

Many believe that the one sure way to evaluate a Council is through the election process: if re-elected, then the individual must have done something right.

But governance is a complex concept that goes beyond the decisions of the electorate. At the core of governance is the bringing together of individuals, with varying ideas, experiences, and preferences. Public officials, once elected, form a Council, a body that has power as a collective, not as individuals.

Good governance occurs when those individuals work together in an attempt to capture all of the considerations necessary in order to address the interests of the stakeholders while creating policy and direction for the betterment of the region.

While there are varying opinions on what good governance looks like, most of the principles are essentially the same and which will form the foundation for Council's self-evaluation:

- A. Rule of Law
- B. Transparency
- C. Responsiveness
- D. Consensus Oriented
- E. Equity and Inclusiveness
- F. Effectiveness and Efficiency
- G. Accountability
- H. Participation
- I. Strategic Focus

While going through the exercise, it will become apparent that the above principles align with Council's Ethical Guidelines of Conduct and the Norms and Values statements that Council commits itself to as part of the annual Organizational Meeting. This suggests that Council has already set the framework for good governance through these documents and, therefore, by holding true to the Guidelines and Norms and Values, Council is already taking positive steps towards good governance.

#### **Scoring:**

Each response is given a point value as follows:

Always	Mostly	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
5 pts	4 pts	3 pts	2 pts	1 pt

Each question has a total potential score of 35; the actual score will be calculated by using the actual score divided by the potential score to create a percentage, e.g.  $28/35 \times 100 = 80\%$ . The percentage of the three questions for each section will be added up and divided by three to create the score for that section, e.g.  $88+92+85/3 = 88.3\%$ . The same formula will be used to calculate the overall score.

## Nine Elements of Good Governance

A. **Rule of Law:** Good governance requires fair legal frameworks that are enforced by an impartial regulatory body for the full protection of stakeholders. **Overall Score: 81%**

1. **Council has enacted bylaws that are balanced and consider the needs of the County as a whole. Score: 80%**

Always	Mostly	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
2	4	1		

Comments and observations:

- Not enough discussion on bylaws or other policies
- Heavy reliance on administration recommendations
- Personal agendas in decision-making

2. **Council has acted as a fair and impartial body when dealing with matters requiring Council approval. Score: 80%**

Always	Mostly	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
2	3	2		

Comments and observations:

- Fine line representing ratepayers and county as a whole
- Perception by public that filling council chambers means vote in favour
- Some bias on matters that have come before council

3. **Council, through Board and Committee appointments, has ensured continuity of fairness and impartiality for those matters requiring decision or direction. Score: 83%**

Always	Mostly	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
2	4	1		

Comments and observations:

- Council does a good job separating themselves from the committee appointments and Council

- B. **Transparency:** Transparency means that information should be provided in easily understandable forms and media; that it should be freely available and directly accessible to those who will be affected by governance policies and practices, as well as the outcomes resulting therefrom; and that any decisions taken and their enforcement are in compliance with established rules and regulations. **Overall Score: 90%**

**4. Council, in partnership with Administration, has initiated mechanisms to make information more readily-available to its stakeholders. Score 88%**

Always	Mostly	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
3	4			

Comments and observations:

- Council and administration have been responsive and proactive
- Have not followed through with making senior admin expenses available to public except via FOIP

**5. Council has debated issues in the public forum, minimizing in-camera discussions during Council and Governance and Priorities Committee Meetings. Score: 97%**

Always	Mostly	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
6	1			

Comments and observations:

- Minimal in-camera sessions

**6. Council utilizes fair and open debate when making decisions for the benefit of the community. Score: 86%**

Always	Mostly	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
3	3	1		

Comments and observations:

- Council not asking enough questions of administration during budget

C. **Responsiveness:** Good governance requires that organizations and their processes are designed to serve the best interests of stakeholders within a reasonable timeframe. **Overall Score:80%**

**7. Council considers the interests of all stakeholders in the development and approval of policies and bylaws. Score: 83%**

Always	Mostly	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
3	2	2		

Comments and observations:

- Need to ensure considering all stakeholders when making decisions
- Not allowing personal bias to influence decisions

**8. Council ensures that decisions are made in a timely manner, with appropriate time for consultation and feedback from the public and stakeholders, as well as time to consider all information presented. Score: 80%**

Always	Mostly	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1	5	1		

Comments and observations:

- Times when Council should be taking more time to consider information before making a decision

**9. Council is open to alternative thoughts and ideas and understands that past practices do not define future actions; that flexibility and adaptability are key to meet the needs of a changing public. Score 77%**

Always	Mostly	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1	4	2		

Comments and observations:

- Council open to thinking outside the box.

- D. **Consensus Oriented:** Good governance requires consultation to understand the different interests of stakeholders in order to reach a broad consensus of what is in the best interest of the entire stakeholder group and how this can be achieved in a sustainable and prudent manner. **Overall Score: 83%**

**10. Council ensures appropriate opportunities for input from the public and stakeholders on important matters before making a decision. Score: 89%**

Always	Mostly	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
4	2	1		

Comments and observations:

- Have tried to schedule meetings/hearings at different times to accommodate ratepayers

**11. Council is open and responsive to feedback from the public and various stakeholders and ensures decisions are balanced and made in the best interests of the community at large. Score: 83%**

Always	Mostly	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
2	4	1		

Comments and observations:

- Silent majority may be overlooked

**12. Council is mindful that the vocal minority does not necessarily represent the quiet majority when contemplating a decision on a contentious issue. Score: 77%**

Always	Mostly	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
	6	1		

Comments and observations:

- Hard to determine opinion of those who do not attend hearings

- E. **Equity and inclusiveness:** The organization that provides the opportunity for its stakeholders to maintain, enhance, or generally improve their well-being provides the most compelling message regarding its reason or existence and value to society. **Overall Score: 80%**

**13. Council makes decisions in the best interests of the County as a whole. Score: 77%**

Always	Mostly	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
	6	1		

Comments and observations:

- Need to represent County as a whole, not by individual division or personal biases

**14. Council approaches decisions with impartiality and without bias or favouritism towards a particular stakeholder or group. Score: 74%**

Always	Mostly	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
	5	2		

Comments and observations:

- Some personal biases and loyalty

**15. Council understands its role as facilitators of the public need. Score: 89%**

Always	Mostly	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
4	2	1		

Comments and observations:

- F. **Effectiveness and Efficiency:** Good governance means that the processes implemented by the organization to produce favourable results meet the needs of its stakeholders, while making the best use of resources – human, technological, financial, natural, and environmental – at its disposal. **Overall Score: 78%**

**16. Council has properly delegated responsibilities to Administration and has empowered Administration to fulfill those responsibilities. Score: 77%**

Always	Mostly	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
	6	1		

Comments and observations:

- Need a closer look at budgets

**17. Council provides clear direction to Administration on policies, projects, and initiatives that allows Administration to perform its duties efficiently, effectively, and professionally. Score: 77%**

Always	Mostly	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1	4	2		

Comments and observations:

- Council needs to give clearer direction to Administration
- Council relying too heavily on Administration recommendations
- Need to have strategic planning sessions more often
- Some micromanaging of staff, Council wanting to be more involved than they need to be

**18. Council ensures Administration has the resources necessary in order to implement Council's direction. Score: 80%**

Always	Mostly	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
	7			

Comments and observations:

- Not enough information on budget – Council needs a better understanding of projects and resources, both human and financial
- Governance review to assist in ensuring adequate resources

- G. **Accountability:** Accountability is a key tenet of good governance. Who is accountable for what should be documented in policy statements. In general, an organization is accountable to those who will be affected by its decisions or actions as well as the applicable rules of law. **Overall Score: 88%**

**19. Council acknowledges that individual members may differ in opinion when representing their constituents, but makes decisions based on the impact to the entire community, and adopts those decisions as a collective. Score 80%**

Always	Mostly	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1	5	1		

Comments and observations:

**20. Council ensures the actions taken and decisions made are within the powers granted to it by the *Municipal Government Act* and other appropriate legislation. Score 94%**

Always	Mostly	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
6		1		

Comments and observations:

- Need to explore other opportunities to think outside of the box while staying within the MGA

**21. Council shares information regarding decisions and issues to the public and makes itself available to hear and respond to questions and concerns of the public. Score: 89%**

Always	Mostly	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
3	4			

Comments and observations:

- Council good in this regard
- Some public members calling outside of their division when councillor cannot be reached



- H. **Participation:** Participation, either directly or through legitimate representatives, is a key cornerstone of good governance. Participation needs to be informed and organized, including freedom of expression and assiduous concern for the best interests of the organization and society in general. **Overall Score: 87%**

**22. Parkland County has adequate Boards and Committees to assist in facilitating Council's strategic goals. Score: 94%**

Always	Mostly	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
5	2			

Comments and observations:

- Review committee and boards terms of reference to ensure they align with Strategic Plan
- Continue to look for ways to improve
- Feedback from committees is important

**23. Board and Committee members are recruited with appropriate skill sets and with the intent of ensuring appropriate representation of Parkland County's diverse community. Score: 74%**

Always	Mostly	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1	4	1	1	

Comments and observations:

- Need to look at and evaluate skill sets on boards and ensure proper recruitment
- Some public members appointed to several boards – favouritism? Lack of people putting name forward?
- General public feels left out

**24. Council encourages its stakeholders to come forward and share their thoughts, concerns, and questions with Council. Score: 91%**

Always	Mostly	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
5	1	1		

Comments and observations:

- I. **Strategic Focus:** Good governance includes the ability to anticipate future problems and issues based on current data and trends, and develop policies that take into account future costs and anticipated changes (e.g. demographic, economic, environmental, etc.) **Overall Score: 74%**

**25. Council is forward-thinking, strategic, and progressive in its decision-making process. Score: 71%**

Always	Mostly	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
	4	3		

Comments and observations:

- Council is not quite there yet

**26. Council ensures short-term solutions will have long-term benefits for Parkland County as a community and as an organization. Score: 74%**

Always	Mostly	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
	5	2		

Comments and observations:

- Council tends to be reactive and cautious – need to work on being more strategic
- Opportunity for further training in this area
- Council striving to better understand long term effects of decisions

**27. Council maintains its focus on the long-term vision for the county, and empowers Administration to perform the day-to-day operations to fulfil Council's vision. Score: 77%**

Always	Mostly	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1	4	2		

Comments and observations:

- Need more focus on long-term vision
- Still some pullback from Council – trust issue?

## Self-Evaluation Summary

Rule of Law	81%
Transparency	90%
Responsiveness:	80%
Consensus-Oriented:	83%
Equity and Inclusiveness:	80%
Effectiveness and Efficiency:	78%
Accountability:	88%
Participation:	87%
Strategic Focus:	74%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>82.3%</b>