Rural and Municipal Governments

According to the *Municipal Government Act*, the purposes of a municipality are the following:

      (a) to provide good government,
      (b) to provide services, facilities or other things that, in the opinion of council, are necessary or desirable for all or a part of the municipality, and
      (c)   to develop and maintain safe and viable communities.

Municipalities can choose to be designated a village, town or city after they meet the criteria set out below.

      Village
      A village may be formed for an area in which
      (a)   a majority of the buildings are on parcels of land smaller than 1850 square metres, and
      (b)   there is a population of 300 or more.

      Town
      A town may be formed for an area in which
      (a)   a majority of the buildings are on parcels of land smaller than 1850 square metres, and
      (b)   there is a population of 1000 or more.

      City
      A city may be formed for an area in which
      (a)   a majority of the buildings are on parcels of land smaller than 1850 square metres, and
      (b)   there is a population of 10 000 or more.

Making the change from village to town to city is not a requirement. Some municipalities, such as Sherwood Park (which is a hamlet), choose to retain their existing classification even when requirements for the category are exceeded. These decisions are often made for economic reasons or to retain the county governance structure.

Comparison of rural and urban councils, leaders and meetings:

The head of county and improvement district governments is called a reeve.
The head of town governments is called a mayor.
The head of urban governments is called a mayor.
Both rural and urban governments have elected representatives called councillors, who are accountable to the citizens that elect them.
Both rural and urban governments hold meetings regularly where they make decisions on

roads, water, electricity, licences for businesses and other public concerns.

Both rural and urban governments attempt to meet the needs of residents and that electoral processes are the same.