

Small City, Big Heart.

**Information Session
for Potential
Council Candidates**

March 25, 2026



SAINT JOHN



This information session will provide potential municipal election candidates with an understanding of the following topics:

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Introduction

- 1. Role and structure of local government**
- 2. Role of the Administration and the CAO**
- 3. Purpose of a Municipal Corporation**
- 4. Common Council roles and responsibilities**
- 5. Council/Committee meetings and meeting procedures**
- 6. Do's and Don'ts for elected officials**
- 7. Fundy Regional Service Commission Information**
- 8. Questions for potential candidate to consider**
- 9. Personal experience of being an elected official: Councillor Killen**



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Role of Local Government

Public Services: Garbage collection, water and sewerage, recreation services, transit, etc.

Public Safety: Policing, fire protection, emergency planning, building inspections, etc.

Infrastructure and maintenance: Build/maintain roads, sidewalks, streetlighting, parks, playgrounds, recreational facilities, libraries, etc.

Urban Planning and Development: Determine land use, including zoning by-laws, community development and housing policies, building permits and inspections, etc.

By-laws and Regulation: Create and enforce by-laws (noise, animal control, etc.)



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Local Government Structure

- **Saint John has a Council/Chief Administrative Officer (“CAO”) system of governance**
- **CAO is only staff member who reports directly to Council**
- **System based on principle of separation of policy from administration**
- **Council responsible for setting policy**
- **CAO responsible for implementing Council decisions**



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Role of Administration

- **Manage City services and day-to-day operations**
- **Support Council by providing timely, impartial information and advice**
- **Implement decisions of Council**
- **Ensure the municipality follows laws, regulations, and policy**
- **Prepare budgets, manage spending, ensure financial accountability, draft and enforce by-laws**
- **Work to align operating and capital budgets with Council's priorities (Strategic Plan)**



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Role of CAO

- **Council's only employee**
- **Oversee all City staff**
- **Oversee administration of all City services**
- **Coordinate the various service areas of the Administration**
- **Strategic planning and priority setting with Council**
- **Prepare and submit the annual City budgets**
- **Oversee the administration of approved budgets**
- **Liaise with other levels of government and wide variety of stakeholders**
- **Keep informed on all matters of importance to the community**



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Purpose of a Municipal Corporation

- **Municipalities are created by the Provinces in Canada, and therefore only have those powers given to them by the Province**
- **Local Governance Act (LGA) is the main legislation that gives municipalities their powers in NB**
- **Under the LGA, their purpose is set out at s.5:**
 - **To provide good government**
 - **To provide services, facilities or things the Council considers necessary or desirable for all or part of the local government**
 - **To develop and maintain safe and viable communities, and**
 - **To foster the economic, social and environmental well-being of the community**



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Purpose of a Municipal Corporation

- Although municipalities are viewed as Institutions of Local Democracy, they are really Service Delivery Vehicles
- Municipalities are also more attuned to the immediate concerns and needs of the citizens
- For most people, local governments are the most direct and accountable political institution
 - But municipalities have been designed to ensure proper and efficient service delivery
- As a result, municipalities have evolved in a manner similar to business corporations
 - Their functions are, at law, often viewed as similar to a business corporation



Municipal Corporation

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Purpose of a Municipal Corporation

- **Municipality is a body corporate**
 - **Special type of corporation**
 - **No letters patent or articles of incorporation**
 - **Created by statute**

- **Municipality = Business corporation**
- **Council = Board of Directors**
- **Mayor = Chair of Board**
- **By-laws/resolutions = minutes and resolutions**

- **Municipal Elections give successful candidates one vote at the Board of Directors' Table**
- **Disagreements are voiced at the time of the vote; once a decision of the Board is made (by majority vote), all Board Members have an obligation to support it**



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Role of Common Council

- **Make decisions about priorities, strategic planning, and community services**
- **Adopt by-laws and policies**
- **Approve annual budgets and monitor the City's financial health**
- **Determine funding levels for City services (fire protection, policing, roads, recreation, etc.)**
- **Set property tax rates and Business Improvement Area rates**
- **Represent the public by ensuring citizens' opinions and concerns are considered**
- **Provide oversight, monitor performance of City services, assess performance of CAO, etc.**
- **Make decisions about land planning matters, including development proposals, property rezonings and municipal plan changes**



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Role of Mayor

Leadership – provides leadership to Council, provides strategic direction

Council meetings – acts as presiding officer/chair, facilitates fair and open discussions, only votes in the event of a tie

Representation – acts as spokesperson for Council and as a representative of the City at events, initiatives, and ceremonies

Key signing authority – Mayor and Clerk are the two key signatories for all contracts, agreements, by-laws, and other documents

Representation on agencies, boards, commissions, and committees – attends meetings for Council standing committees, Fundy Regional Service Commission, and various other boards



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Role of Deputy Mayor & Councillors

Deputy Mayor:

- **When the Mayor is absent, or the office of the Mayor is vacant, the Deputy Mayor assumes all the powers of the Mayor**

Councillors:

- **Engage with the community and their constituents**
- **Consider the well-being and interests of the whole community when making decisions**
- **Bring forward issues to the Council that can support that may promote the welfare or interest of the City**
- **Take part in developing and evaluating local government policies and programs**
- **Attend and participate in Council and Committee meetings**



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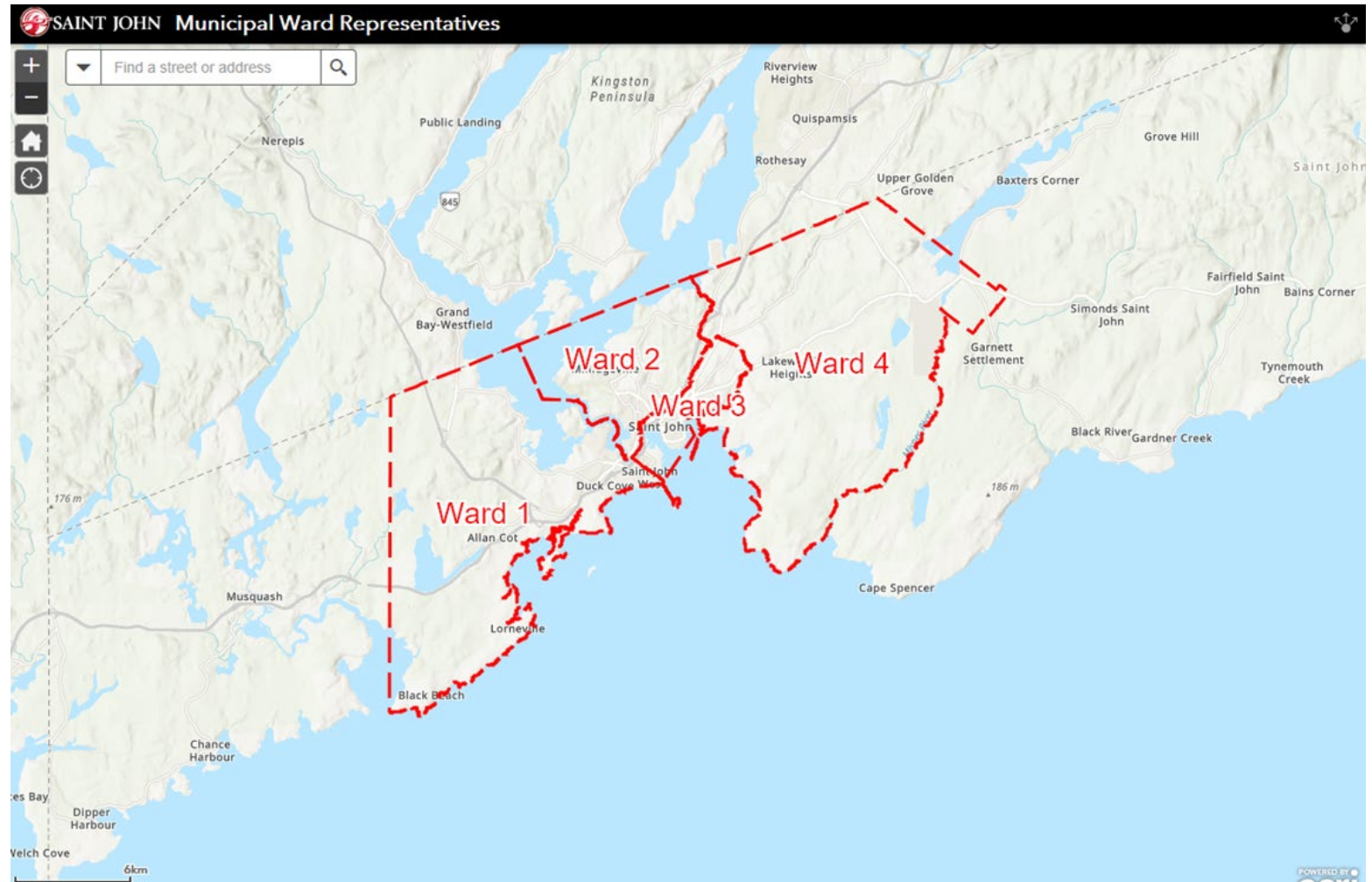
Council Positions in 2026 Election

- **Mayor**
 - **2 Councillors-at-Large**
 - **2 Councillors Ward 1**
 - **2 Councillors Ward 2**
 - **2 Councillors Ward 3**
 - **2 Councillors Ward 4**
-
- **One of the ten Councillors is appointed Deputy Mayor by Council**



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City of Saint John Ward Map





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Salaries and Benefits

Annual Salaries (2026) for Council positions:

Mayor	\$101,055
Deputy Mayor	\$48,920
Councillors	\$37,435

- **City's health and dental plan available**
- **Each Council member is allotted an annual \$3,000 professional development fund, a \$1,500 Council Community grant fund, and a \$1,000 fund to attend community events**
- **Council members receive a City laptop, Saint John email account, cell phone, Microsoft account**



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Council Meetings

Council Meeting types:

- **Regular meetings of Council**
- **Special or Emergency Council Meetings**
- **Committee of the Whole Meetings**
- **Council Standing Committees...**
 - **Finance Committee**
 - **Growth Committee**
 - **Public Safety Committee**
- **Council members also serve on other agencies, board, commissions, and committees of the City (Saint John Energy, P.R.O. Kids, Planning Advisory Committee, etc.)**



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Council Meetings

Regular Council meetings:

- Held every 2 weeks on Monday evenings (6:00 p.m. start)
- Open to the public, broadcast on Rogers TV, livestreamed on YouTube
- Council's Procedural By-law is followed (based on Robert's Rules of Order)
- Council makes decisions by voting on motions, adopting resolutions, and enacting by-laws

Special or Emergency meetings of Council:

- Can be scheduled as needed to address time-sensitive or urgent matters



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Committee Meetings

Committee of the Whole meetings:

- **Less formal, fewer procedural restrictions**
- **Every 2 weeks on Monday, precedes regular council meeting (typically beginning at 4:00 p.m.)**
- **Agenda topics are discussed; no formal decisions can be made**
- **Recommendations are forwarded to Common Council for a decision**
- **Can be held in closed session to discuss confidential matters (e.g., legal opinions, personal information, land transfers)**

Council's Standing Committees:

- **Finance, Growth, and Public Safety**
- **Same procedural rules as Committee of the Whole: no decisions can be made, and recommendations are forwarded to Common Council for a decision**



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Council Meeting Procedures

- **Council and Committee meetings governed by Procedural By-law (based on Robert's Rules of Order)**
- **Meeting agenda packages typically provided 3 days in advance of meeting**
- **Quorum required (6 members) for Council meeting to proceed**
- **Mayor chairs meeting**
- **Council members may speak to each agenda item twice, 3 minutes each time**
- **Decisions made by voting on motions**
- **All Council members, except Mayor, must vote on all motions**
- **Mayor only votes to break a tie vote**
- **Majority vote required for motions to pass**



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Do's and Don'ts for Elected Officials

The Do's:

- Act honestly, ethically, and transparently
- Follow the Council Code of Conduct
- Understand difference between governing vs. managing day-to-day operations
- Communicate with the Administration through the CAO
- Work as a team with Council and accept Council decisions
- Prioritize the interests of the city as a whole when making decisions
- Actively and respectfully participate in Council and Committee meetings
- Maintain confidentiality



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Do's and Don'ts for Elected Officials

The Don'ts:

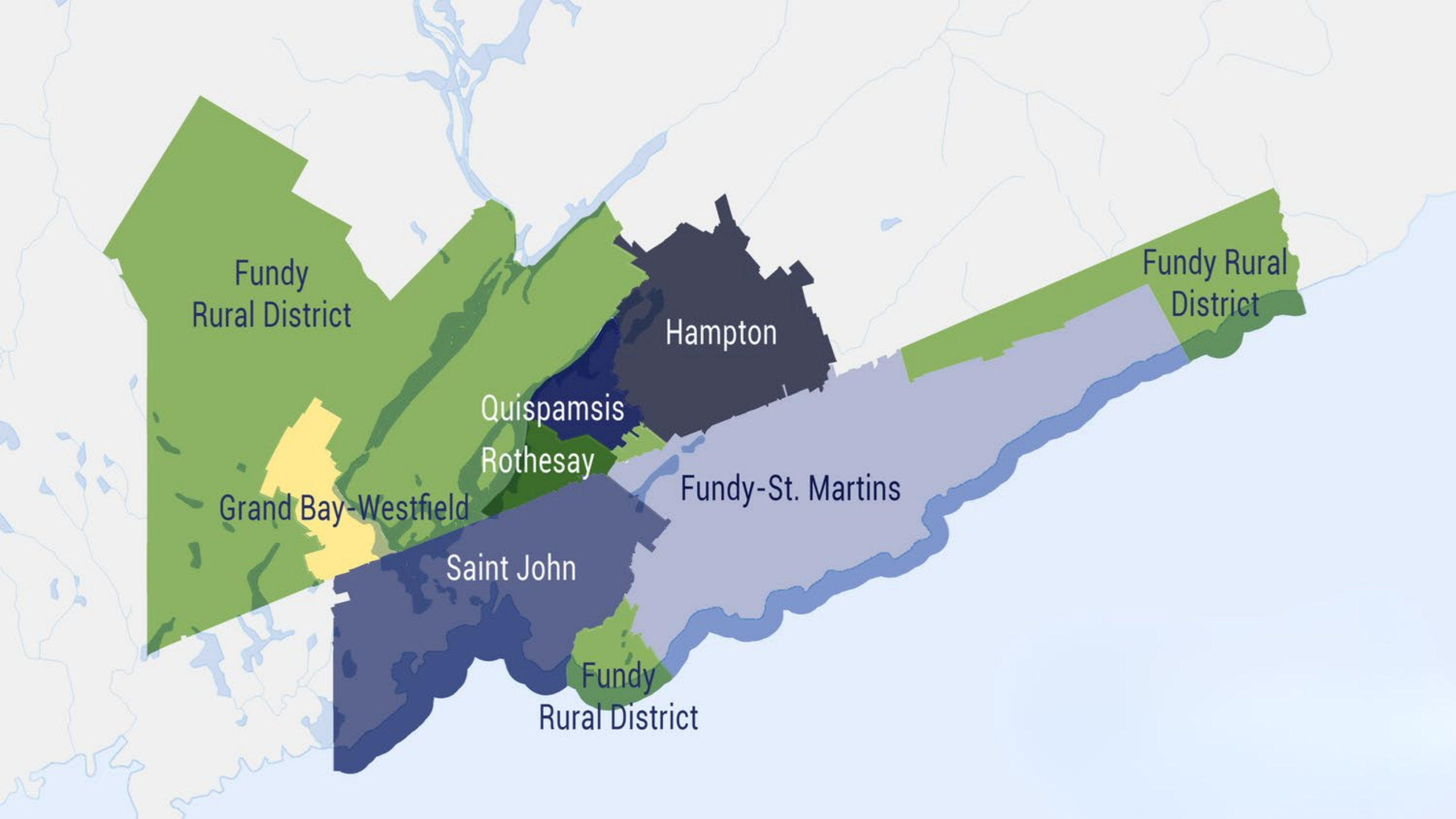
- **Interfere in day-to-day operations**
- **Direct or interfere in the work of City staff (CAO is Council's only direct employee)**
- **Make decisions on your own (all decisions are made by Council as a whole)**
- **Take advantage of your position for personal gain, or to benefit friends or family (avoid conflicts of interest)**
- **Share private or confidential information, including information from closed session meetings of Council**

2026 Municipal Election : Candidate Information

Overview of Regional Service Commissions (RSCs)

Regional Collaboration in New Brunswick

- Many services and challenges cross municipal boundaries
- Regional collaboration helps communities:
 - Share costs fairly where benefits are shared
 - Reduce duplication and align efforts
 - Plan for growth and infrastructure more strategically
 - Access provincial/federal funding more effectively
- RSCs are the legislated structure that provide a practical, region-based approach that allows communities, large and small, urban and rural to collaborate on services and initiatives.



Fundy
Rural District

Grand Bay-Westfield

Quispamsis
Rothesay

Saint John

Fundy
Rural District

Hampton

Fundy-St. Martins

Fundy Rural
District

RSC Mandates



Solid Waste
Management



Community Planning
& Building Inspection



Regional Public
Safety



Regional
Transportation



Social Mandate*



Community
Development



Regional
Facilities



Economic Development



Tourism Promotion

* Capital, Fundy, and Southeast are mandated to pursue the social mandate.

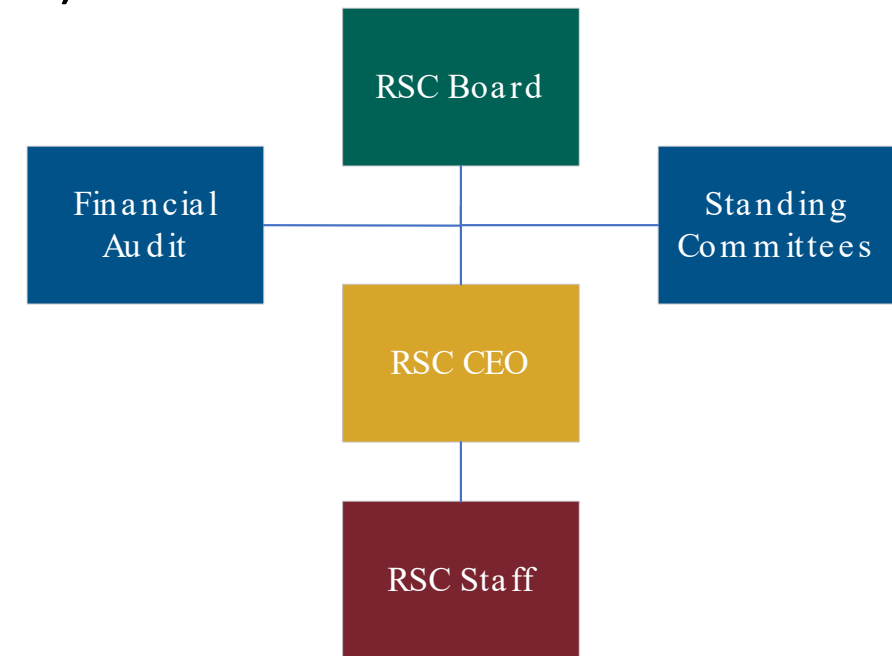
Regional Service Commissions

Structure

- Board of Directors (mayors of Local Governments and chair of Rural District)
- Chair of the Board (elected from among board members)
- Standing Committees
- Statutory employees of RSCs

Governance

- Board – Accountable to their Region / Councils / Communities
- CEO – Accountable to the board
- Staff – Accountable to the CEO



Leadership at Local and Regional Level

- Board members of Regional Service Commissions carry a dual responsibility.
- As a councilor or mayor, you represent your community.
- As an RSC Board member, you are also expected to take a regional perspective and uphold expectations as a director of the RSC.
- Regional leadership means:
 - Thinking about impacts across the region (not just one community)
 - Building awareness and ownership on regional efforts with your council
 - Recognizing trade-offs and compromise
 - Using evidence (costs, usage, demographics) to support decisions
 - Building relationships with other elected officials

RSC Specific Board Operations

- In Fundy Region:
 - Monthly meetings (3 hours in length), 10-20 agenda items (average of 150 pages), includes open and closed sessions.
 - Many Board members serve on standing committees (4-12 time/year).
 - Three board members serve on Executive Committee.
 - Weekly correspondence from FRSC Head Office (additional for chair, executive and committee members).
 - Board members receive monthly allowance (additional for members serving committees, executive and chair).

RSC Engagement with Local Councils

- In Fundy Region:
 - All Board meeting material is published 6 days prior to meeting (publicly accessible on website).
 - All councils receive a monthly newsletter outlining progress and summary of past Board meeting.
 - RSC typically delivers 1-3 presentations annually to each member council.
 - The FRSC hosts a regional summit once a year to receive direct input from member councils.

How to access additional information

- Link to regional service commission website
 - Regional Strategy
 - Budgets
 - Annual Reports
 - Minutes and agenda packets
- Contact information of RSC Head Office



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Questions to Consider

- **Do I have the necessary time to commit to this role?**
- **Am I available to attend all meetings (Council, committees, boards), which may take place evenings or weekends?**
- **Am I comfortable being in the public eye? Can I deal with public criticism?**
- **Can I work effectively as a team with other elected officials?**
- **Can I accept decisions of Council that I do not agree with?**
- **Can I deal with several competing priorities at once?**



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What It's Like to Be a Councillor

- We will now hear a personal account from Councillor Joanna Killen about her experience serving on Council and her advice to those considering on running in the current municipal election.



THANK YOU.