

Presentation to Municipality of Yarmouth Council

(a short presentation on Citizens and Council working together)

Introduction: My name is Ron Cox and I live in Dayton. Acknowledge and thank Warden and Councillors.

Purpose of this presentation to underscore the important role of our municipal councillors in local government and why it is beneficial for both our councillors and our citizens to cooperate with each other and work together for the benefit of our whole municipality.

Explain picture of government as a pyramid or triangle federal, provincial and local.

Explain importance of councillors in local government; they are public servants who are elected by the local people in their ridings to represent the wishes and concerns of those same people.

Explain their uniqueness ... local most important, closest to citizens, there is personal relationship, the two sides can interact unlike provincial and federal.

We could get into history here but will not. I will mention one point though. In 2023, N.S. celebrates the 175 Anniversary of responsible government. (1848) N.S. was the first British colony in the world to achieve responsible government. You could say we started out as a world leader in this regard. (mention Joseph Howe)

today in 2023, the people of the Municipality of Yarmouth, (citizens, voters, tax payers) cannot ask a question or make a comment at our Council Meetings.

I have been attending council meetings for over a year.

stop here and explain a private phone call, private emails, a private letter and private conversations on the street as opposed to a question or comment made at a formal Council session. (recorded in the minutes, etc.)

this does not need to be the case in the 21st century.

mention how other municipal and town councils in N.S. and across Canada handle this

councils that value the input from their citizens on important issues. ie. in the municipality of Lunenburg there are 20 minutes allotted for public input at the start of every regular council meeting. Members of the public may register to speak at the start of the meeting. Each speaker is allowed 3 minutes to ask their question or make their point per meeting.

Reflect on councillors role as public servants. Compare this with other relationships in life.

Mention the argument re: Roberts Rules of Order or Parliamentary Procedure. The whole purpose of these Rules of Order is to provide for constructive and democratic meetings and to help not hinder the business of an assembly.

Under no circumstances should undue strictness be allowed to intimidate members or limit full participation. The fundamental right of deliberative assemblies require all questions to be thoroughly discussed before an action is taken.

In conclusion; list steps to correct/improve this. Explain a comment or concern is just that. A question asked does not need to be answered immediately. An answer could take time to research etc.

Thank the council and offer to answer questions.