

**Prompt (the question posed to the AI):** I live in a small town of 5,000 people. We have a mayor and 4 councillors. What is the role of the mayor and councillors versus the administration and civil service?

**The AI answer:** In a small town government, there's an important distinction between the **elected officials** (mayor and councillors) and the **administrative staff** (civil service):

#### **Mayor and Councillors (Legislative/Policy Role)**

These are your elected representatives who:

- Set the vision and strategic direction for the town
- Make policy decisions and pass bylaws
- Approve the annual budget
- Represent constituents' interests and concerns
- Hire (and can fire) the top administrator, often called a Town Manager, CAO (Chief Administrative Officer), or Town Clerk
- Make decisions at public council meetings
- Focus on "what" the town should do and "why"

The mayor typically chairs council meetings and serves as the public face of the municipality, though in a small town they usually don't have more voting power than councillors.

#### **Administration/Civil Service (Implementation Role)**

These are the hired professionals who:

- Implement the policies council creates
- Run day-to-day operations (roads, water, permits, etc.)
- Provide expert advice and reports to council
- Manage town staff and departments
- Handle administrative and technical work
- Execute the budget council approved
- Focus on "how" to accomplish what council decides

In a town of 5,000, you might have a small team—perhaps a CAO, a clerk/treasurer, public works staff, and maybe some planning or bylaw enforcement officers.

**The key principle:** Council governs and sets direction; administration manages and executes. Council shouldn't micromanage staff, and staff shouldn't make political decisions. The CAO is typically the crucial link between these two spheres.