



City of Iqaluit
1085 Mivvik Street
P.O. Box 460
Iqaluit, Nunavut
X0A 0H0

Public Service Announcement

How City Council and Staff Work Together

July 29, 2025 – Iqaluit, Nunavut

The City of Iqaluit would like to help residents better understand how our local government works, and who is responsible for what at City Hall. The City follows a council–manager system. This means the City Council, made up of the Mayor and eight councillors, makes the big decisions and sets the direction for the city. Then, the municipal administration, led by the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), makes sure those decisions are carried out and that city services run smoothly.

The Council is elected by residents and is responsible for passing bylaws, approving the budget, and setting the city's long-term priorities. Councillors represent the whole city and are expected to act with integrity and leadership. Council also provides oversight through committees like Finance, Planning and Development, and Governance and Priorities. These committees help councillors study specific issues in greater detail and ensure the administration is following through on Council's direction.

The administration is made up of about 150 staff members. They manage day-to-day services such as water delivery, garbage collection, bylaw enforcement, recreation, and emergency services. All staff report up to the CAO, who is the only employee hired directly by Council. The CAO connects Council's decisions with the work of city staff and provides advice and information to help Council make informed choices.

The CAO plays a vital role in ensuring the city functions effectively. They manage the City's workforce, oversee budgets and major projects, and act as the key link between Council and administration. This ensures that decisions made at the Council table are turned into real results for residents. The CAO also ensures that Council receives the professional analysis, background, and advice needed to make strong, evidence-based decisions.

It's important to note that individual councillors do not direct city staff. All communication between Council and staff must go through the CAO. This structure protects the professional and non-political delivery of public services, ensuring that operations are based on expertise, not politics. It also helps maintain a respectful and efficient workplace for staff.

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Once Council passes a motion or bylaw, the CAO assigns it to the appropriate department to carry out. For example, if a development permit is approved, the Planning and Development team follows the appropriate process to issue it. If Council approves a budget for a water project, the Engineering team takes the lead. This structured process makes sure that every Council decision moves from planning to implementation in a clear, accountable way.

This system benefits all residents by helping deliver standard and dependable services—especially in a northern city like ours, where providing water, managing infrastructure, and responding to emergencies present unique challenges. The City must often adjust to extreme weather, limited construction seasons, and high transportation costs, which makes good planning and professional execution even more important.

By separating political leadership from daily operations, the City ensures that experienced professionals manage complex services, while elected officials focus on listening to residents and setting the overall direction. This system allows Council to represent the public's voice while giving staff the space and structure to do their jobs effectively.

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