

# Lac La Biche County *Policy*

**TITLE:** Ward Open House

**POLICY NO:** GOV-11-016

**RESOLUTION:** 24.124

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** June 9, 2015

**DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBLE:** Legislative Services **NEXT REVIEW DATE:** April 1, 2026

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## **POLICY STATEMENT:**

To provide residents of Lac La Biche County the opportunity to express ideas and concerns about matters affecting the municipality, it is necessary for the County's Elected Officials to meet with constituents, on a periodical basis. Lac La Biche County supports the use of Open Houses to facilitate the engagement between Elected Officials and constituents.

## **DEFINITIONS:**

**Elected Officials** includes the Mayor and Councillors of Lac La Biche County.

**Open House** means an informal gathering of residents for the purpose of providing an opportunity to meet their Elected Officials and to learn about issues of general interest to the ward or the County as a whole. These gatherings are those where notice is broadly provided, and the event is held at a location where the public is permitted to attend.

## **PRINCIPLES:**

1. Through the annual budget, County Council may allocate funds to allow Elected Officials to host Open Houses. Budgets shall be allocated equally to elected officials.
2. Reasonable expenses incurred for hosting and advertising Open Houses may be reimbursed to the Elected Official, upon submission of the appropriate receipts. All expenses of this nature are subject to approved budgetary amounts. Reasonable expenses include rental for public meeting spaces, advertising, and light refreshments.
3. Despite clause 2:
  - a. expenses shall not be reimbursed for Open Houses held between December 31 of the year before the general election and the organizational meeting immediately following an election (this is an approximate 10-month period);
  - b. expenses shall not be reimbursed for Open Houses held during a byelection for the office of Mayor. The byelection period is the time between of the vacancy being reported until the results of the byelection become official (this is an approximate 100-day period); and
  - c. may be reimbursed during a byelection for an office of Ward Councillor, provided that the Member hosting the Open House seeks approval from Council.
4. Open Houses are the responsibility of individual elected officials. For further clarity, this means Elected Officials are responsible for the overall planning, notice and preparation of the event, whereby support from

County Administrative personnel is not provided. Further, attendance at the event by members of County Administration shall not be required.

5. Elected Officials may choose to collaborate and host Open Houses with other Elected Officials. In these instances, the collaborating Elected Officials shall decide how the expenses are to be shared between their budgets and submit expenses accordingly.
6. This policy does not apply to events scheduled by Lac La Biche County for the purpose of encouraging public engagement on specific County initiatives, which may include the annual budget, economic development strategies, recreation plans, draft policies, etc. The provisions of the Public Participation Policy apply in these instances.
7. This policy does not apply to public engagement and events that may be scheduled by Council as a Whole. This may include seasonal public receptions or opportunities to collaborate with elected representatives of other governments, such as Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs).
8. Council may temporarily suspend the eligibility for reimbursement under this policy, at any time.

"Original Signed"  
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Mayor

April 6, 2024  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

"Original Signed"  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief Administrative Officer

April 5, 2024  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**SPECIAL NOTES/CROSS REFERENCE:** Previous policy number CS-11-016.

**AMENDMENT DATE:** March 26, 2024