

# **Chapter 5: Electing your representative**

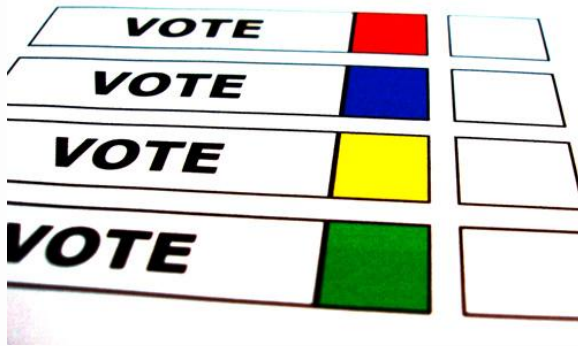
# Governing Structure

## The Municipal Council

- ✓ A municipality's powers are exercised on behalf of its residents by a council elected by them.



# Methods of Election



Members of council are generally chosen from **at large elections** or **ward elections**.

# At Large Elections

- In an at large election (also referred to as election by general vote), candidates stand for election across the entire municipality and all eligible voters within the municipality can vote for any candidate.



# Election by Ward

- If there is an election by ward, the municipality is divided into a number of separate geographic areas, usually referred to as wards or districts, with a very limited number of councillors elected from each ward.
- Only the eligible voters within each ward can vote for candidates running for election in that ward.

# Head of Council

## Mayor/Reeve/Warden/Chair



- ✓ Heads of council have only one vote just like every other member of council, but can exert significant influence and power through their leadership and vision for the municipality.

# Voting and Running for Council

You are eligible to vote if you are:

- A Canadian citizen
- At least 18 years of age
- A resident in the municipality, or the owner or renter of land in the municipality, or the spouse of a resident, owner, or tenant of land in the municipality.



# Councils Must...

- Represent the residents of the municipality and provide programs and services in response to their needs and wishes
- Make sure there are enough municipal staff to provide these services and carry out all the responsibilities of the municipality
- Adopt a budget every year that sets out how much money will be needed to run the municipality for the coming year and identifies where that money will be found
- Balance the budget and not spend more than collected. Councils cannot budget for a deficit like the provincial and federal governments

# Council Meetings

The council has to exercise its powers in formal meetings that must follow a number of legal requirements. Particular emphasis is given to the openness of meetings, on the grounds that “the public’s business is public business.”



# Standing Committees

