



Saskatchewan Association
of Rural Municipalities

COUNCILLOR HANDBOOK

2301 Windsor Park Road, Regina, SK

www.sarm.ca

2019



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Vision, Mission and Values

Vision Statement

By being the rural voice, SARM will effectively lead autonomous municipalities in creating a vibrant, diverse economy resulting in a strong, sustainable Saskatchewan.

Mission Statement

SARM delivers timely, dependable programs and services to meet the needs of its members while influencing government policy and facilitating municipalities to work together to foster rural development and build strong, sustainable communities.

Organizational Values

- o We act with integrity and ethics.
- o We take our direction from our members.
- o We exist to meet the needs of all our members, regardless of their size.
- o We undertake our role in a responsible and professional manner.
- o We strive for accountability and transparency with our members.
- o We educate and inform our members.
- o We represent the interests of rural governments.
- o We play a leadership role for rural Saskatchewan while respecting local autonomy.
- o We strive for innovation and best practices in the programs and services provided to our members.



Code of Ethics

As a Member of the Rural Municipal Council

1. I will be motivated primarily by an earnest desire to serve my municipality and the people of my community to the best of my ability.
2. I will endeavor to attend all council meetings.
3. I will recognize that the expenditure of municipal funds is a public trust, and I will endeavor to see that all such funds shall be expended efficiently, economically and in the best interest of the municipality.
4. I will not use the municipality or any municipal program for my own personal advantage or for the advantage of my friends.
5. I will do everything possible to maintain the integrity, confidence and dignity of the office of a rural municipal council member.
6. I will listen to what other council members, individuals or groups may have to say before making final decisions.
7. I will endeavor to avoid hostility and bitterness, to observe proper decorum and behaviour, to encourage full and open discussions in all matters and not to withhold or conceal from my fellow council members any information or matter in which they should be concerned.
8. I will make no disparaging remarks, in or out of a council meeting, about other members of the council or their opinions, but I reserve the right to make honest and respectful criticism.
9. I will consider it unethical to pursue any procedure calculated to embarrass a fellow member of the council, a member of the municipal staff or another local government body.
10. I will treat my fellow council members, the municipal staff and the public I serve with respect and consideration.
11. I will recognize that authority rests with the council in legal session, and not with individual members of the council.
12. I will abide by majority decisions of the council once they are made.
13. I will not discuss confidential business of council outside of council and committee meetings.
14. I will endeavour to keep informed on all local, provincial and national municipal developments of significance.
15. I will earnestly try to interpret the peoples' needs of the entire municipality and do my best to implement action to meet those needs, keeping in mind budget limitations of the municipality.



Council Responsibilities

Accepting elected office is one of the highest orders of public service. It offers the opportunity to significantly influence the quality of life in your community.

The Municipalities Act provides the basic legislative framework for Saskatchewan's southern municipalities. Council members must know and comply with federal and provincial legislation, laws and codes. Council's responsibility is to make decisions about municipal services, establish policies and provide direction for the operation of the municipality in a manner which encourages participation in the governance process. Councils have numerous powers, duties and responsibilities.

Council is legislatively responsible to ensure that:

- A. A municipal office is named in Saskatchewan
 - for citizens to attend to make payments, receive information and report concerns;
 - for council meetings (which are required to be held in an open and transparent manner where the public may be present to observe);
- B. A qualified administrator is appointed for the municipality;
- C. The municipality's assessment is confirmed by Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency (SAMA) each year;
- D. All decisions are made by resolution or by law;
- E. At least one (1) council person or other person is designated to sign cheques. The administrator is required to be the other signatory unless the administrator has been authorized to delegate this duty to another employee;
- F. A fidelity bond is obtained annually for the administrator and any other employee as required;
- G. Workers' Compensation coverage is obtained for workers, employees and labour contractors;
- H. All meetings are held in public;
- I. A quorum is required at all meetings;
- J. A records retention schedule is established;
- K. Public notice is provided when a regular meeting date is changed;
- L. Public notice bylaw is adopted and public notice is provided prior to considering any of the following:
 - Any report to close, lease or sell a municipal street or road;
 - Any report to dispose of public land used for park purposes;
 - A petition for a public meeting with respect to a municipal restructuring, establishing an organized hamlet or incorporating a resort village or village;
 - Any report to increase/decrease the number of councillors in a municipality;



- The initial consideration to divide the municipality into wards;
 - The report completed by the wards commission with respect to the establishment of boundaries is completed and open for public inspection at the municipal office during normal business hours;
 - Holding a public hearing and deciding a matter after a public hearing pursuant to this or any other Act;
 - Borrowing money, lending money or guaranteeing the repayment of a loan;
 - Establishing a purchasing policy;
 - Selling or leasing land for less than fair market value and without a public offering;
 - Selling or leasing mines and minerals owned by the municipality;
 - Setting remuneration for members of council and for members of council committees and other bodies established by the council;
 - Establishing a business improvement district;
 - Prohibiting or limiting the operation of a business or class of business;
 - Amending or repealing of referendum bylaws or resolutions;
 - Holding a public meeting of the voters;
 - Any report with respect to special taxes; and
- M. Using any excess revenue generated from special taxes;
- N. The municipality's audited financial statement and the auditor's report is submitted to the minister by July 1st of each year;
- O. An auditor is appointed for the municipality and its controlled corporations;
- P. A tax levy is authorized on all assessments of the municipality;
- Q. A prorated amount of moneys received from trailer or mobile home permit fees is paid to the school division in which the trailers or mobile homes are located;
- R. Streets and roads are kept in a reasonable state of repair;
- S. A water rate policy is adopted by bylaw or resolution;
- T. An emergency plan is adopted; and
- U. A board of revision is appointed.

Your administrator will provide guidance and valuable information in this area.

Source: <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/municipal-administration/tools-guides-and-resources/council-responsibilities>



Administrator Responsibilities

In rural municipalities, administrators must be qualified as required by The Rural Municipal Administrators Act. Certification of administrators is the responsibility of the Board of Examiners. The Board of Examiners consists of one (1) person appointed by RMAA, one (1) person by SARM and one (1) or more persons appointed jointly by RMAA and SARM. Further information on certification of administrators can be obtained from the secretary of the Board of Examiners. The secretary's name and contact information can be obtained from the SARM office or from the Executive Director of RMAA.

An administrator is required to perform the duties and functions required by The Municipalities Act, other legislation and other duties that may be assigned by council.

Core Administrator Duties and Responsibilities

The Administrator has specific duties and responsibilities, which are outlined in The Municipalities Act. The Administrator will either directly perform these, or will delegate them to another staff member, depending on the municipality's size. Regardless of how these duties and responsibilities are carried out, the Administrator always remains responsible under the Act. Section 111 of The Municipalities Act outlines the statutory duties of the administrator.

111(1) The Administrator shall take charge of and safely keep all books, documents and records of the municipality that are committed to his or her charge and shall:

- a) Produce, when called for by the council, auditor, minister or other competent authority, all books, vouchers, papers and moneys belonging to the municipality; and*
- b) On ceasing to hold office, deliver all books, vouchers, papers and moneys belonging to the municipality to his or her successor in office or to any other person that the council may designate.*
 - (2) The administrator shall ensure that:*
 - (a) All minutes of council meetings are recorded;*
 - (b) The names of the members of council present at council meetings are recorded;*
 - (c) The minutes of each council meeting are given to council for approval at the next regular council meeting;*
 - (d) The corporate seal of the municipality, bylaws and minutes of council meetings and other records and documents, funds and securities of the municipality are kept safe;*
 - (e) The council is advised of its legislative responsibilities pursuant to this or any other Act;*
 - (f) The minister is sent any statements, reports or other information with regard to the municipality that may be required by the minister to this or any other Act;*
 - (g) The official correspondence of the council is carried out in accordance with council's directions;*
 - (h) An indexed register containing certified copies of all bylaws of the municipality is maintained;*
 - (i) Cash collections that have accumulated to the amount determined by the council that is equal to or less than the amount for which the administrator is bonded or insured, but in any case not less than once a month nor more than once each day, are deposited in the name of the municipality in a bank or credit union designated by the council, of which the administrator may not be an employee;*
 - (j) The funds of the municipality are disbursed only in the manner and to those persons that are directed by law or by the bylaws or resolutions of the council;*



- (k) *A complete and accurate account of assets and liabilities and all transactions affecting the financial position of the municipality is maintained in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles;*
- (l) *The financial statements and information that the council may, by resolution, request are submitted to the council on or before June 1st in each year, a financial statement is completed as required by section 185.*

Administration

The Administrator is the administrative head of the municipality and is responsible for the overall administration of the municipality including:

- **Meetings of Council:** Preparing and organizing all meeting agendas; recording the minutes of all municipal meetings; and providing council with sound advice on all aspects of municipal governance and legislative requirements.
- **Bylaws:** Ensuring all required bylaws and resolutions are in-place and up-to-date; preparing resolutions and bylaws for the municipality.
- **Implementing council priorities:** Ensuring the policies, programs and services of the municipality are implemented; monitoring, evaluating and reporting back to council on the policies, programs and services of the municipality; and answering all public requests, inquiries and/or complaints, and ensuring a high standard of customer service.

Financial Management

Sound financial management is critical to the successful operation of the municipality. The duties of the Administrator in this regard are far reaching, including:

- **Preparing the annual financial plan:** Presenting options for the annual operating and capital budgets for council's consideration.
- **Monitoring the financial plan:** Preparing the monthly financial statements, an annual financial statement and cash flow projections as required.
- **Controlling:** The day to day accounting i.e the account payable, accounts receivable, tax collections, payroll, monthly bank reconciliations and investments. This also includes ensuring that accurate records and books are kept of all the financial affairs of the municipality, and making adjustments, as required, to the municipality's financial plan.



- **Reporting:** Providing council with up-to-date financial information on a regular and timely basis, ensuring that exceptions and issues are clearly identified, providing the Province with financial information and reports as required by legislation/agreements, working with the auditors when they are conducting the annual financial audit of the municipality and providing financial information to the public as required.
- **Taxation process:** Administering the entire taxation process, including the property assessment process, levying and collection of taxes and the tax enforcement process.

Human Resource Management

The Administrator works with council in the management and supervision of the employees of the municipality. Specific duties may include:

- **Recruitment and development of employees:** including hiring, training, evaluating, promoting and dismissing employees;
- **Conducting union negotiations;**
- **Developing a human resource recruitment/retention plan.**

Additional Administrator Duties

Additional duties of the administrator will depend on the particular needs of your municipality based on its size, structure, vision and long-term plans. The administrator may have additional duties relating to:

- **Economic Development;**
- **Delivery of recreation programs and services;**
- **Project Implementation,** for example the implementation of a new public utility system (i.e. A rural water line project).



Working Together

One of the most important aspects of good municipal government is an effective working relationship between council and the administration. Understanding how the administration of your municipality works assists municipal council members to carry out their role.

The employees look after the day to day operations of the municipality. The key role of council is to provide leadership and set policy. The administrator is a policy advisor and ensures council's policies are carried out. It is important for staff to keep council informed and up-to-date on current and impending issues. The experience and knowledge of municipal administration and staff may enable council members to do their job more efficiently.



SARM Programs and Services

SARM provides a number of services and programs to its members including:

General Municipal Support

The staff at SARM have a significant amount of experience in municipal government. Staff will either provide the assistance needed by any caller or will direct the caller to the appropriate ministry or agency where their concern can be addressed. Educational workshops, seminars, and special meetings are organized and presented by the SARM board and staff or by invited presenters on an as-needed basis.

Website link: <http://sarm.ca/about-sarm/staff>

Policy Services

Advocacy: Since 1905, SARM has been working to address the concerns of rural municipalities and ensure their voice is heard by senior levels of government. We provide support to our members in dealing with the provincial and federal government. We advocate on behalf of our members and help ensure our members are in compliance with legislation and regulations. SARM's policy is developed at the grassroots level, driven by resolutions passed at our annual and midterm conventions. Examples of some of the issues dealt with by our policy team are as follows:

- Planning issues;
- Agriculture;
- Economic Development;
- Environment and Resources;
- Infrastructure and Development;
- Water management; and
- Assessment, Taxation and Grants-in-Lieu.

SARM retains a lobbyist, Hill + Knowlton, in Ottawa to assist with advocacy at the federal level.

Website link: <http://sarm.ca/advocacy>

Representation of rural interests on boards and committees: Member municipalities, through SARM, have a voice at the table of many boards and committees.

SARM External Committees: <https://sarm.ca/+pub/File/SARM%20Committees%202016.pdf>

SARM Internal Committees: <https://sarm.ca/+pub/File/SARM%20Internal%20Committees%202016.pdf>

Legislation Review: SARM reviews proposed legislation and regulations that affect RMs and encourages and promotes legislative changes requested by members.

Policy Research: SARM employs staff that focus on agriculture, environment, infrastructure & development, and municipal governance.

Communication Services



SARM uses monthly electronic “Updates”, the *Rural Councillor* (<https://sarm.ca/resources/rural-councillor>) magazine (published quarterly), e- mail, an *annual report* (<https://sarm.ca/resources/annual-reports>), and their *website* (<https://sarm.ca/>) to ensure members are aware of the Association’s activities. SARM also provides an information distribution service and website postings, for a fee, to its members.

Legal Services

SARM retains two lawyers on staff. While their primary functions are related to our Insurance Programs, they also provide legal services and advice to members at a reduced cost.

Website link: <http://sarm.ca/services/legal-services>

Planning Services

SARM employs three community planners to provide assistance and advice to rural municipalities.

Website link: <http://sarm.ca/services/community-planning>

Insurance and Benefits

Employee Benefits Programs: SARM provides the following programs to its members.

- SARM Benefits Plan
 - Short Term Disability Benefits
 - Death Benefit
 - Vision Care Benefit
 - Maternity Benefit
 - Accidental Death and Dismemberment Benefits
- Long Term Disability Benefits
- Extended Health and Dental Benefits
- Group Life Insurance
- Optional Life Insurance

Website link: <http://sarm.ca/services/insurance-and-benefits/employee-benefits>



Municipal Insurance Programs: Member municipalities have access to the following insurance programs:

- SARM Fidelity Bond Self-Insurance Plan

Website link: <https://sarm.ca/services/insurance-and-benefits/fsip>

- SARM Liability Self-Insurance Plan

Website link: <https://sarm.ca/services/insurance-and-benefits/lisip>

- SARM Property Self-Insurance Plan

Website link: <https://sarm.ca/services/insurance-and-benefits/psip>

These insurance programs provide insurance tailored to fit the needs of our member municipalities at very competitive rates.

Trading Services

SARM Trading Services provides members with access to a wide range of goods and printing services at very competitive prices. Trading Services is customer-oriented with fast and friendly service.

Website link: <https://sarm.ca/services/trading-services>

Conventions and Special Meetings

Members may submit resolutions, debate, and vote on resolutions at membership conventions or meetings including the Annual Convention (March), Division Meetings (June), and Midterm Convention (November).

Website link: <http://sarm.ca/events>

Municipal Fund Management

SARM manages a number of funds for municipalities, including:

- Treaty Land Entitlement Tax Loss Compensation Fund
- Specific Claim Tax Loss Compensation Fund
- Municipal Habitat Conservation fund
- Municipal Accounts in SARM Liability Program

Website link: <https://sarm.ca/about-sarm/member-services>



SARM Administered Programs

Pest Biosecurity Program

The **Pest Biosecurity Program** is available to RMs and First Nations (FNB), south of the Northern Administrative District, and is made up of four programs that will provide RMs and FNBs with resources when dealing with issues regarding invasive plants, rats, nuisance beavers, clubroot and other pests as declared/designated under the Saskatchewan Pest Control Act and Weed Control Act.

- Plant Health Network (CAP-PHN)
- Beaver Control Program (CAP-BCP)
- Invasive Plant Control Program (CAP-IPCP)
- Rat Control Program (CAP-RCP)

Website link: <https://sarm.ca/programs/administered-programs/ag-programs>

Municipal Roads for the Economy Program (MREP)

SARM administers the Municipal Roads for the Economy Program (MREP) on behalf of the Provincial Government. MREP provides funding to rural municipalities for road and bridge infrastructure. The MREP program consists of three (3) components: the Clearing the Path (CTP) program, the Municipal Bridge Program, and the Heavy Haul-High Volume Program.

Website link: <http://sarm.ca/programs/administered-programs/mrep>



SARM Programs

Rural Municipal Administrator Internship Program (MAIP)

To help address the projected need for rural municipal administrators in the future, the Rural Municipal Administrator Internship Program (MAIP) was created. MAIP provides funding for rural municipalities to train selected interns to become RM administrators.

Website link: <http://sarm.ca/programs/sarm-programs/maip>

SARM Rural Municipal Administration Scholarship Program

SARM recognizes the vital role that administrators play in rural Saskatchewan. To help promote the profession, SARM developed a Rural Municipal Administration Scholarship Program available to students in the Local Government Authority Certificate Program.

Website link: <http://sarm.ca/programs/sarm-programs/rmasp>

SARM High Interest Savings Account (HISA)

SARM has partnered with CIBC Commercial Banking to bring our members a pooled High Interest Savings Account (HISA). The HISA offers a competitive interest rate, secured principal, and the ability to move your money at any time without penalty, regardless of the amount invested.

Website link: <https://sarm.ca/services/trading-services/high-interest-savings-account>

Partner Initiatives

Municipal Leadership Development Program (MLDP)

SARM administers the Municipal Leadership Development Program (MLDP) on behalf of our partners. The MLDP is a series of six (6) one-day modules that target specific issues of importance to municipalities. The program was developed exclusively for elected and appointed municipal leaders in Saskatchewan.

Website link: www.mldp.ca

Municipal Management Essentials Program (MME)

SARM and SUMA partnered with the Southeast College to develop the Municipal Management Essentials training program for RM Administrators, Foreman and Councillors. This program focuses on building the skill and capacity in a number of business training workshop style courses including Conducting Effective Meetings, Safety Leadership, Conflict Management, Communicating Effectively, etc.

Website link: <https://www.southeastcollege.org/courses/municipal-management-essentials/>



Awards and Scholarships

Lieutenant Governor's Award for Outstanding Service to Rural Saskatchewan

This award is given to a reeve, councillor, or administrator for his or her lifetime contribution to rural Saskatchewan. The award is presented to the successful candidate at the Opening Ceremonies of the SARM Annual Convention. This forum provides an excellent opportunity to publicly recognize the recipient of this prestigious award.

Website link: <http://sarm.ca/about-sarm/member-services/lieutenant-governors-award>

SARM 90th Anniversary Student Scholarship

In 1995, SARM auctioned off the first copy of their history book, *The Building of a Province: Commemorating the 90th Anniversary of the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities*. This auction netted the sum of \$2,600 which SARM contributed to the Centre for Agricultural Medicine. These funds initiated the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities 90th Anniversary \$1,000 Student Scholarship in Agricultural Safety and Rural Health.

Website link: <http://sarm.ca/about-sarm/member-services/sarm-scholarship>

SARM Rural Municipal Administration Scholarship Program

The SARM Rural Municipal Administration Scholarship Program is for students enrolled in the Local Government Authority (LGA) Certificate Program at the University of Regina. Three (3) scholarships of \$1,000 each will be awarded annually, paid at the end of the completed semester.

Website link: <http://sarm.ca/programs/sarm-programs/rmasp>



Inquiry Directory

If you are unable to find what you are looking for on the SARM website or have an inquiry, please use this contact list based on inquiries to assist you. The main SARM office contact information is below:

(P): 306.757.3577

(F): 306.565.2141

(E): sarm@sarm.ca | (W): www.sarm.ca

Topic / Issue	Contact
General Municipal Support	
Ratepayer has an unresolvable issue with council	Government Relations 306.787.2680 Provincial Ombudsman 1.800.667.9787
Contact information for a municipality	http://www.mds.gov.sk.ca/apps/Pub/MDS/welcome.aspx
Contact information for a Provincial Government	http://qtgs.gov.sk.ca/
SARM Programs	
Beaver Control (BCP)	Programs Manager 306.761.3744
Rat Control (PREP)	Programs Manager 306.761.3744
Gopher Control	Director of Programs and Operations 306.761.3733
Weed Control	Programs Manager 306.761.3744
Road Construction, Clearing the Path (CTP), MREP Roads Program	MREP Manager 306.761.3736
Bridge Construction Questions – MREP Bridge Program	Director of Municipal Bridge Services 306.761.3746
Questions regarding invoices, payments to and from SARM	Senior Accounting Technician 306.761.3739
Bulk Fuel Program	Director of Finance 306.761.3720
Treaty Land Entitlement (TLE) & Specific Claims Questions	Director of Finance 306.761.3720
Training for RM Councillors – Municipal Leadership Development Program (MLDP)	MLDP Program Administrator 306.761.3931
RM Operator Training	Insurance Program Administrator 306.761.3732
Potash Tax Sharing	Executive Director 306.761.3721
Fish and Wildlife Development Fund	Events Coordinator 306.761.3730
Municipal Administrator Internship Program (MAIP)	Director of Programs and Operations 306.761.3733
Legal Services	
SARM provides reduced cost legal support to RMs – Lawyers on staff	Director of Legal Services 306.731.3724
	Legal Counsel 306.761.3738
	Legal Assistant 306.761.3725



Community Planning	
Community Planning and bylaw drafting support for RM members	Community Planners 306.761.3728/3734
Insurance and Benefits	
SARM Benefits Program for RMs	Employee Benefits Administrator 306.761.3727
SARM's Property Insurance Program for RMs, Bonding of RM Employees	Insurance Program Administrator 306.761.3732
SARM's Liability Insurance Program for RMs	Director of Insurance and Benefit Programs 306.761.3726
Trading Services	
Provincial RM Road Map (Grid Road Map) order	Accounts Administrator 306.761.3722
Rat Bait Orders	Accounts Administrator 306.761.3722
Office supplies for RMs	Supreme Basics - https://www.supremebasics.com
	Staples - https://www.eway.ca
Communications	
SARM Website/Twitter	Marketing & Communications Coordinator 306.761.3931
Rural Councillor Magazine	Marketing & Communications Coordinator 306.761.3931
Monthly Updates to RMs	Marketing & Communications Coordinator 306.761.3931
Information Distribution/Ads/ Classifieds/Tenders	Executive Assistant 306.761.3731
Convention/Events	
Questions regarding Convention/Convention Sponsorship/Trade Show	Convention & Events Coordinator 761.761.3730
Policy/Advocacy	
Resolutions	Director of Policy and Research 306.761.3729
Municipal Governance Issues/Committee	Director of Policy and Research 306.761.3729
Environment Issues/Committee	Senior Policy Analyst 306.761.3742
Agriculture Issues/Committee	Director of Policy and Research 306.761.3729
Infrastructure & Development Issues/Committee	Senior Policy Analyst 306.761.3742
Emergency Planning Issues	Director of Policy and Research 306.761.3729
Scholarships and Awards	
SARM Administrator Scholarship	Director of Programs and Operations 306.761.3733
SARM Scholarship Program	Director of Programs and Operations 306.761.3733
Saskatchewan Municipal Awards	Director of Programs and Operations 306.761.3733
Lieutenant Governor's Award	Executive Assistant 306.761.3731



Common Inquiries	
Municipal Recycling MMRP	Senior Policy Analyst 306.761.3742
Civic Addressing	Director of Policy and Research 306.761.3729
Rural Policing & Bylaw Enforcement	Senior Policy Analyst 306.761.3742
Asset Management	Senior Policy Analyst 306.761.3740
Lobbyist Registration Federal/Provincial	Director of Policy and Research 306.761.3729
Environmental Code	Senior Policy Analyst 306.761.3740
Road Maintenance Agreements	Director of Policy and Research 306.761.3729
Water and Drainage	Senior Policy Analyst 306.761.3740
Rail lines and Grade Crossings	Senior Policy Analyst 306.761.3742
Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency (SAMA)	Executive Director 306.761.3721
Crime Stoppers Committee	Director of Strategic Engagement and Communications 306.761.3740
FlySask2 – GIS Mapping, SARM provides free access to maps for its RMs	Executive Assistant 306.761.3731
	SRC 306-933-8180
Municipal Funding	Director of Policy and Research 306.761.3729



SARM

The logo for SARM features the word "SARM" in a bold, dark red, sans-serif font. The text is centered and framed by two light gray, curved swooshes that arch over and under the letters, creating a sense of motion or a protective shield.