October 2026

Chief Administrative Officer — Job Description

Position summary

The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) is the Town of Annapolis Royal's senior appointed official and head of its administrative branch, responsible for turning Council's decisions and the Strategic Plan into services, budgets and results.

- **Accountability:** Reports to Town Council as a whole, not to the Mayor or any individual councillor. Council directs the CAO by resolution, policy and by-law.
- **Scope:** Leads and collaborates with the Town's directors and staff across finance, municipal operations and development, recreation and administration, and works with the Chief of Police and the Board of Police Commission.
- **Statutory role:** Carries out the responsibilities and exercises the powers the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA) gives a CAO (ss. 28–31C), plus any further duties Council assigns.

Duties and responsibilities

The CAO has the statutory duties the MGA assigns to the position, together with the Town-specific duties below. MGA references show where each duty comes from.

Council and governance

- Serve as head of the administrative branch. Council communicates with employees through the CAO, and no individual councillor, committee or committee member directs staff (MGA s. 30).
- Advise Council on the Town's operations and affairs, and prepare clear, balanced reports and recommendations for decision.
- Carry out Council's resolutions, policies and by-laws. Review draft by-laws and policies and recommend changes (MGA ss. 31, 47–49).
- Supervise the preparation of Council and Committee of the Whole agendas and make sure the actions that come out of meetings are carried out.
- Keep the Town's by-laws and policies current and consistent and prepare new ones as required with legal support.
- Attend, or be appropriately represented at, Council and Committee of the Whole meetings and meetings of Town boards and committees, except where Council excludes or limits the CAO's attendance, such as meetings on the CAO's evaluation (MGA ss. 31(2), 31B).
- Keep Council promptly informed of significant operational matters, risks and legal exposure.
- Support the administration of Council's code of conduct (MGA ss. 23A–23E).
- Take part in an annual performance evaluation by Council or the committee Council designates (MGA s. 31A).

Strategy and planning

- Turn the Strategic Plan into annual work plans, budgets and reports, and report progress against its goals and measures to Council regularly.
- Support Council's yearly update of the Plan.

- Coordinate and direct the preparation of plans and programs for the construction, rehabilitation and maintenance of municipal property and facilities, in line with the Asset Management Policy (MGA s. 31).
- Lead delivery of the major projects in the Plan names.
- Make every effort to grow residential and commercial base

Financial management (with the Director of Finance)

- Ensure the annual operating and capital budgets are prepared and submitted to Council, and administer them once adopted (MGA ss. 31, 65, 87).
- Maintain 3–5 year financial plans as directed
- Prepare, with other members of Town staff, applications for funding and grants with the support of the town staff.
- Lead the finance function through the Director of Finance, who is accountable to the CAO for ensuring the Town meets provincial financial reporting and audit requirements and acts on audit committee recommendations (MGA ss. 32, 42–44).
- Oversee procurement under Council's procurement policy and supervise Town contracts and agreements.

People and labour relations

- Develop and maintain the Town's leadership team and lead it effectively by setting direction and priorities and ensuring collaboration among its members.
- Ensure human resources, safety and employee benefits policies are in place, that staff issues are handled efficiently, and that every employee is subject to documented performance management.
- Appoint, suspend and remove employees, and delegate that authority as appropriate, within Council-approved policies and collective agreements (MGA s. 31(2)).
- Act, or appoint someone to act, as the Town's bargaining agent in negotiations with trade unions (MGA s. 31(2)).
- Lead the Town's compensation and classification system, retention strategies, and employee benefits.
- Ensure compliance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act and regulations, and a respectful, inclusive workplace.

Public safety and the Board of Police Commissioners and the Police Service.

- Act as the administrative link between Council, the Board of Police Commissioners (BoPC) and the Police Service (under the Board of Police Commissioners by-law).
- Attend BoPC meetings without a vote (Police Act s. 44(6)) and support the BoPC budget recommendations to Council (Police Act s. 53). Council only appoints the Chief of Police. All other hires are the Chief of Police decision.
- Acts as secretary or designates someone to serve as the secretary to the Board (Under the Board of Police Commissioners by-law attends and attends meetings without voting privileges (police Act s. 44 (6e)).
- The CAO does not direct policing: the Board provides civilian governance, and day-to-day direction rests with the Chief (Police Act ss. 38, 52, 55; MGA s. 54).

- Ensure fire protection and emergency management arrangements, including regional emergency plans, meet statutory requirements and Council's expectations (MGA Part X).
- Work closely with the Town's emergency management coordinator to coordinate disaster planning and serve as a senior member of the Town's emergency response team.

Infrastructure, utilities and property

- Lead, with the Director of Municipal Operations and Development and the operations team, the Town's infrastructure and utilities, including water, wastewater, roads and waste services, and ensure regulatory compliance.
- Manage the acquisition, sale and lease of Town property, including surplus properties, as Council directs (MGA ss. 50–52).
- Lead asset management and capital planning.

Legislative, records and compliance

- Ensure the statutory clerk functions are carried out, including minutes, by-law and policy records, and the records management and destruction policy (MGA ss. 33–36).
- Ensure the Town meets its freedom of information and privacy obligations (MGA Part XX).
- Ensure planning and development are administered under the municipal planning strategy and land-use by-law (MGA Part VIII), including heritage conservation.
- Support municipal elections and any other statutory functions of Council delegates to the CAO.

Community, intergovernmental relations and communications

- Represent the Town with the Province, neighbouring municipalities and municipal associations, subject to Council's authority to limit the CAO's participation in outside bodies (MGA s. 31B).
- Lead community consultation before decisions with major financial, societal or environmental impact, and lead the Town's communications with residents and partners.
- Respond to feedback the public directs to the CAO.
- Advance inclusivity, diversity, equity and accessibility in Town services and workplaces.

Absence and delegation

- Designate an acting CAO for planned absences. Delegations from the CAO make stay subject to Council's authority to intervene in, reassume or redirect them if the CAO is absent or unable to act for more than 30 days (MGA s. 31C).

Critical accountabilities

The CAO's annual evaluation (MGA s. 31A) measures results in these five areas:

- **Client service:** Responsiveness to complaints and suggestions, the time taken to resolve them, and communications that are timely, clear and concise.
- **Planning:** Comprehensive strategic plans with measurable long-, medium- and short-term goals, and adherence to those plans and budgets.
- **Financial:** Optimization of the Town's assets, in partnership with the Director of Finance.

- **Human resources:** Effective staff supervision, efficient use of available resources, and ongoing, documented performance management for every employee in **accordance with** HR policy
- **Town Growth:** Every effort is made to grow the residential and commercial base.
- **Policy:** A rationalized by-law and policy framework, and an effective, efficient policy development process.

Key relationships

The CAO works for Council as a whole and has to keep the administrative and political roles clearly separate.

- **Council:** Employer and source of direction. The CAO is the principal policy and administrative adviser to Council and takes direction only through Council decisions. Is the only employee of the Council.
- **Mayor:** Regular briefings and agenda planning, without taking direction outside Council decisions.
- **Directors and staff:** The CAO leads the leadership team effectively by setting directions and priorities and encouraging a collaborative approach amongst the members.
- **Board of Police Commissioners and Chief of Police:** The Chief is accountable to the Board for policing, and the CAO does not direct police operations.
- **Province and regulators:** Provincial departments responsible for municipal affairs and other services, and the regulators that oversee the Town's utilities.
- **Neighbouring municipalities and partners:** The Municipality of the County of Annapolis, the Town of Middleton, the intermunicipal working group and services agreements, neighbouring municipalities, and the Lawrencetown co-operative and other regional bodies and agreements through which services are shared.
- **Associations:** Provincial and national municipal associations, and the professional association for municipal administrators.
- **Community:** Residents, businesses, heritage and tourism organizations, and community groups.

Required

- A university degree in public administration, business administration or a related field. The highest level of qualification is preferred, and commensurate experience will be considered.
- A minimum of [7] years' progressive experience in municipal government or a comparable public- or private-sector organization, including several years as a senior manager responsible for budgets, staff and organizational results.
- Experience reporting to a governing body, preferably a municipal council, and preparing decision-ready reports for it.
- Thorough knowledge of municipal operations and of the *Municipal Government Act* and related provincial and municipal legislation and policy.
- Sound financial management skills, including multi-year operating and capital planning, and knowledge of asset management.
- Proven ability to develop and carry out multi-year strategic and operational plans.
- Proficiency with Microsoft 365 and accounting software and demonstrated support for modern technology and innovation.

- Excellent written, verbal and listening skills, and the ability to deal tactfully and respectfully with a wide range of people, sometimes in challenging circumstances.
- Fluency in oral and written English
- A valid driver's licence and reliable vehichle.

Preferred

- Experience in a Nova Scotia municipality, and with capital infrastructure projects, utilities or intermunicipal collaboration.
- Experience leading in a unionized environment, including collective bargaining.
- Experience working with a municipal police service and its governing board.
- Incident Command System (ICS) certification, or willingness to obtain it.
- A Certificate in Local Government Administration (or equivalent) and good standing with the Association of Municipal Administrators of Nova Scotia, or willingness to obtain them.
- A master's degree or higher in public administration or a related field.
- Fluency in French would be an asset.

Competencies

The CAO is a strategic, collaborative leader who is steady in both the administrative and political dimensions of the role.

- **Council relations:** Gives impartial, well-supported advice; understands the line between Council's policy-making authority and the CAO's administrative responsibility; is loyal to Council's role as the governing body and supports the direction Council ultimately agrees upon.
- **Strategic leadership:** Plans several years ahead sets measurable objectives, and keeps staff and resources aligned with Council's priorities.
- **People leadership:** Mentors and supports a talented team, builds a positive and productive workplace, and champions and carries through change.
- **Financial and asset stewardship:** Reads budgets and financial statements with confidence and weighs long-term infrastructure and reserve decisions against what the Town can afford.
- **Communication and engagement:** Shares information openly with Council, staff, partners and residents, and is comfortable in public consultation and media settings.
- **Collaboration:** Builds relationships with other levels of government, neighbouring municipalities and community organizations, and welcomes constructive challenge.
- **Judgment and integrity:** Solves problems independently, keeps confidence, and acts ethically under pressure.
- **Personal suitability:** Shows initiative, empathy, adaptability and creativity, and is honest, reliable and dependable.
- **Community commitment:** Makes a lasting commitment to the community and respects its heritage, environment and small-town character.

Working conditions

The work requires frequent travel to meetings in the Valley as well as some travel to Halifax. Must have a valid drivers' license and a reliable vehicle. Employees are required to work from the office during

their scheduled work hours. Working remotely or from home is not permitted unless specifically authorized by Council.