



## *How to Run Effective Council and Committee Meetings*

Photo location: Bay Bulls



75<sup>TH</sup>  
ANNIVERSARY

## Legislative Framework

(A quick refresh!)

### Key Points:

- The *Towns and Local Service Districts Act* governs council and committee meetings.
- Sections 38–48 outline meeting requirements, transparency rules, and committee structures.
- Councils must follow legislated procedures and adopt local rules of procedure.



## Regular and Special Meetings (Sections 38 & 39)

### Key Points

- Regular meetings must occur at least monthly.
- Date, time, and location approved annually by resolution.
- Special meetings may be called by the Town Clerk at the request of:
  - The Mayor, or
  - Written request of two councillors.
- Minimum 24 hours notice required.
- Only business listed in the notice may be discussed unless all members agree otherwise.



## **Open Meetings (Section 40)**

### **Key Points**

- All council and committee meetings must be open to the public.
- Transparency is required by legislation.
- Public access strengthens accountability and trust.



## **Closed Meetings (Section 41)**

### **Key Points**

- Meetings may close only for the 10 legislated reasons.
- Public must not be present during closed discussions.
- Only limited resolutions/by-laws may be adopted.
- Records are restricted as defined in legislation.
- Decisions must be ratified at a public meeting.



## **Rules of Procedure (Section 46)**

### **Key Points**

- Council must adopt formal rules of procedure.
- Rules guide debate, motions, and decision-making.
- Ensures fairness, consistency, and efficiency.
- Template available on the MNL and PMA websites



## Committees (Sections 47 & 48)

### Key Points

- Standing or special committees require at least two councillors.
- Council establishes mandates and procedures.
- Advisory committees may include residents or experts.
- Council defines scope, functions, and guidelines.



## Liabilities: Legal Responsibilities

### Key Points

- Duty of care: act in municipality's best interests.
- Avoid negligence through informed decisions.
- Disclose conflicts of interest.
- Follow legislation and municipal policies.



## **Liabilities: Ethical Responsibilities**

### **Key Points**

- Maintain integrity and impartiality.
- Avoid undue influence or personal gain.
- Protect confidentiality when required.
- Maintain public trust through ethical conduct.



The best approach to running **effective** municipal council or committee meetings is to combine the requirements of provincial municipal legislation with strong governance practices that keep meetings focused, transparent, and productive!



**75<sup>TH</sup>**  
ANNIVERSARY

## **1. Establish a predictable meeting schedule**

This improves attendance, allows staff to prepare properly, and helps the public know when meetings occur.

## **2. Send agendas and materials in advance**

Provide councillors with the agenda, reports, financial information, committee recommendations, and correspondence before the meeting.



### **3. Use committee work effectively**

Committees should do the detailed analysis and discussion, then bring clear recommendations to council. This allows council meetings to focus on decision-making rather than lengthy information gathering.

### **4. Set deadlines for agenda items**

A cut-off date (typically 4–5 days before the meeting) helps staff prepare complete briefing packages and reduces last-minute surprises.



Photo location: Conception Harbour

## 5. Follow a consistent agenda

- Call to Order
- Adoption of Agenda
- Adoption of Minutes
- Business Arising
- Delegations
- Committee Reports
- Correspondence
- Finances
- Regulations
- General Business
- Notices of Motion
- Adjournment

Using a consistent structure helps members and the public follow proceedings.



Photo location: Conception Harbour

## **6. Clarify the purpose of each agenda item**

Indicate whether it is:

Information only

Discussion and direction

Decision required

This prevents confusion and keeps debate focused.

## **7. Chair with neutrality and discipline**

Keep discussion on topic.

Ensure all members have an opportunity to speak.

Prevent repetitive debate.

Summarize issues before motions are considered.

Maintain respectful conduct.



## 8. Focus on decisions

After a clear motion and focused discussion, move toward a vote.

Meetings become ineffective when the same issue is repeatedly discussed without resolution.



A highly effective council meeting can often be summarized as:

**Information → Committee Review → Recommendation → Council Decision → Public Communication**

When committees do the detailed work and council focuses on governance and decision-making, meetings become shorter, more strategic, and more productive.



**Questions?**

Photo location: Conception Harbour