About Local Government

A Presentation Prepared for *Local Government Week*

by

AMCTO

(Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario)

AMCTO
THE MUNICIPAL EXPERTS

Ontario has thousands of local governments – consisting of municipal governments or **municipalities** and various other local governing bodies known as agencies, boards, and commissions, or **ABCs**.

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- ✓ Boards of education (operate public schools)

- ✓ Police commissions (provide police protection services)

- ✓ Public heath units (conduct activities such as rating restaurants for cleanliness and pushing to ban smoking in public places)

- ✓ Transit commissions (operate bus and subway systems)

- ✓ Library boards

- ✓ Conservation authorities (manage **watersheds** and help preserve the quality of **groundwater**– *the source of drinking water for most of rural Ontario*).

- ✓ Arena or community center boards

Not a Good Start to the Day!

You wake up one morning and go to the bathroom for a drink of water, but nothing comes out of the tap. You flip the light switch but no light comes on. Puzzled, you look out the window. The streetlamp in front of your house is also out. In the early morning light, you see that the road in front of your house is gone. The park and playground opposite your house have also disappeared – as has the school building down on the corner. When you call the police department, there is no answer. Nor is there any response from the fire department.

Local Infrastructure

✓Local governments provide services such as roads and bridges, water supply and sewage treatment plants which make up a community's basic infrastructure

Social Programs

✓local governments can be responsible for a wide range of social programs, including; day care facilities, homes for the aged, and affordable housing.

Planning & Development

Land use decisions by municipalities play a major role in determining the character and prosperity of the community.

✓Essential services such as: Fire protection, police, & ambulances, also fall under the jurisdiction of municipal governments.

Caring For the Environment

✓ Local governments are directly responsible for providing safe drinking water, effective treatment of sewage, and garbage collection and disposal. They also operate recycling programs.

Ontario's Municipalities

✓Ontario is made up 445 municipalities

✓Only 7% have a population greater than 100,000

✓1/3 of the municipalities are located in the north

✓90% of Ontario's land area is found in the North, yet it only contains 7% of the province's population.

Ontario's Municipalities

✓Toronto is Ontario's largest municipality with a population of 2,481,000

✓Ontario's smallest municipality is the Township of Cockburn Island with a population of 2

✓ Both the oldest and the newest governments in Canada are municipalities!

✓ The earliest municipalities in Ontario were set up 200 years ago, but it was not until Confederation in 1867 that the federal government came into existence, along with the original provinces of Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick.

Amalgamations

✓ Hundreds of new municipalities have been created in Ontario over the past decade as a result of **amalgamations** (mergers of two or more former municipalities).

Key features of a municipality:

✓Powers assigned by the Province

✓Defined geographic area

✓Elected council

✓Power to tax

Municipal Functions

✓When most of Ontario's municipalities were set up as early as the 1840s, they were needed for specific functions.

✓The big issues that faced them back then were drunkenness, profanity, noises and nuisances, cattle and poultry running in public places, traveling salesmen, and repair of roads.

Urbanization & Service Demands

✓The population increased rapidly in urban Canada in the early 1900s, largely because of immigration. The result was an increased demand for municipal services

Urbanization & Service Demands

✓ Growth of cities after World War Two brought the need for more services.

✓ The growing urban population of the early 1900s also needed improved transportation.

Managing Growth

✓ New housing is needed if more people are to move to the municipality. Factories and businesses are needed if more jobs are to be created, so that people can find work in the area. Growth increases the amount of money a municipality gets from taxes. But too much growth, or the wrong kind of growth, can bring problems and costs.

Land Use Planning

Municipalities exercise their land use planning powers in two main ways:

✓They must adopt an *official plan.* This important document sets out the long term goals for the municipality.

✓They can adopt a *zoning by-law.* This spells out specifically how land may be developed within various areas (zones) of the municipality.

✓Municipalities are responsible for providing the clean drinking water we need to live.
✓Municipalities also protect the water supply by disposing of waste safely.

✓Municipalities are also involved, along with other public bodies such as health units and conservation authorities, in protecting ground water in rural areas.

Waste Disposal

✓ Another environmental challenge concerns how to dispose of the amount of garbage that we generate today.

✓ Municipalities that actively promote the three Rs (reduce, reuse, and recycle) can help to address the garbage disposal issue.

Securing Safe Neighbourhoods

✓ Municipalities are responsible for the policing within their boundaries, whether provided by a local police force or contracted with the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), which is especially the case in rural Ontario.

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Securing Safe Neighbourhoods

Municipalities can help to provide safer neighbourhoods in other ways :

✓ Improving the design and layout of streets and providing street lighting

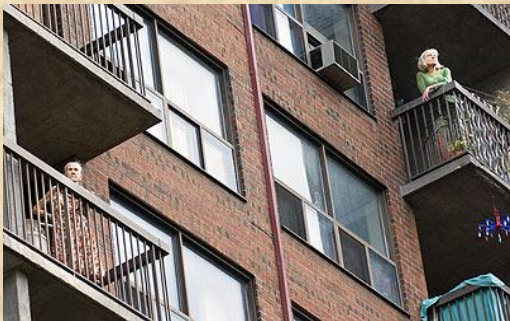✓ Providing community supports, including adequate recreational facilities and programs for youth

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Improving the Quality of Life

Public health programs help the entire population with their emphasis on disease prevention.

Public housing and community shelters become increasingly important as the homeless population grows.

Improving the Quality of Life

✓recreational programs, cultural programs, and the arts also support the quality of life.

Paying For Services

All of the services we have talked about have a cost. Since money doesn't grow on trees, how do we pay for these services?

Paying For Services

In some cases we pay **directly** for public goods and services. For example:

✓ Those who drive a car pay a fee for a driver's licence and also pay to renew the stickers for the licence plates on their cars.

✓ Those who go to Provincial and Federal public parks usually pay an entrance fee and/or an overnight camping fee.

✓ Those who travel abroad pay a fee to obtain a passport.

Paying For Services

✓ **The Property Tax** - Local government services are mainly paid through the property tax.

User Charges

A user charge is a fee charged for the use of a particular municipal service such as:

✓ Installing meters in homes to measure (and charge for) the amount of water being used

✓ Bus and subway fares for transit

✓ Charges for ice rental at the arena or for the use of ball diamonds or soccer fields.

✓ Fees for recreational programs including swimming lessons and fitness activities.

✓ Fees for the use of a municipal golf course

✓ Municipalities can require **licences** for allowing people to carry out a wide range of activities, mostly business-related, for example: licences for operating taxi-cabs.

Building permits are used to regulate building activity and to ensure that construction meets certain standards.

Development Charges

Municipalities can also set **development charges** that apply to each new lot that is created. The purpose of these development charges is to raise money from the developer of the lots that can be used to cover some of the cost for providing services to these lots.

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, with very limited exceptions, 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

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- Only t ... each ward c ... running for elec ... on in that ...

Q.E.W.

PLAINS ROAD EAST

FAIRVIEW ST.

BRANT ST.

GUELPH LINE

MAPLE AVE

NEW ST.

LAKESHORE ROAD

LAKE ONTARIO

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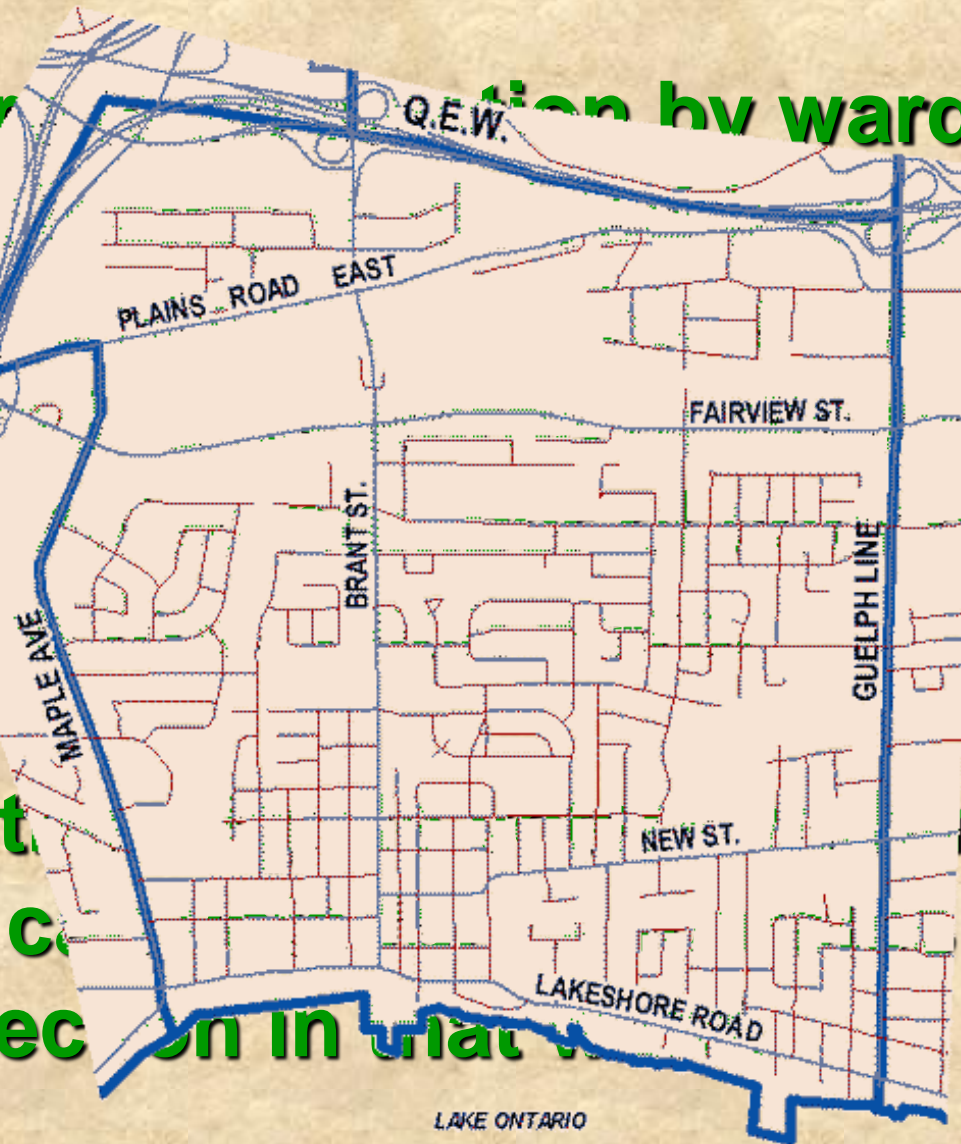
Head of Council

✓ Mayor/Reeve/Warden/Chair

✓ Heads of council have only one vote just like every other member of council, but those with strong personalities or a clear vision for their municipality can often exert significant influence and power.

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.

DON'T LET OTHERS SPEAK FOR YOU

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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.

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."

Municipal Staff

✓In all but quite large municipalities, councillors serve on a part-time basis. Most of them hold other jobs apart from their duties as councillors.

✓One of the basic duties of a council, therefore, is to make sure that enough staff, with the right skills, is hired to run the municipal organization

The Treasurer

✓ The Treasurer's job is to make sure that municipal revenues are collected and handled properly and that bills are paid.

✓ The Treasurer and other staff in the finance area are also responsible for such matters as preparing the annual budget, maintaining internal controls that ensure the proper use of money, and reporting regularly to council on the state of municipal finances.

The Clerk

✓ The office of the Clerk is the central clearing house for municipal information, including the keeping of all records for the municipality.

✓ The clerk prepares the **agenda** for council meetings and the minutes that report the results of such meetings.

✓ The Clerk's office also carries out a number of duties directed by provincial legislation, such as registration of deaths and issuing marriage licenses.

Road Superintendent

✓ A 3rd important municipal employee from the earliest days was the road superintendent. This person, and the roads department, were responsible for construction and maintenance of roads, snow-plowing and other road-related activities (such as ditching and drainage).

✓The Chief Administrative Officer, or Town/City Manager

✓Parks and recreation staff to administer parks, recreational facilities and recreational programs.

✓Planners and planning technicians to help in preparing and administering the municipality's official plan and zoning by-law.

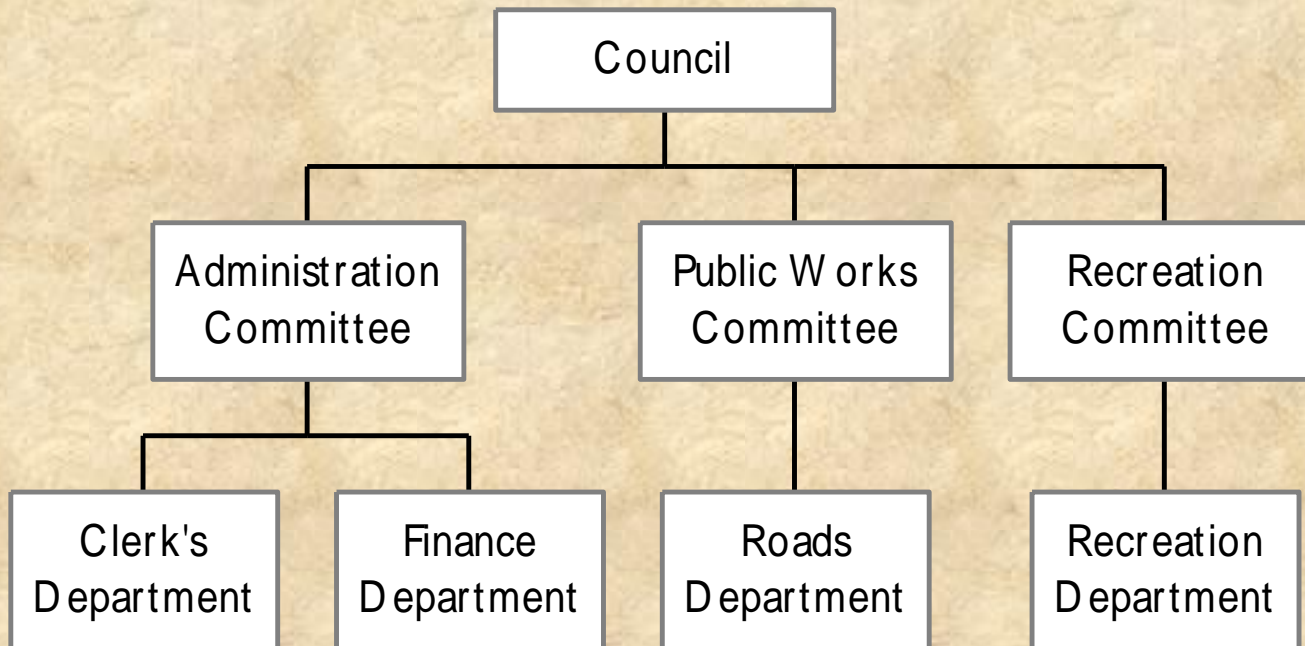# Other Key Staff (Cont.)

✓ Staff to administer various social programs including general welfare assistance, provision of public (assisted) housing, homes for the aged, and ambulance services.

✓ Technical staff to operate the municipal water treatment plant and sewage disposal plant.

✓ Staff to operate the municipal fire department.

✓ Librarians and other staff to operate the municipal library.

Standing Committees

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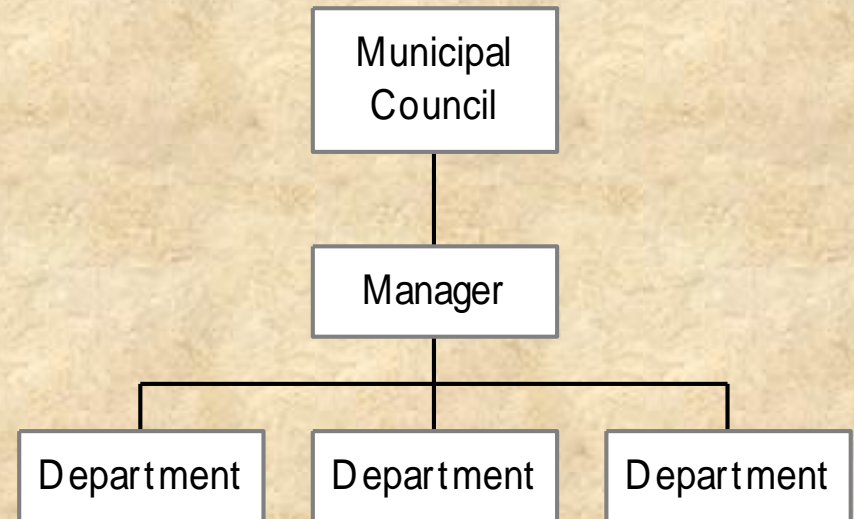
✓ The Chief Administrative Officer or CAO is the senior manager responsible for bringing together and overseeing the various municipal departments.

✓ In particular, the CAO makes sure that the advice and recommendations given by staff to council are balanced.

Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)

✓ Without a CAO, council usually receives specialized reports that may deal only with the interests of roads, or recreation, or planning, or some other specialty. Under a CAO system, these narrow reports may be brought together and combined by the CAO to give council a better overall picture.

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GET INVOLVED...
The world is run by those who show up

Local citizens can become involved in a number of ways, the most obvious being:

✓ Voting

✓ Running for Public Office

✓ Volunteering for Boards & Committees

✓ A Career in
Local Government

Careers in Local Government

*Engineering * Recreational Programming * Library Services* By-law Enforcement * Nursing * Accounting * Computers * Policing * Water and Waste Water Management * Arts, Culture & Heritage Services * Building Inspection * Communications * Community Services * Corporate Administration * Environmental Services * Facilities Development & Maintenance * Financial Administration & Management * Fire & Rescue Services * Human Resources * Information Technology * Land Use Planning & Development * Legal Services * Licensing * Vehicle Maintenance * Museum & Archive Services * Office Administration * Parks & Recreation * Project Management * Property Management * Public Works & Operations * Records Management * Taxation * Waste Management * Media Relations

AMCTO's more than 2,200 members work in a variety of administrative jobs in municipalities across Ontario

Thank You