the pressures of groups of your electors organized for selfish purposes;
- ✓ Be prepared to serve on committees of council and accept other duties as assigned by council;
- ✓ Share information which you may receive from outside agencies, at conferences, training sessions or meetings, with other members of council;
- ✓ Be prepared to accept responsibility for majority decisions of council - even though it may mean supporting a decision that you did not vote for; and
- ✓ Try to create an informed interest in community and public affairs in your municipality.

COUNCIL COMPOSITION

A municipal council is composed of elected officials. The Town of Watson Lake normally elect a mayor and four councillors.

The mayor, in addition to performing their duties as a member of council, must provide leadership to their council and direction to the chief administrative officer. They preside at all council meetings and maintain order, proper conduct and decorum at these meetings. They may act as spokesperson for the community at special functions and with the news media.

It is interesting to note that in the decision-making process all councillors including the mayor or chairperson are equal - they each have one vote. By virtue of their office, the mayor or chairperson may be able to persuade other councillors to follow their lead but in the final result neither the mayor nor the chairperson has any more power in council than any other member.

COUNCIL MEETINGS

It is the duty, obligation and responsibility of every councillor to attend all meetings of council and take part in debates, discussions, and decisions on municipal business. In all these meetings it is important to be prepared to listen to other members of council, and to collectively reach decisions which are in the best interest of the municipality.

If you have a monetary interest in a matter under consideration by council, then you must not take part in the discussion or vote on such a matter. In a closed meeting, you should leave the room until the question has been dealt with. If the meeting is open, you may simply leave the table and sit in the public gallery.

BYLAWS AND REGULATIONS

Municipal council decisions are expressed in the form of either a bylaw or resolution. Bylaws are the formal enactment, under the seal of the municipality, of rules and regulations adopted by council to regulate and manage the affairs of the municipality. They are binding once adopted by council and may be viewed as the municipal equivalent of territorial or federal legislation.

Resolutions are less formal. A resolution expresses the decision of council on a particular matter submitted to it in the form of a motion, as moved and seconded, and adopted by a majority vote. Although not as formal as a bylaw, a resolution, once adopted by council, will normally be as binding as a bylaw, until it is reversed or amended.

RULES OF PROCEDURE

The procedure, agenda and general rules governing council and its meetings are outlined in the municipality's procedure bylaw. These procedural rules are established to assist council in conducting its business in an efficient and orderly manner. You can contact your municipal office to obtain a copy of the procedure bylaw.

COMMITTEES OF COUNCIL

If elected, you will be asked to serve on a number of the various standing and special committees of council. It is at the committee level that many matters are given detailed scrutiny before formal consideration by council. Standing committees of a municipal council generally relate to such matters as fire protection, public health, streets, public works, finance, bylaw amendments, libraries, planning and development. Special committees are also appointed in relation to special tasks or projects.

COUNCIL AND ADMINISTRATION

It is council's job (in a municipality) to formulate policy and make decisions while staff implement these policies and decisions.

You should avoid the temptation to become a quasi-administrator. You should leave day-to-day administrative matters to the staff and concentrate on your role in providing staff with clear and concise policy direction.

Council ↔ Administration relations should be based on respect and mutual trust.

You will find it helpful to familiarize yourself with the various services provided by your municipality. This can be easily done by consulting your chief administrative officer (CAO) or the appropriate department head. In addition, you should familiarize yourself with the organizational chart of the municipal unit so that you have a clear picture of the personnel responsible for specific services.

AM I ELIGIBLE TO RUN AS A CANDIDATE?

To be eligible for election as mayor or councillor you must be a qualified voter. This means:

- ✓ you must be a Canadian citizen on the day of your nomination;
- ✓ be at least 18 years of age on polling (election) day; and
- ✓ you must have lived for at least one year preceding polling day in the municipality.

PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT ELIGIBLE TO RUN AS A CANDIDATE

A number of situations or occupations disqualify a person from holding municipal office. These include:

- ✓ an employee or salaried officer of the municipality who has not obtained a leave of absence without pay to run for office;

- ✓ having been convicted of an election offence under subsection 51(7) or sections 160 to 163 of the Yukon Municipal Act in the previous four (4) years;
- ✓ having been convicted of an offence under Section 254 of the Yukon Municipal Act within the previous five years;
- ✓ if they are a judge, including a judge of the Territorial Court;
- ✓ if they are indebted to the municipality for an overdue debt exceeding \$500, other than a debt for current year taxes, or a debt for provision of a basic service under a program that meets the requirements set out in subsection 252(2.02) of the Yukon Municipal Act;
- ✓ if they are currently under sentence for an indictable offence;
- ✓ if they cease, before election day, to be entitled under Section 48 of the Yukon Municipal Act; or
- ✓ if they are a member of the Yukon Legislative Assembly, a member of Parliament, or a chief or councillor of a Yukon First Nation.

NOMINATION PROCESS

Details regarding the date, time, and place of nomination will be posted in areas that are accessible to the public. These notices will be published no later than September 9, 2026. Contact your Municipal Office to find out when the nomination period in your municipality will start.

Thursday, September 24, 2026, is Nomination Day. Your nomination paper must be filed with the returning officer, no later than noon (12:00 p.m.) on Nomination Day.

In order to become nominated to run in your local election, you need to do the following:

- ✓ obtain a blank nomination paper from your returning officer;
- ✓ get your nomination paper signed by at least ten qualified voters (it is advisable to have more than the minimum required in case some of your nominators are not qualified voters);
- ✓ complete and sign the “oath and consent” portion of your nomination paper; and;
- ✓ return your completed nomination form to the returning officer no later than noon on September 24, 2026.

The nomination paper includes a section requiring your disclosure of any convictions within the preceding 10 years for indictable offences under the Criminal Code for which you have not received a pardon.

Once you have filed your nomination paper and the returning officer is satisfied that you have complied with the necessary requirements, you are officially nominated.

ACCLAMATION

Where only one candidate is nominated, or exactly the number of candidates required for the number of seats are nominated, the returning officer will declare the candidate or candidates concerned, elected, once the time for a challenge has expired (s. 82(2) of *Yukon Municipal Act*).

GRANT OF POLL (ELECTION)

If there are several people competing for the same office, the returning officer will call the election and publish the names of candidates, the dates and times of the advance and regular polls, and the location of polling stations in your community.

ELECTION!!!

Election Day is Thursday, October 15, 2026.

COUNTING OF VOTES

Immediately after the close of the poll on Election Day, the returning officer with the assistance of poll clerks or designated municipal officers and in the presence of the candidates and their agents, will open the ballot boxes. The returning officer will examine the ballot papers and proceed to count the votes.

RECOUNT OF VOTES (if necessary)

A recount of the votes, if necessary, is done by the returning officer and must be held within 24 hours of the close of the polls on polling day.

Any candidate or their agent may attend and, if necessary, the returning officer may summon any person to bring all relevant documents and examine witnesses to help ascertain the result of the poll.

BREAKING OF A TIE VOTE (if necessary)

If the votes cast in respect of two or more candidates are equal in number, the returning officer shall, in the presence of at least one other election official and any candidate or agent present at the time, write the name of each candidate on an identical sheet of paper,

fold each sheet in an identical manner, deposit each sheet into a non-transparent receptacle, and withdraw the number of sheets that are equal to the number of candidates required to be elected.

The returning officer shall declare each candidate whose name appears on a withdrawn sheet of paper to be elected.

PROCLAMATION OF ELECTION RESULTS

The returning officer will publish unofficial results of the voting as they are received from polling places on election day. However, the official results of the election will be proclaimed on the 4th day following election day.

A statement will be issued by the returning officer showing the number of votes cast for each of the candidates.

WHO TO CONTACT

Returning Officer: Jenny Skelton
(867) 334-6566
jskelton@northwestel.net

Town: Municipal Clerk, Tiffany Lund
(867) 536-8000 ext. 9
cdo@watsonlake.ca

KEY DATES

September 24	Deadline for nomination forms to be submitted
October 5	Special Ballots available
October 13	Mobile Poll open 8:30am – 4:00pm
October 15	Election Day! Polls open 8:00am – 8:00pm (Morgan Chaddock Hall, Watson Lake Recreation Centre)