

THE TOWN OF OKOTOKS
GOVERNANCE AND PRIORITIES COMMITTEE MEETING
AGENDA

Monday, April 20, 2026
4:30 PM
COUNCIL CHAMBER

	Pages
1. CALL TO ORDER	
2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA	
3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES	
3.1 Governance and Priorities Committee - March 16, 2026	2
4. BUSINESS	
4.1 2026 Alberta Municipalities Resolution	6
<p style="margin-left: 40px;">The deadline for submitting the proposed resolution to the Alberta Municipalities for consideration at the Fall 2026 convention is May 31, 2026.</p>	
5. NEW BUSINESS	
6. CLOSED SESSION ITEMS	
<p>(At the Committee's discretion, this portion of the meeting may be closed to the public if a matter to be discussed is within one of the exceptions to disclosure in Division 2 of Part I of the <i>Access to Information Act (ATIA)</i>)</p>	
7. MOTION(S) ARISING FROM CLOSED SESSION	
8. NEXT MEETING	
<p>The next meeting of the Governance and Priorities Committee is Tuesday, May 19, 2026 at 4:30 p.m.</p>	
9. ADJOURNMENT	

**TOWN OF OKOTOKS
UNADOPTED MINUTES
FOR THE GOVERNANCE AND PRIORITIES COMMITTEE
HELD ON MONDAY, MARCH 16, 2026
AT THE OKOTOKS MUNICIPAL CENTRE COUNCIL CHAMBER**

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS
PRESENT**

Deputy Mayor Hallmark, Chair
Mayor Thorn
Councillor Dykema
Councillor Lang
Councillor Nix
Councillor Penner
Councillor Walther

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT

Chief Administrative Officer Elaine Vincent
Legislative & Corporate Records Officer Janice Storch

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Hallmark called the meeting to order at 4:31 p.m. and provided a traditional land acknowledgement.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

MOTION: By Councillor Walther that the agenda for the March 16, 2026 Governance and Priorities Committee Meeting be adopted as presented.

Carried Unanimously

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

3.1 Governance and Priorities Committee - February 17, 2026

MOTION: By Councillor Nix that the minutes of the Governance and Priorities Committee Meeting held February 17, 2026 be adopted as presented.

Carried Unanimously

4. BUSINESS

4.1 Municipal Grant Programs and Subsidies

Social Planner Michelle Grenwich, Community Identity Manager Chris MacIsaac, Community & Social Development Team Leader Sian Anderson, Customer Experience Team Leader Marisa Harris, and Environment Team Leader Jinny Toffelmire reviewed the report containing the issue that an overview of all the Town's grant programs and subsidies is provided for review and discussion to inform policy updates and the 2027-2030 operating budget.

MOTION: By Councillor Dykema that administration be directed to incorporate Committee discussion and feedback as they move forward with policy updates and future operating budget recommendations.

Carried Unanimously

Recess at 5:35 p.m. Reconvene at 6:00 p.m.

4.2 2026 Council Connect Plan

Community Engagement Manager Melanie Heemeryck and Senior Communications Advisor Stephanie Barnes reviewed the report containing the issue that information is being shared with the Governance and Priorities Committee regarding the approach to developing the 2026 Council Connect Plan, which will also forecast Council Connect opportunities for the remainder of the Council term and be revisited annually.

MOTION: By Councillor Lang that administration be directed to prepare a 2026 Council Connect Plan that reflects the discussion and direction provided by the Governance and Priorities Committee and provide that Plan to Council for approval no later than April 30, 2026.

Carried Unanimously

Recess at 7:05 p.m. Reconvene at 7:09 p.m.

4.3 Tax Rate Ratios

Chief Financial Officer Katherine Van Keimpema reviewed the report containing the issue that Administration is seeking Governance and Priorities Committee's consideration of options for allocating municipal property taxes between residential and non-residential taxpayers for 2026.

5. NEW BUSINESS

None

6. CLOSED SESSION ITEMS

MOTION: By Mayor Thorn that the meeting go into Closed Session as the matters to be discussed during this portion of the meeting are within one of the exceptions to disclosure in Division 2 of Part I of the *Access to Information Act (ATIA)* at 8:03 p.m.

Carried Unanimously

6.1 Advice from Officials and Policy Development (*ATIA* s. 20, 28, 29, 30)

In Attendance

Chair Hallmark

Mayor Thorn

Councillors Dykema, Lang, Nix, Penner, and Walther

Chief Administrative Officer Elaine Vincent

Community Safety & Organizational Excellence Director Paula Bernat

Acting People, Policy & Technology Senior Manager Cathy Duplessis

MOTION: By Councillor Penner that the meeting come out of Closed Session at 8:31 p.m.

Carried Unanimously

7. MOTION(S) ARISING FROM CLOSED SESSION

MOTION: By Mayor Thorn that a recommendation be forwarded to Council to endorse Option B from Closed Session report 6.1 as presented.

Carried

8. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Governance and Priorities Committee is Monday, April 20, 2026 at 4:30 p.m.

9. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: By Councillor Lang that the Governance and Priorities Committee Meeting of March 16, 2026 adjourn at 8:34 p.m.

Carried Unanimously

Unapproved



2026 ABMUNIS RESOLUTIONS

Council / Governance Issue

The deadline for submitting the proposed resolution to the Alberta Municipalities for consideration at the Fall 2026 convention is May 31, 2026.

Recommendation

That a recommendation be forwarded to Council for approval and submission of the proposed ABMunis resolution regarding creation of a province-wide income-qualified home energy-efficiency program as presented.

Background and Considerations

Submitting a resolution for debate at the ABmunis' 2026 Convention is a strong way to highlight the issue and, if supported by most municipal members, empowers Alberta Municipalities to take action.

The ABmunis' *Guide to Submitting a Resolution in 2026* is attached for reference. According to the guide a resolution must:

- Focus on an issue that affects municipalities at a regional or provincial level,
- Be approved by the sponsoring municipality's council, and
- Be seconded by a council from another municipality with a different population size.

The deadline to submit 2026 resolutions is May 31, 2026.

Administration has drafted a resolution to be submitted to Alberta Municipalities for inclusion in the 2026 Resolution Handbook that advocates for a province-wide, income-qualified home energy-efficiency program.

Such a program would serve to improve the affordability of household utilities for low-income Albertans by providing free home energy assessments and no-cost energy efficiency upgrades. It recognizes that rising energy costs place added pressure on residents with limited incomes and that many existing programs are not accessible to renters or those unable to pay for upgrades upfront.

A provincially delivered program would help ensure consistent access across Alberta, reduce administrative demands on municipalities, and support community resilience, affordability, and long-term sustainability.

Current Policy or Bylaw Analysis

n/a

Municipal Comparisons

There are similar income-qualified home energy-efficiency upgrade programs currently operating in Canada offering free home energy assessments and no-cost, direct-install energy efficiency upgrades to participants. Efficiency Manitoba introduced the *Canada Greener Home Affordability Program* (CGHAP) in 2025 to qualified participants in Manitoba with funding from Natural Resources Canada. Within Alberta, the City of Calgary's *Home Upgrades Program* is currently available to homeowners and renters within the city.

CAO Comments

Committee direction is requested.

Attachment(s)

1. Town of Okotoks 2026 Resolution - Draft
2. Alberta Municipalities' *Guide to Submitting a Resolution in 2026*

Prepared by:
Jinny Toffelmire
Environment Team Leader
April 13, 2026

Increase Affordable Housing with Province-wide Home Energy-Efficiency Program

Moved by: Town of Okotoks
 Seconded by: Town of Devon

WHEREAS there is a shortage of affordable housing across Alberta;

WHEREAS “affordable” refers to housing that can be owned or rented by a household with shelter costs (rent or mortgage, utilities, etc.) that cost less than 30% of before-tax (gross) household income¹;

WHEREAS the shortage of affordable housing and rising cost of utilities disproportionately affects low-income Albertans;

WHEREAS home energy efficiency upgrades are shown to lower energy bills and increase comfort and resilience during cold and extreme weather events²; and

WHEREAS investment in housing generates economic returns, creating jobs and providing stability that contributes to reducing interactions in health, social services, and justice systems,³.

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT Alberta Municipalities advocate for the Government of Alberta to establish a province-wide, income-qualified home energy-efficiency upgrades program that leverages available federal funding and private investment opportunities, in order to improve affordability of household utilities for low-income Albertans.

BACKGROUND:

Offering a province-wide, income-qualified home energy efficiency program centralizes the administrative burden, avoiding duplication and ensuring equal opportunity for all Albertans to participate. It also allows Alberta to leverage available federal funds while still maintaining control over prioritization and allocation.

Many households in Alberta are in core housing need, meaning they are living in housing that is unsuitable, inadequate, or unaffordable and cannot afford proper alternatives. The Alberta Municipalities 2026 Advocacy Priorities include *Affordable Housing and Homelessness* which

¹ Affordable Housing Asset Management Framework, Government of Alberta, September 23, 2022 <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/da3888d3-29ac-4637-87d7-5ebe49bddecdd/resource/9967b0d7-230f-4dea-8827-f2c231150d7b/download/sh-affordable-housing-asset-management-framework.pdf>

² Energy Poverty in Canada, Efficiency Canada, <https://www efficiencycanada.org/energy-poverty-in-canada/>

³ Stronger Foundations: Alberta’s 10-year plan to improve and expand affordable housing, Government of Alberta, November 2021 <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/d17f3af6-fa5a-4cb0-b36e-248823cddff1/resource/d11b4795-763a-4221-b6f9-2f5769df50a5/download/sh-stronger-foundations-albertas-10-year-strategy-affordable-housing-2021.pdf>

contains a goal to see “improved access to affordable housing, as well as the supports and services needed to maintain housing and prevent homelessness” can include being able to afford the utility bills related to the affordable housing. *Stronger Foundations*, the Government of Alberta’s 10-year plan to improve and expand affordable housing, identifies the following objectives:

- Albertans have access to safe, affordable housing that meets their needs and promotes quality of life.
- The housing system delivers innovative and sustainable affordable housing options to Albertans in need through partnerships with other orders of government, non-profit and private housing providers, and communities.
- The housing system serves Albertans now and into the future³.

Housing is only affordable long-term if the ongoing costs to live comfortably within the home are also sustainable, including the cost of utilities. When household utility costs rise faster than incomes, residents defer maintenance, face arrears, or go without adequate heating and cooling. Municipalities are often confronted with secondary impacts from the lack of affordable housing associated with increased utility costs: more calls for emergency assistance, higher arrears on utility accounts, increased pressure on housing and homelessness systems, and rising demand for community cooling/warming centres during extreme weather.

A household is considered to be “energy poor” if it spends 10% or more of its after-tax income on home energy bills. Because many households cannot afford—or, in the case of renters, cannot control—necessary energy-efficiency upgrades, rising income alone does not eliminate this burden⁴. In Alberta, 1-in-7 households are affected by energy poverty⁵, and the challenge spans communities of all sizes: in Okotoks, a 2024 survey found that over 30% of residents struggled to afford their utility bills⁶, while in Calgary, about 64% of households face low to moderate energy burdens, indicating difficulty covering up to half of their energy costs⁷.

The steep initial cost and slow return on investment of energy-efficiency upgrades can hinder many residents from taking this step. In most regions, low-income Albertans have limited access to programs that are designed to make energy-efficiency upgrades more affordable. For example, the Government of Alberta’s *Act to Enable Clean Energy Improvements*, SA 2018, c6 and associated *Clean Energy Improvements Regulation*, AT 212/2018 allowed Alberta municipalities to offer the Clean Energy Improvement Program (CEIP), giving property owners a low-interest financing option

⁴ Energy Poverty in Canada: Prevalence, social and spatial distribution and implications for research and policy, Riva et. al, 2021 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2021.102237>

⁵ Energy Poverty: An Energy Poverty Strategy for Alberta, Boyd, R. and H. Corbett, All One Sky Foundation, 2018

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5ed809f05c460126fe7f10e2/t/5eea6d9da0da297283dc4edb/1592421794193/Alberta%2BEnergy%2BPoverty%2BStrategy.pdf>

⁶ Social Needs Assessment & Strategy, Town of Okotoks, 2025 [https://hdp-ca-prod-app-okotoks-shape-files.s3.ca-central-](https://hdp-ca-prod-app-okotoks-shape-files.s3.ca-central-1.amazonaws.com/7917/4463/7640/Okotoks_Social_Needs_Assessment_Strategy_web.pdf)

[1.amazonaws.com/7917/4463/7640/Okotoks_Social_Needs_Assessment_Strategy_web.pdf](https://hdp-ca-prod-app-okotoks-shape-files.s3.ca-central-1.amazonaws.com/7917/4463/7640/Okotoks_Social_Needs_Assessment_Strategy_web.pdf)

⁷ Advancing Energy Equity Together, Calgary’s Energy Equity Strategy, City of Calgary, 2025-2030 <https://www.calgary.ca/environment/programs/equity.html>

for energy efficiency upgrades through their property taxes. However, CEIP offers insufficient support for renters and low-income residents. Similarly, most municipal rebate programs require participants to pay for upgrades upfront, which prevents many people from enrolling. The Home Energy Upgrades Program was initially available in Edmonton, Calgary, Canmore and ST. Albert with funding from participating municipalities, privation foundations, as well as Government of Canada contributions via the Green Municipal Fund and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.⁸

Currently, it is only offered in the City of Calgary and is designed to overcome the financial barriers experiences by homeowners. It helps homeowners and renters in Calgary with utility-saving services, including no-cost energy efficiency upgrades for income-qualified residents⁹. While the program demonstrates the value of these upgrades to low-income households, it depends on limited local funding and is not available to the remaining 70% of Alberta residents living outside of Calgary. Smaller municipalities and rural areas lack the resources and expertise to offer similar programs.

Investing in energy efficiency retrofits for residential buildings in Alberta also delivers clear economic benefits. By reducing household energy costs, efficiency upgrades free up more disposable income for Albertans, supporting broader economic activity and reducing burdens on social supports. This type of program would also help to sustain Alberta's energy-efficiency workforce, ensuring ongoing market demand for professions that were initially expanded under previous national programs. Examples of these professions include solar PV installers, energy advisors, and related contractor and installation professional services. Additionally, reducing individual household energy use strengthens the resilience of Alberta's energy generation and distribution systems and gives the province greater flexibility in planning and phasing future infrastructure investments.

⁸ Home Energy Upgrades Program, <https://www.homeupgradesprogram.ca/>

⁹ Calgary Home Upgrades Program, City of Calgary <https://www.homeupgradesprogram.ca/calgary>



Guide for Submitting a Resolution in 2026

Created: January 2026

About Resolutions

Alberta Municipalities conducts an annual resolutions process that enables member municipalities to bring forward common issues and solutions and seek member approval to give direction to ABmunis' Board of Directors to advocate to the federal and provincial governments on members' behalf.

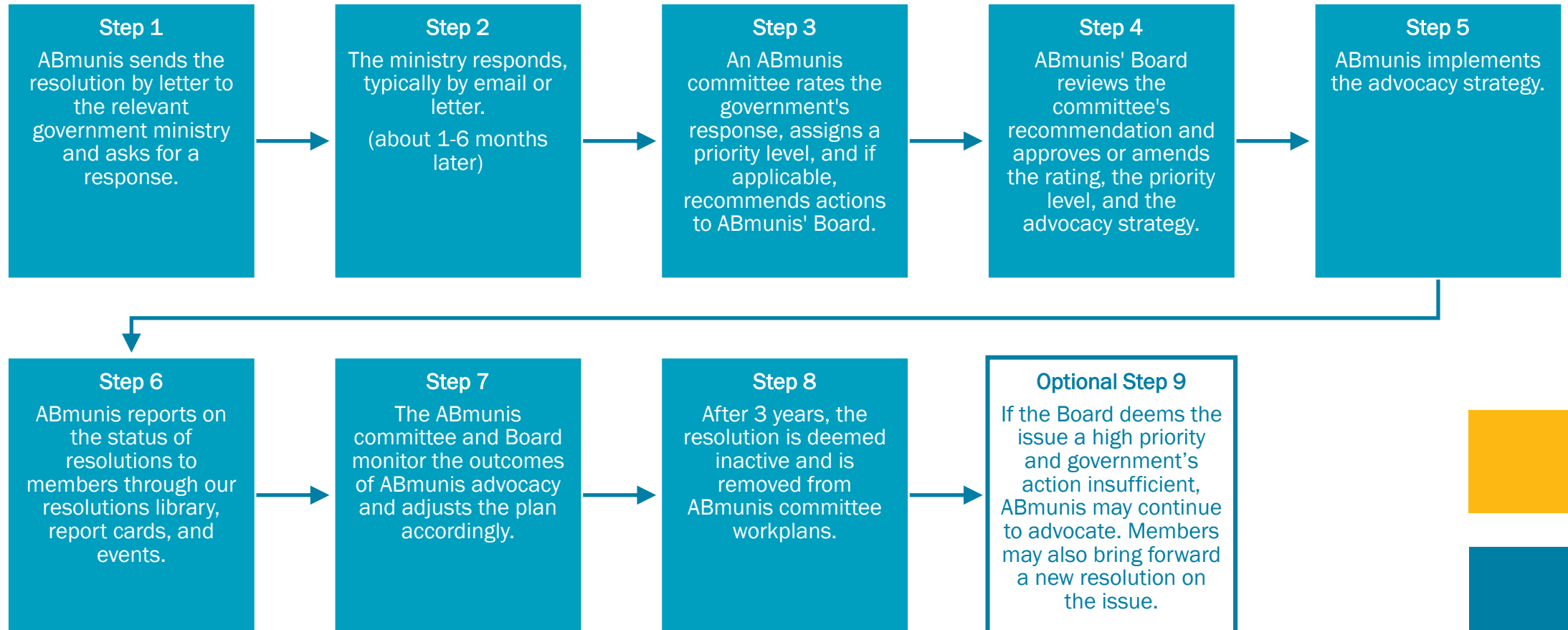
For a resolution to be presented at ABmunis' Convention, the resolution must:

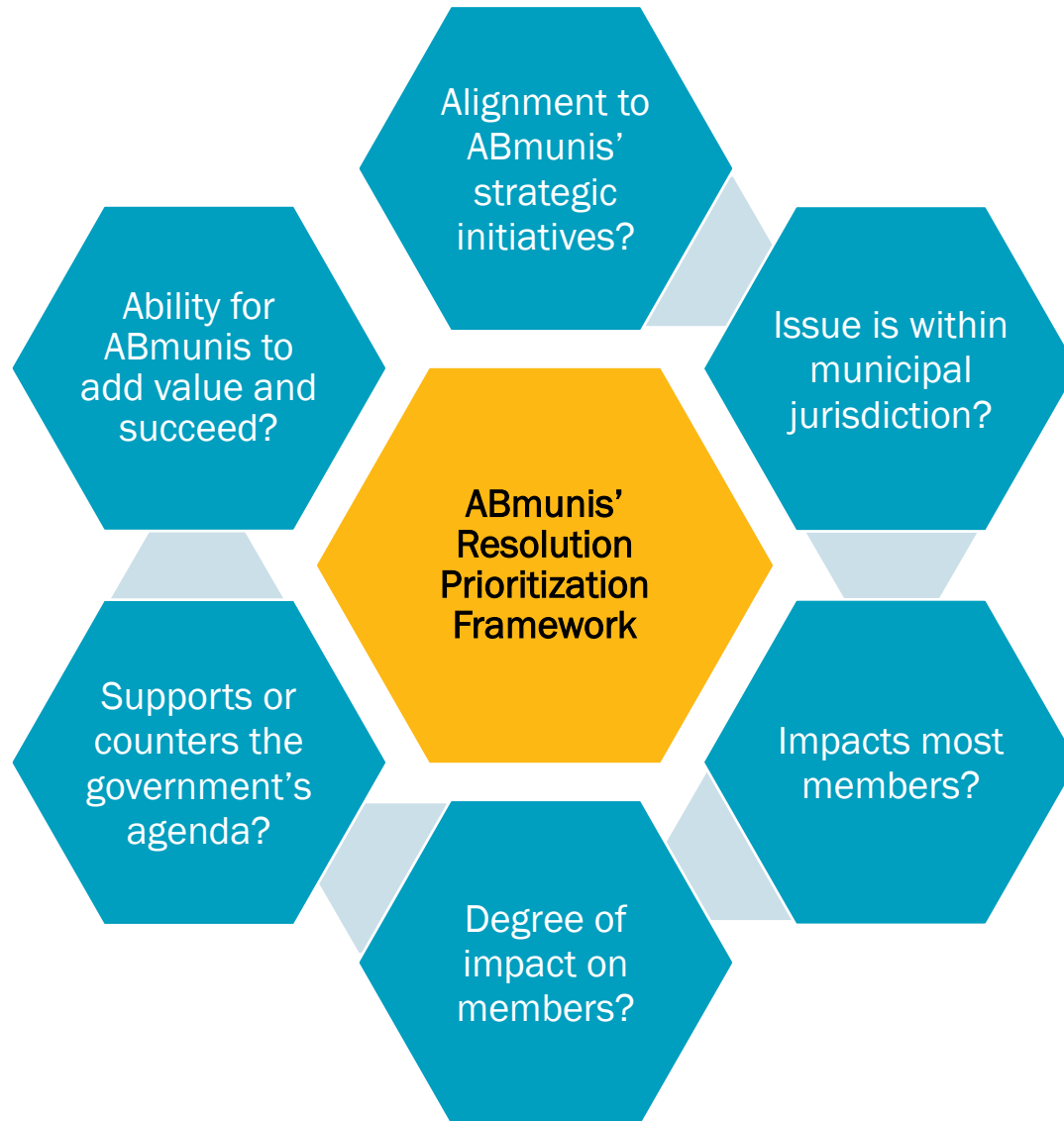
- address a topic of concern affecting municipalities on a regional or provincial level,
- be approved by the council of the sponsoring municipality, and
- be seconded by an additional municipal council of a different sized population.

Timeline for 2026 Resolutions

January	ABmunis begins accepting resolutions for the 2026 year.
May 31	Deadline to submit a resolution including endorsement by the moving and seconding councils.
June	ABmunis' Municipal Governance Committee reviews, categorizes, and checks that each resolution meets the requirements of ABmunis' Resolutions Policy.
July	ABmunis' Board of Directors approves each resolution to be considered for debate at the 2026 Convention. ABmunis publishes the 2026 Resolutions Book.
September 23-25	Members debate and vote on the 2026 resolutions.
October	ABmunis begins advocacy on all resolutions that were adopted by members at Convention.
Ongoing	ABmunis regularly publishes a report card on the outcomes of ABmunis' advocacy efforts until the 3-year active period ends.


What happens after members adopt a resolution?





ABmunis assigns a low, medium, or high priority to each resolution using our prioritization framework

Before You Create a Resolution

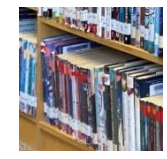
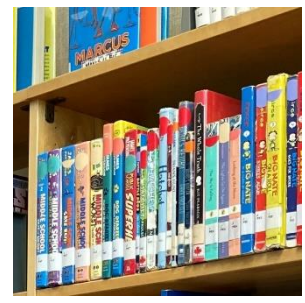
Question to Consider 	If the answer is no...
1. Have you communicated with your MLA or the relevant minister about the issue?	You may still submit a resolution, but ABmunis encourages you to engage your MLA on the issue too.
2. Does the issue currently impact most of ABmunis' member municipalities or may impact most municipalities in the future?	Research how many municipalities are likely to be impacted by the issue so you can justify that it's a regional or provincial issue.
3. Does the issue align with ABmunis' 2026 strategic initiatives ?	ABmunis may assign a low priority to the resolution and take limited action on the issue if it does not.
4. Does the issue trigger any of the rejection criteria in section 32 of ABmunis' Resolution Policy ?	Great, because ABmunis wants to avoid any situation where the Board may have to reject a member's resolution.
5. Have you searched the Resolution Library to make sure your issue is not already addressed in a resolution that was adopted in 2024 or 2025?	Please check the library to make sure ABmunis isn't already advocating on the issue through an active resolution.
6. Does the issue align with the priorities of the current government?	Would advocacy on this issue hinder ABmunis' success on other issues that your municipality would consider a higher priority?

What if a resolution isn't the right option?

- Meet with your MLA
- Contact the government department staff
- Write a letter or meet with the appropriate minister
- Raise the issue at the minister dialogue sessions at ABmunis' events (if a regional/provincial topic)
- Speak with an [ABmunis Board Director](#) or email president@abmunis.ca
- Check with ABmunis administration by emailing resolutions@abmunis.ca



Tips to Consider When Creating a Resolution



Finding a Seconder

Start your search early to find a municipality that will second your resolution. This provides:

- An opportunity for the seconder municipality to provide meaningful feedback on the wording of the resolution.
- Sufficient time for both councils to endorse the resolution before the deadline.

Notify us!

Email resolutions@abmunis.ca as early as possible to notify ABmunis of your interest in submitting a resolution. ABmunis advocacy staff can save you time by:

- Informing you if another municipality is planning a similar resolution.
- Identify municipalities that may be willing to second your resolution.



Requirements for the Seconder

Section 10 of ABmunis' Resolutions Policy requires that resolution mover(s) and seconder(s) must represent at least two of the following population categories:

- Less than 2,500
- 2,501 to 10,000
- Greater than 10,000

Example A

If a municipality of 20,000 population is the mover, then the seconder municipality must be below 10,000 population.

Example B

If a municipality of 7,000 population is the mover, then the seconder municipality must either be less than 2,500 or greater than 10,000 population.

For 2026, a municipality's population is based on [Municipal Affairs' 2025 Official Population List](#).

Tips for Writing a Resolution

1. Use ABmunis' [resolution template](#).
2. If your resolution is specific to legislation:
 - Always use the proper name of the legislation.
 - Reference the specific sections of the legislation in the preamble or background sections.
3. Focus on the desired outcome of the resolution, rather than presenting a prescriptive solution.
4. Consider using the background section to describe a local experience but make sure you demonstrate how the issue is relevant to other municipalities and how many municipalities are impacted. In other words, be careful not to localize the resolution to the extent that it is seen as a single municipality's issue.
5. Any facts or statistics must include the source of that information. The source can be presented in the background section or a footnote (do not use endnotes).
6. Check if the issue is being addressed by the Rural Municipalities of Alberta and/or the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. If so, mention this in the resolution.
7. Seek feedback from the seconder municipality before your council approves the resolution.
8. Email a draft version to ABmunis Advocacy staff at resolutions@abmunis.ca for input before you present it to either council for approval.

Deadline for Submission

- Resolutions must be submitted by **May 31, 2026**.
- A resolution submitted after May 31 will only be accepted if it is deemed an emergent issue per the criteria in section 19 of the Resolutions Policy and is approved by ABmunis' Board.

How to Submit Your Resolution

Email your resolution to resolutions@abmunis.ca:

- Must be in Word format using [ABmunis' template](#), and
- Confirm that the resolution has been endorsed by the moving and seconding councils by providing:
 - A copy or link to the meeting minutes, or
 - Date of the meeting, motion number, mover's name, and wording of the motion.



Checklist for Success

- We have considered the questions on page 7 and have taken the appropriate actions.
- We understand that ABmunis may take limited action if the resolution issue is deemed to be a low priority for most members.
- We notified ABmunis staff (resolutions@abmunis.ca) of our intent to submit a resolution.
- We wrote the resolution using ABmunis' template and tips (page 12).
- We sent a draft version of the resolution to ABmunis staff (resolutions@abmunis.ca) for input before it was endorsed by the moving and seconding councils.
- We have a seconding municipality that meets the population requirements.
- The moving and seconding councils have passed motions before the May 31 deadline.
- We have submitted all documents to resolutions@abmunis.ca by May 31, 2026.



Questions? Email resolutions@abmunis.ca

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