

10 Minute Trainers

Module 1: Council Procedures

February, 2025

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What are 10 Minute Trainers?

10 Minute Trainers are short group-training sessions designed for council members and facilitated by your administrator. These trainers include short videos and an opportunity to discuss issues related to your council procedures.

Each video and discussion will take approximately 10 to 15 minutes. This module is broken down into three sections.

The goal of these trainers is to learn about key municipal matters in a team-building environment. Use this time to have an open discussion and determine what works best for your municipality.

Module 1: Council Procedures

This module helps you explore how your municipality does business by reviewing your Council Procedures Bylaw. Problems may arise when your current practices and your bylaw are at odds. This may lead to misunderstandings. The objective of this module is to make sure your current practices align with your bylaw.

Homework

1. Review the Homework Materials Handout. This handout will give you some things to keep in mind while reviewing your Council Procedures Bylaw.
2. Review your Council Procedures Bylaw. Focus on the following:
 - **Section 1:**
 - Special Meetings
 - Meeting through Electronic Means
 - Quorum
 - **Section 2:**
 - Closed Meetings
 - Delegations – Matters on Council Agenda
 - **Section 3:**
 - Committees:
 - i. Procedure for Appointments
 - ii. Term
 - iii. Committee Procedures

Video Clips

Included with this material are three video clips showing different situations that a municipal council may encounter. Watch one video clip at a time and then pause to discuss the questions on the Participant Worksheet. Remember that the objective of this module is to make sure your current practices align with your Council Procedures Bylaw.

**Video 1:
How to make a rush council
decision**

**Video 2:
Unexpected agenda item**

**Video 3:
Dysfunctional council committee**

Discussion Questions

- Refer to the Participant Worksheet.

Wrapping Up

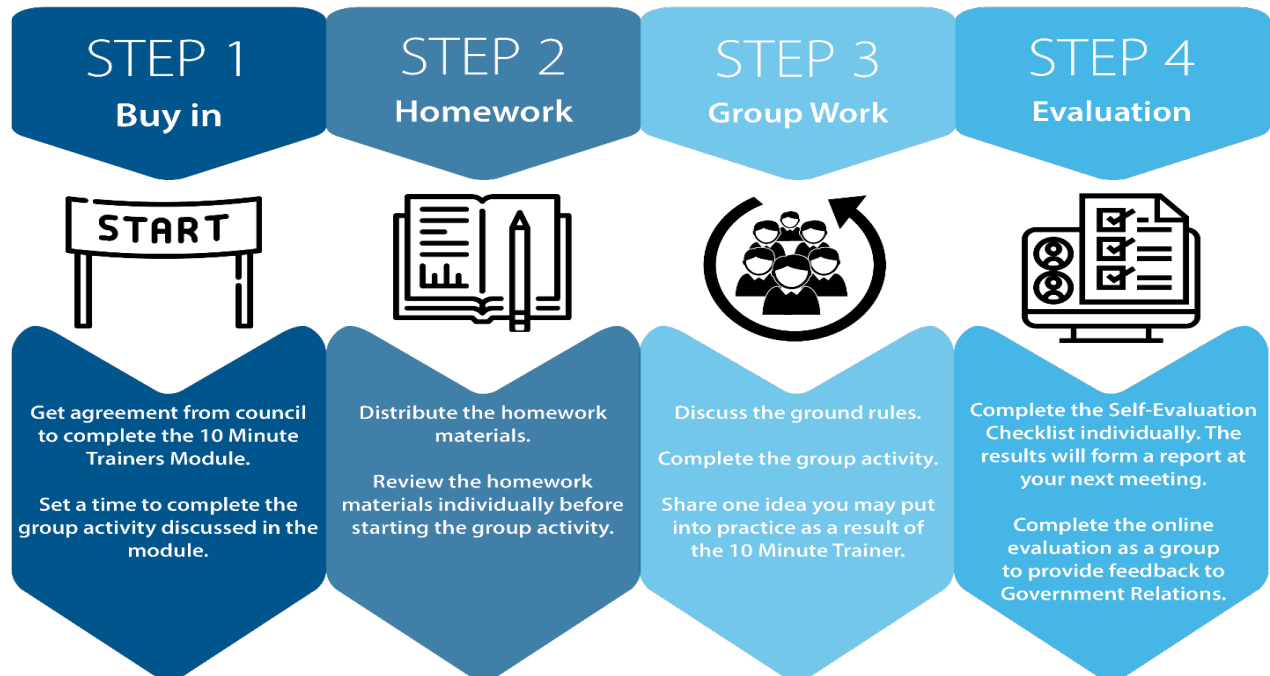
1. The facilitator will ask each participant to share one idea or one change they may put into practice as a result of the 10 Minute Trainers.
2. Individually complete the participant evaluation.

Further Information

If you have any questions about the 10 Minute Trainers, please contact 306-787-2680.

Timelines

This timeline outlines the steps to complete the 10 Minute Trainers Module.



Materials

The facilitator will work with you to arrange the necessary materials for the 10 Minute Trainers. Here is what your group will need:

- Laptop with audio or separate speakers
- Projector* or television
- Screen or a blank wall to play the videos*
- Homework materials (enough copies for council)
- Tent cards (included in the 10 Minute Trainers package)
- Copies of participant evaluation (enough copies for council)
- Copy of Council Procedures Bylaw

* Your council can also gather around the computer monitor to watch the videos if a projector or television is not available.

Instructions

Facilitator	Council Members
<p>Before the training session:</p>	<p>Before the training session:</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review 10 Minute Trainers package <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Watch videos. 2. Distribute necessary documents to council: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Overview of Module 1: Council Procedures b. Homework material c. Tent card d. Participant worksheet 3. Organize time with council to complete the module. 4. Make sure the necessary materials are ready for training. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review the homework materials. 2. Review Council Procedures Bylaw. 3. Bring the training materials to session.
<p>During the training:</p>	<p>During the training:</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review and discuss ground rules as a group (tent card). 2. Direct attention to Council Procedures Bylaw. 3. Start section one. It should only take 10 to 15 minutes per section. 4. Read “Things to keep in mind while watching” from the participant worksheet to group. 5. Watch the video. 6. Facilitate discussion based on questions from the participant worksheet. 7. Ask council members to share one idea or change they may put into practice as a result of the exercise. 8. Start again at step three to complete sections two and three. 9. Have everyone complete the survey. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review and set up a tent card in front of you. 2. Use participant worksheet during video and discussion. 3. Give your honest feedback during evaluation.
<p>After the training:</p>	<p>After the training:</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete facilitator survey. 2. Submit any paper evaluations back to Advisory Services and Municipal Relations (contact information is on facilitator evaluation). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Address any next steps from participant worksheet.

Facilitator Tips

The administrator or assistant administrator will take on the role of facilitator. The facilitator is responsible for guiding participants through each 10 Minute Trainer. This includes:

- Setting a time to complete the group activity
- Distributing the homework materials
- Leading the group discussion
- Gathering feedback

Role of the facilitator

To facilitate means to make easier. The role of the facilitator is to create a comfortable and productive space for a group of people. Your role as facilitator is to help guide the process and encourage learning by continuously involving participants. It is important to remain neutral in your role and avoid sharing a strong opinion.

Setting the tone

Create an environment of respect and integrity. As the facilitator, remember to lead by example.

1. Take time to explain your role as the facilitator.
2. Review and discuss the ground rules as a group (outlined on the participant tent cards).

Encourage discussion

Here are some examples you could use:

- Write participants' comments on a whiteboard/flipchart.
- Ask follow-up questions.
- Summarize ideas.
- Encourage people to share their ideas.
- Do not be afraid to admit you do not know something – use the opportunity to discuss how the group may research the issue.

How to address potential barriers in group discussions

The participant who talks too much:

- a. Redirect the discussion.
- b. Find ways to include other people.
- c. Directly ask someone else a question or introduce a new topic.

The member who will not talk:

- a. Provide opportunities for smaller group discussions.
- b. Ask opinion-based questions like “How do you feel about this?”
- c. Have participants write out their answers beforehand.

The discussion goes off track:

- a. List the questions or issues you want to cover on a board/flipchart.
- b. Summarize the discussion to help redirect participants.
- c. Write down any off-topic ideas that can be discussed later.

The discussion that turns into an argument:

In good discussions, conflicts can arise. Here are some ways to resolve them:

- a. If the solution depends on certain facts, the facilitator can ask participants to refer to the legislation/bylaws.
- b. If the question has to do with values, the facilitator can use the opportunity to help participants become aware of other people’s values.
- c. The facilitator can refer back to the ground rules, asking participants to focus on ideas rather than people and resist being judgmental.
- d. Take a short break.

Share the airtime.
One speaker at a time.
Use “I” statements.
Honour time limits.
Success depends on participation – share ideas and ask questions.
Listen to understand.
Let go of the outcome.
Cone of silence – whatever is said in the room, stays in the room.

Ground Rules

Tips for Working Better Together

Be Respectful

A successful working relationship is based on a solid foundation of respect. This means taking time to learn about your colleagues’ perspectives and consider the impact of your actions on others.

Have Realistic Expectations

Some issues cannot be resolved in one meeting. If you communicate openly and identify your goals, you will gain a better understanding of each other’s concerns and what may be needed to address them.

Be Flexible

It is easy to become frustrated when dealing with complex issues. If things do not go exactly as planned, be flexible.

Balance Appreciation and Judging

Appreciate everyone’s input, even if you disagree. It shows that you are engaged in the discussion

Homework Materials

The following information includes materials from the *Council Member's Handbook*. The Handbook is a guide developed to help council members understand and perform their role. Search "council member's handbook" online at saskatchewan.ca for the complete guide. Please review your municipality's Council Procedure Bylaw after reviewing the following information:

Overview of Council Procedures Bylaw

A Council Procedures Bylaw sets out the way council conducts its business. Bylaws cannot establish rules or procedures contrary to provincial legislation. Every municipality must have a Council Procedures Bylaw in place. The bylaw must cover:¹

Rules about:

- Conduct of council members
- Confidentiality, transparency and accessibility of documents to be discussed by or presented to council
- Delegations, presentations and submissions

Processes on:

- The days, times and places of regularly scheduled meetings and how to amend those days, times and places
- Calling a special meeting
- Closing all or part of a meeting
- Appointing an elected official as a deputy reeve/mayor
- Appointing an acting reeve/mayor if the mayor is unable to perform their duties

A more detailed Council Procedures Bylaw would also cover processes on:

- Calling the meeting to order and quorum
- Postponing meetings
- Agenda items
- Taking minutes
- Passing bylaws
- Rules of debate
- Voting on motions
- Committee of the whole
- Committees and committee meetings
- Revisiting decisions of council

¹ Subsection 81.1(2) *The Municipalities Act*, subsection 55.1(2) *The Cities Act*, subsection 100.1(2) *The Northern Municipalities Act*, 2010

Council committees and other bodies established by council also need written meeting rules.² The rules may be different. Council may ask the entity to establish their own rules, but council must make sure that the rules are in writing and are publicly accessible.³

A [sample template for Council Procedures Bylaw](#) is available on the Government of Saskatchewan's website.

Section 1: How to Make a Rush Council Decision

Council meetings

Councils are required to hold regular council meetings, as established in the municipality's Council Procedures Bylaw.

Council members have a legislated responsibility to attend council meetings. A council member may be disqualified from council for missing meetings.

A legally constituted meeting:

- Is a regular meeting in accordance with a resolution and the Council Procedures Bylaw.
- Is a special meeting called in accordance with legislation and the Council Procedures Bylaw.
- Provides notice to the public and to council members when required.

Special meetings

Councils can also hold special meetings in addition to regular meetings. Special meetings are usually held when important or unforeseen business arises that needs to be dealt with before the next regular meeting.

Meeting through electronic means

Council meetings may be conducted electronically, such as over the phone or through video conferencing. This provides an option to accommodate council members who, due to work or other responsibilities, are unable to attend the meeting in person.

Number of council members to make a decision

Council meetings require a majority (50 per cent plus one) of council to be present before a meeting convenes and at all times during the meeting. An exception to quorum requirements is when a member declares a conflict of interest and withdraws from a meeting. A council member who participates electronically is considered present at the meeting.

² Subsection 81.1(5) *The Municipalities Act*, subsection 55.1(5) *The Cities Act*, subsection 100.1(5) *The Northern Municipalities Act, 2010*

³ Subsection 81.1(5) *The Municipalities Act*, subsection 55.1(5) *The Cities Act*, subsection 100.1(5) *The Northern Municipalities Act, 2010*

Section 2: Unexpected Agenda Item

Closed meetings

Councils are required to conduct their business in meetings that are open to the public. This ensures that the public can hear the debate and know what was decided. Legislation allows councils to meet in a closed or “in camera” meeting only in very specific situations. It is important to keep confidential matters discussed in a closed meeting or confidential information of a private nature private until discussed at a public meeting.

Independent council member actions

Councillors must look after the interests of the entire municipality. If you are in a municipality that has wards or divisions, you will have to be careful not to place the interest of your ward or division above the interest of the whole municipality. Your effectiveness depends on providing input as a representative of an area while thinking and voting for needs of the whole municipality.

Communication between municipal officials

Council members should be courteous, timely, clear and direct when communicating with each other and with employees. This means you:

- Take time to listen
- Are approachable
- Respect confidentiality
- Are clear with people about what you can or cannot do
- Apologize if you make a mistake

Section 3: Dysfunctional Council Committee

Duties delegated to committees

Councils may establish committees, boards and other bodies⁴ to help them carry out their municipal responsibilities. Council may choose to create council committees made up of council members only, or to create committees, boards or other bodies that enlist the help of members of the community that are not serving on council. Committees can be an effective way of bringing additional expertise and new perspectives to the table.

Committee decision making process

Usually, a group established by council is required to exercise its duties and powers at a meeting that is open to the public. Groups established by council also require written meeting procedures. Generally, these groups make recommendations to council, which acts on the recommendations and makes the final decision.

⁴ Section 81 *The Municipalities Act*, section 55 *The Cities Act*, section 100 *The Northern Municipalities Act, 2010*

However, council may choose to delegate some decision-making authority to the group that is established. Actions are not effective unless council has delegated authority to the group by resolution or bylaw or council adopts the recommendations or decisions at a council meeting.

Role of the chair in meetings

The chair maintains order at a meeting and facilitates debate on questions before council or a committee. This is an acquired skill that does not always come naturally. Chairs have the following skills:

- Awareness of the rules
 - Familiar with the Council Procedures Bylaw
- Preparedness
 - Review the agenda
- Timeliness
 - Start meetings on time
 - Ensure the debate remains productive
- Impartiality
 - Makes decisions based on meeting principles, and not on a personal viewpoint
- A team player
 - The chair does not have any special power respecting the decision-making process
 - The chair has one vote only, just like any other member
 - The chair cannot veto a decision of council

Participant Worksheet

Section 1: How to Make a Rush Council Decision	
<p>Things to keep in mind while watching:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Calling a special meeting• Meeting by electronic means• Number of councillors to make a decision	Observations:
<p>Questions to discuss as a group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What would your council do in this situation?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Do we all agree? Why or why not?• How many council members do you need to make a decision?• Have we ever met by electronic means?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ If not, is this an option we want to explore?• How do we call a special meeting?• Does what we just discussed match our Council Procedures Bylaw?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ If not, what needs to change?• What are our next steps?	Notes:

Section 2: Unexpected Agenda Item

Things to keep in mind while watching:

- Holding a closed meeting
- Independent council member actions
- Communication between municipal officials

Observations:

Questions to discuss as a group:

- What would your council do in this situation?
 - Do we all agree? Why or why not?
- When can council hold a closed meeting?
- When can citizens present to council?
 - How can they do this?
- How do independent council member actions impact the rest of council?
- Why is it important to have good communication between council and administration?
- Does what we just discussed match our Council Procedures Bylaw?
 - If not, what needs to change?
- What are our next steps?

Notes:

Section 3: Dysfunctional Council Committee

<p>Things to keep in mind while watching:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Duties delegated to committees• Committee decision making process• Role of chair in meeting	<p>Observations:</p>
<p>Questions to discuss as a group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What would your council do in this situation?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Do we all agree? Why or why not?• What authorities do council committees have?• How do committees make decisions?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ How do they communicate information to council?• What happens when committee members do not agree?• What is the role of the chair in the meeting?• Does what we just discussed match our Council Procedures Bylaw?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ If not, what needs to change?• What are our next steps?	<p>Notes:</p>

Video and Evaluation Links

Video Links

Section 1 – How to Make a Rush Council Decision –

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OQKC30zpkAA>

Section 2 – Unexpected Agenda Item –

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cFGqP93eWco>

Section 3 – Dysfunctional Council Committee –

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ujjeOnFbiw>

Evaluation Links

Participant Evaluation: <http://ca.surveygizmo.com/s3/50014889/10-Minute-Trainers-Participant-Evaluation>

Facilitator Evaluation: <http://ca.surveygizmo.com/s3/50017596/10-Minute-Trainers-Facilitator-Evaluation>

Note: If you or your council is unable to complete the evaluations electronically, we have provided a printable copy in the trainer package. Please fill them out and return to Government Relations.

Participant Evaluation

Instructions

Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements by checking your response using the scale provided.

1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree

The facilitator will collect the completed evaluations and submit them to the Ministry of Government Relations.

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
1. The facilitator was prepared for the training.					
2. I came prepared for the training.					
3. The training materials were clear.					
4. The videos helped facilitate discussion.					
5. I appreciated the light tone of the videos.					
6. The videos were a good length.					
7. I learned something I did not know about our Council Procedures Bylaw.					
8. The activity helped with team building.					
9. There was enough time.					
10. I would participate in another 10 Minute Trainer.					

Questions:

1. How long have you been on council?
2. What aspects of the 10 Minute Trainer could be improved?
3. What did you learn from participating in the 10 Minute Trainer?
4. How do you hope to improve your practice as a result of this training?
5. What other topics would you like to see in future 10 Minute Trainers?

Facilitator Evaluation

Instructions

Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements by checking your response using the scale provided.

1 = strongly disagree 2 = disagree 3 = neutral 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree

Please submit your completed evaluation along with the participant evaluations to the Ministry of Government Relations.

Statements		1	2	3	4	5
11.	I came prepared for the training.					
12.	The training materials were clear.					
13.	The facilitator tips helped me deliver the training.					
14.	The videos helped facilitate discussion.					
15.	I appreciated the light tone of the videos.					
16.	The videos were a good length.					
17.	Participants were engaged in discussions.					
18.	I managed group dynamics well.					
19.	Participants learned something they did not know about our Council Procedures Bylaw.					
20.	There was enough time.					
21.	I was comfortable facilitating this training.					
22.	I would participate in another 10 Minute Trainer.					

Questions:

1. How long have you been an administrator?
2. What did you like most about the 10 Minute Trainer?
3. What aspects of the 10 Minute Trainer could be improved?
4. What did you learn from facilitating the 10 Minute Trainer?
5. How do you hope to improve your practice as a result of this training?
6. Were there any issues with technology? (ex. YouTube vs USB and projector/computer screen)
7. What other topics would you like to see in future 10 Minute Trainers?

Scan and email completed evaluations to:

Manager, Strategic Initiatives
Advisory Services and Municipal Relations
Ministry of Government Relations
muninfo@gov.sk.ca