

Do's and Don't for Council Members

For the newly elected council members, the following list of do's and don'ts could prove to be helpful. To incumbent, holdover council members, it is offered as a reminder.

- Do be prepared for council meetings by acquiring facts and being familiar with the aspects of each issue.
- Don't depend on others to give you all the details and facts of an issue, especially at the last minute.
- Do gather the sentiments of your citizens.
- Don't guess how your citizens feel about the issues.
- Do be responsible to citizen concerns and needs and vote their needs, as is prudent and "right".
- Don't act on the issues based on your personal judgement or very narrow interests, unless you are honestly convinced it is in the best interests of the community and you must do so;
- Do be open and communicative with the public and news media as much as possible;
- Don't treat the public and the news media as interference in your domain;
- Do represent the best interests of your entire community
- Don't be exclusively concerned and always vote for the concerns of one segment of your community;
- Do work productively with your fellow council members and be tolerant of their views, and if you must differ with them, do so based on your honest conviction of the issues only;
- Don't differ with fellow council members because of personal dislikes and petty matters;
- Do work harmoniously with the mayor and assist him or her in providing local leadership and guidance, if your locality has the mayor-council form of government;
- Don't try to circumvent or usurp the manager's authority and responsibilities;
- Do work harmoniously and cooperate with the manager and attempt to understand and appreciate his or her role, if your locality has the council-manager form of government.
- Don't try to circumvent or usurp manager's authority and responsibilities;
- Do try to understand and work harmoniously with neighbouring local governments – both general and special purpose government;
- Don't ignore or feud with neighbouring local government or reject them outright as adversaries;
- Do avail yourself of opportunities to become better informed about government by reading pertinent literature and attending various training sessions and conferences;
- Don't every feel that you know the "important" matters or feel you "know it all".
- Do set goals and objectives for yourself as a public figure and for your community;
- Don't be content merely to react to local matters or giving little thought to future developments
- Do remember why there is government and why you are in public office – to direct and serve the public interests;
- Don't let your tenure in public office be self-serving.