

# Elected-staff relations

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## Contents of this Section

- ▶ **Elected-staff Relations**
  - ▶ Why is role clarity so important
  - ▶ What does the legislation say?
  - ▶ What does good practice say?
  - ▶ Who does what?
  - ▶ The elected-staff partnership

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## Why is role clarity so important?

- ▶ **Democracy**
  - ▶ Community elects those who set overall direction and policy
- ▶ **Good Decisions**
  - ▶ Elected officials need objective professional advice about alternatives, before making decisions
- ▶ **Efficient Implementation**
  - ▶ Council's decisions need to be fairly implemented by those with appropriate qualifications.

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### Role Comparison

#### ELECTED OFFICIALS

- ▶ PROVIDE LEADERSHIP
- ▶ SET POLITICAL DIRECTION
- ▶ MAKE DECISIONS – CHOOSE BETWEEN ALTERNATIVES
- ▶ ESTABLISH POLICY
- ▶ REVIEW CAO'S PERFORMANCE
- ▶ AVOID ADMINISTRIVIA

#### STAFF

- ▶ PROVIDE ADVICE
- ▶ IMPLEMENT DIRECTION
- ▶ ADVISE ABOUT ALTERNATIVES
- ▶ ADVISE ABOUT POLICY AND IMPLEMENT POLICY DECISIONS
- ▶ REVIEW SUBORDINATES' PERFORMANCE
- ▶ AVOID POLITICS

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### Role Comparison

#### ELECTED OFFICIALS

- ▶ KEEP INFORMED ON COMMUNITY AFFAIRS
- ▶ COLLABORATE WITH OTHER AGENCIES AT POLITICAL LEVEL
- ▶ COMMUNICATE WITH CONSTITUENTS

#### STAFF

- ▶ KEEP CURRENT ON PROFESSIONAL TRAINING
- ▶ COLLABORATE WITH OTHER AGENCIES AT STAFF LEVEL
- ▶ PROVIDE PUBLIC INFORMATION

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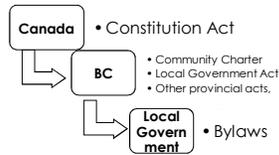
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### What does the legislation say?

- ▶ Provincial legislation authorizes all activities that local governments may undertake.

Bish and Clemens  
Local Government in BC




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**Role of Council/Regional Districts**

- ▶ providing for good government of its community,
- ▶ providing for services, laws and other matters for community benefit,
- ▶ providing for stewardship of the public assets of its community, and
- ▶ fostering the economic, social and environmental well-being of its community.

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**Responsibilities of Council/Board Members (including the Mayor/Chair)**

- ▶ to consider the well-being and interests of the local gov't and its community;
- ▶ to contribute to the development and evaluation of the policies and programs of the municipality respecting its services and other activities;
- ▶ to participate in council meetings, committee meetings and meetings of other bodies to which the member is appointed;
- ▶ to carry out other duties assigned by the council;

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**Mayor's Responsibilities (similar for Regional District Chairs)**

- (1) The mayor is the head and chief executive officer of the municipality.
- (2) In addition to the mayor's responsibilities as a member of council, the mayor has the following responsibilities:
- ▶ to provide leadership to the council, including by recommending bylaws, resolutions and other measures that, in the mayor's opinion, may assist the peace, order and good government of the municipality;
  - ▶ to communicate information to the council;
  - ▶ to preside at council meetings when in attendance;

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### Mayor's Responsibilities (cont'd)

- ▶ to provide, on behalf of the council, general direction to municipal officers respecting implementation of municipal policies, programs and other directions of the council;
- ▶ to establish standing committees
- ▶ to suspend municipal officers and employees in accordance with section 151;
- ▶ to reflect the will of council and to carry out other duties on behalf of the council;

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### Municipalities and Regional Districts

- ▶ A Council or Board **MUST** establish the following officer positions (*Community Charter s. 146, Local Government Act s. 234 and others – see handout*)
  - ▶ Corporate Administration
  - ▶ Financial Administration
  - ▶ Chief and Deputy Election Officers
  - ▶ Auditor
  - ▶ Collector of Taxes
- ▶ A Council or Board **MAY** establish a Chief Administrative Officer Position (*Community Charter s. 147, Local Government Act s. 235*)

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### Officer Duties – from Legislation

#### CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

- When established, the CAO position is responsible for:
- ▶ overall management of the operations of the municipality;
  - ▶ ensuring that the policies, programs and other directions of the council are implemented;
  - ▶ advising and informing the council on the operation and affairs of the municipality.

#### OTHER OFFICERS

##### FINANCIAL OFFICER

Responsibility for financial administration

##### CORPORATE OFFICER

Responsibility for a range of administrative duties

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**What does good practice say?**

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**Best Practices for Decision-making Bodies**

- ▶ Focus on Governance, not Administration
- ▶ Focus on What and Why, not How
- ▶ Govern 'from the balcony', not from the ground floor
- ▶ Is the ultimate policy-making authority
- ▶ Serves its community as a collective voice, not as individuals

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**Best practices for staff**

- ▶ CAO is responsible for providing expert professional advice and for implementing Council or Board decisions
- ▶ Staff are apolitical, and provide unbiased, professional advice
  - ▶ Staff advice should be based on what Council 'needs' to hear, not on what it may 'want' to hear
- ▶ CAO provides leadership to staff to ensure engagement and effectiveness

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### Who does what?

► **The Boat Analogy**

- Council says where the boat will go
- CAO is the Captain of the boat – advises Council about what will be needed, direct the boat as Council has requests, and report progress regularly.
- Council needs to ensure staff have sufficient resources to take the boat where it wishes to go.

► **The House Analogy**

- Council says what kind of house to build
- CAO is the contractor – advises Council about what materials and contractors will be needed, implement the decision and report progress to Council regularly.
- Council needs to ensure staff have sufficient resources to build the house that Council wants

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### The elected-staff partnership

**Best Practices for Relationships with Staff:**

- One employee – the CAO
  - Council hires and assesses performance of the CAO
- CAO role
  - Provide good advice to Council/Board about direction and policy
  - Hires, manages and assesses staff's performance to ensure Council/Board's decisions are carried out

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### Goal: Highly engaged staff

- Council – Code of Conduct, rules of engagement
- Council to CAO – respect, clear expectations and regular feedback
  - CAO to all staff – respect, clear expectations and regular feedback
- Council directs staff by resolution in proper meeting, through the CAO
  - As an individual Council member, avoid giving direction to individual staff
- Respect the CAO's authority and responsibility for staff
  - Expect the best
- Praise in public, criticize in private (to the CAO in closed session of Council)

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**Goal: Non-political staff**

**Things to do – for Council or Board**

- ▶ Base CAO hiring and evaluation on merit (knowledge, education, experience, skills)
- ▶ Treat all staff as professionals
- ▶ Observe the 'chain of command' in the organization

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**Goal: Non-political staff**

**Things to Avoid – for Council or Board**

- ▶ Basing the CAO hiring and evaluation on political factors
- ▶ Council involvement in hiring of staff below the CAO level
- ▶ Involving staff in your election campaign, or soliciting political support from them
- ▶ Becoming close personal friends with staff (including the CAO)
- ▶ Involving staff in your critiques of fellow council members

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**Goal: Non-political staff**

**▶ Things to Do – for CAO**

- ▶ Provide governance orientation to the new Council
- ▶ Give each new council an early opportunity to put its stamp on strategic directions
- ▶ Ensure Council/Board members understand how to getting their initiatives in front of the Council/Board
- ▶ Shape shift after the election, as needed

**▶ Things to Avoid – for Staff**

- ▶ Becoming close personal friends with some elected officials
- ▶ Providing information to one or a few members of Council/Board, while excluding others
- ▶ Becoming publicly involved in election campaigns (for or against) of elected officials
- ▶ Giving the impression that you are anything but neutral about election outcomes

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**Goal: Getting things done**

- ▶ **Best practices for Elected Officials**
  - ▶ Focus on governance, vision and priorities
  - ▶ Understand the extent of your jurisdiction
  - ▶ Understand the resources needed to achieve your goals
  - ▶ Work in an encouraging way. Celebrate success.
- ▶ **Best practices for staff**
  - ▶ Respect for the role of the Council/board
  - ▶ Provide means for elected officials to advance their ideas
    - ▶ Through Council/Board
    - ▶ Provide good advice about resources needed

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**Your best chance for success...**

- ▶ A respectful partnership between
  - ▶ an effective Council or Board
  - and
  - ▶ highly-engaged, apolitical staff

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