

TYPES OF GOVERNANCE QUESTIONS

What kind of questions does an effective governing body ask? This question has seldom been asked and thus seldom answered. Obviously, the simple response is: policy questions. That having been said, what does one of those look like?

While these are certainly not presented as the only questions to be asked, they do reflect a certain level of questioning which a Council should strive to meet. Such questions strike at the heart of key governance issues and refrain from the temptation to become involved in matters of day-to-day administration. They deliberately steer clear of involvement in the minutiae of administration i.e. the ‘how does it happen?’ kinds of questions. The responses to these questions would obviously provoke other questions but, again, the caution is to become involved in what is to be done, not how.

- **Corporate Direction**

-
1. Is the proposed course of action in line with Council’s approved Corporate Priorities?
 2. How does this recommendation fit with our previous decisions on this same topic?
 3. When did we last communicate with our public regarding our priorities for this term (or year)? What was the response?
 4. What does the most recent research tell us about the changing nature of our municipality?

- **Independent Advice**

-
1. When do we review the appointment of our auditors? Our legal counsel?
 2. What action can the CAO report with regard to follow-up on the auditor’s management letter?
 3. What date has been set for Council to meet with our auditor?
 4. What current information does our legal counsel have with regard to any proposed legislative change?

- **Fiscal Issues**

-
1. Do we as a governing body have a clear set of fiscal goals and priorities?
 2. Does the present fiscal plan reflect our goals and priorities?

3. Do we have appropriate fiscal policies in place?
4. Do we have sufficient checks and balances in place to give us the necessary level of confidence?
5. What information do we have with regard to trends in terms of our fiscal position?
6. What might we learn from others in our industry? What are we doing to ensure that we are on the leading edge of new developments?

- **Facility Management**

1. What recent information do we have in terms of the condition of our municipal facilities? Do we have a replacement plan and policy for each of our key facilities? Has this information been built into our long-range budget planning?
2. What policy guidance have we provided to our staff with regard to cost recovery? Do we have an adequate monitoring system in place to ensure that any needy resident is taken into account?
3. Have we provided policy direction with regard to utilizing the private or not-for-profit sectors in the management or ownership of our facilities?
4. Are business and marketing plans needed and, if so, what is the process for developing such plans?

- **Government Relations**

1. Do we have a clear indication of how our municipality is viewed by the provincial government?
2. How do we monitor that relationship?
3. Is there a better way for us to seek out federal funding on any of our projects? Can we find out what funding other municipalities in other Provinces seem to find?