



Guide to writing resolutions

Many issues confronting local councils require action by levels of government other than the municipal level. And sometimes these issues are, or have the potential to be, common to many municipalities. Resolutions forwarded to AUMA are an effective vehicle for dealing with these types of issues.

Keep in mind that a resolution forwarded to AUMA is more than a directive to local municipal staff or a policy guideline for future council meetings. A resolution passed by local council and forwarded to AUMA is one in which you and your council are hoping ultimately to have endorsed by a majority of Alberta's municipalities.

It follows that the resolution should be as clear as possible to as many people as possible. The resolution must address a topic of concern to municipalities throughout the province, and Resolutions must not direct a municipality to adopt a particular course of action, but must be worded as a request for consideration of the issue.

Construction of the resolution

All AUMA resolutions take the form of a preamble followed by an operative clause.

The preamble is composed of a number of clauses. How many depends on the complexity of the problem with which the resolution is dealing. Generally, however, there should be no more than five clauses to the preamble.

The operative clause contains the actual call to action which the resolution is putting forward.

As it is best to have only one request per resolution, there is generally only one operative clause.

The preamble

The purpose of the preamble is to lead up to the operative clause. That is, the preamble familiarizes the reader with the subject under discussion and alerts the reader to the problem at hand. The reader is then prepared to consider the solution/call to action offered in the operative clause.

All preamble clauses begin with "WHEREAS" and, where appropriate, should start out by referring to the applicable legislation. Always use the proper title of the Act or number of the Bill in question. If possible, list the particular sections of the Bill or Act to which the resolution is addressed.

The preamble should then go on to explain the exact problem. This is best explained by using examples of the actual incident(s) precipitating the resolution. However, care must be taken to ensure that this does not localize the resolution and place it in jeopardy of being seen as a single municipality's issue.

The operative clause

All operative clauses begin with “THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association...” This is usually followed with either “requests” or “is opposed to”. Operative clauses should specifically indicate the government to which the resolution is directed; for example, the Government of Alberta, the Federal Government, FCM. The operative clause is the call to action, the very reason the resolution was drafted in the first place. This is the most important part of the resolution and should be written very clearly. There should be no doubt as to what specific action is being requested.

Also, the called-for action must be appropriate to the problem outlined in the preamble.

The wording of a resolution

Keep it simple. Keep it action oriented. Keep it free of ambiguous terms.

Background information

No preamble can be comprehensive enough to give a full account of the situation that gave rise to the resolution. In all cases, supplementary or background information (1 to 2 pages max.) is necessary. This additional material will assist the Convention Resolutions Committee, and later convention delegates, in understanding the issue at hand. Often, a resolution passed by local council is based upon a report received from municipal staff. If this is the case, an executive summary of this report should be included with the resolution.

For more information, contact [Advocacy](#) by calling 310-AUMA.