



GROWING COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT: A WORKSHOP FOR WOMEN IN POUCH COVE

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 11AM-1PM
RECREATION CHALET - STILES COVE RECREATION COMPLEX



TEN QUESTIONS FOR MARLENE CARROLL

1. What inspired you to run for Council? And when did you first run?

I always had an interest in running for Council but never did voice it to anyone. I didn't really think that I would actually do it.

Back in 2013, I was living in Torbay and it was election year. I was at the Ball field watching my sons play softball. I was chatting with Cyril Power, a former Mayor of Torbay and his wife and we were chatting about the upcoming election. I said to Cyril, I always thought about running. That is all I needed to say. Cyril and Jeannie just loved the idea. Cyril worked with me at DFO and was now retired. He called me at work the next day and said you should really consider running. I told him I would think about it. Cyril called me the next day and asked if I had given it any thought. I said you know what, I don't have anything to lose, I will put my name forward.

I didn't have time to campaign or go door to door but I had a lot of contacts through volunteering in the community and so many friends living in Torbay. I did really well. I had 932 votes and was very close to a returning Councillor. She beat me by maybe 30-40 votes.

Even though I didn't win, I felt really good because I thought to myself, if I had the time to put into it, I may have won.

So, in 2016, I went through a divorce and lost my Mom at the same time. I decided to move back to my hometown of Pouch Cove. There was an election coming up in 2017 so I figured it would be a good way to get out and meet residents of the Town that I didn't know and get reacquainted with residents that I did know.



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2. Could you please outline your experiences with the Council?

I have had a great experience with Council. I was elected by the residents of the Town to be their representative so I take that very seriously. I was the only woman to run out of 9 candidates and I had the most votes and therefore became Deputy Mayor. That felt really good but I was nervous, I didn't know anything about being Deputy Mayor or being a Councillor. But I was elected to do this job and I wanted to give it my best shot. So, I read everything that was given to me and I attended any information sessions that came up and I attended the AGM in Gander and I went the FCM Conference in Quebec. You don't always come away from these meetings with a wealth of knowledge but you do come away with something. I always feel that I benefit from attending sessions. I have met a lot of Councillors from other Municipalities and hearing what their struggles are or things that they had accomplished in their Town and how we can learn from that.

We don't always agree in Council Chambers but we all have our own opinion and we always listen to each other and try to come up with a cost effective and sensible way of doing things that will benefit our Town.

I have had a couple of incidents whereby I felt disrespected. Both times were when I was chairing a Public meeting in the Mayor's absence. I did voice my concerns to Council but I did not receive an apology from the Councillor and that was disappointing but I have big shoulders and I moved on. It did however give me a negative vibe for that person. But I can continue to work with him and I keep an open mind and move on.

I have made great female friends from other Municipalities, Deputy Mayor of St. John's Sheilagh O'Leary, Deputy Mayor of Torbay Trina Appleby, Councillor Mary Thorne-Goose from Torbay, Councillors Isabel Fry and Andrea Power from Mount Pearl to name a few. We get together for supper now and then. We don't Men bash. That is not our purpose, but we do discuss challenges and issues that face us as Women Councillors. We help each other.



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3. What did you consider before running for Council?

I considered how much time I would have to dedicate to the position. I work full time and at the time my boys were still in school and in hockey and basketball and everything else. I also have hobbies that I love to spend time at. I also considered do I know enough to do this. Will I know what is being discussed? I also have a hearing disability which is very frustrating at times and very irritable for people on the other side of it. Even though I wear two hearing aides, I don't always get clarity so I was nervous about missing parts of conversations... I don't always hear what is being said and that can be difficult to deal with... It is embarrassing at times... There are two other Councillors who are hard of hearing as well so that makes it a little easier for me. My hearing impairment is much worse I think but I have become more comfortable with asking Councillors to repeat what they said or ask them to speak in a louder tone. I purchased a little device that goes directly into my hearing aids and when attending conferences, I ask the speaker to attach it to their lapel and it is a wonderful little contraption. In a smaller setting it isn't so great but in a larger area, it works beautifully. One thing that I would like to see is a microphone on each of our space in Council Chambers. Something that I brought up before but I didn't follow up on. I need to speak with Brian and staff to purchase those mics. But the time I spend on Council does not interfere with my work or any other things that are going on in my life. I make it work.

4. Was there any particular event or person that gave you support, satisfaction or confirmed your decision to run for Council?

A lot of residents approached me and asked me if I would consider running. Councillor Connors was very supportive and encouraged me to run. Then during the Summer of 2017, I was coaching my boy's softball game at the Killick Coast Games. My boys still played with Torbay and we were playing against Pouch Cove team who Joedy was coaching. After the game, I mentioned to Joedy that I was considering running for Council and he said that would be fabulous. Happy to hear that. to know that I had his support as well, I put my name forward.



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5. What are some jobs, skills, involvements or interests that may have been useful in your decision to run for Council? And get elected?

I always volunteered, whether it was within the Community or at work. I was a Leader for Beavers and Cubs, I coached for approximately 10 years with Killick Coast games, I volunteered with hockey fundraisers and basketball fundraisers, I coached soccer. Wherever I was needed, I would lend a helping hand. I chaired the Social Committee for several years in my workplace. We organized many events for employees. I love volunteering and meeting new people and socializing. Just love it. Also, my experience in working with committees and projects in my job gave me an interest in being involved.

But growing up I was somewhat shy. In school, I would slide down in my seat so I wouldn't be called upon by the teacher. When I went to work with DFO 32 years ago, you could avail of courses and I had read about Dale Carnegie. So, I registered for the course and it really helped me with speaking in front of a group of people and bringing me out of my shyness of speaking or of having a voice. I found after that, I could at least speak at meetings and offer my opinion. I still tremor most times when I am speaking but I think that is part of who we are, part of our personality and not all of us are Public speakers but we all have a voice. Of course, being the Deputy Mayor, I have had to say a few words at some events in the Town. I was nervous about doing it, but I still do it and I get a lot of positive feedback so that makes it worthwhile and gives me confidence to do it the next time.



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6. What is the role of the Council?

Council as a group represent the interests of the residents. Council is responsible for representing the public and considering the well being and interests of the municipality. Developing and evaluating policies and programs. Municipal Councillors have a responsibility to provide balance in decision making, for sound financial oversight, effective communications, to maintain relations with other levels of government and to comply with relevant legislation. Councils must adopt Rules of Procedure for the conduct of their council meetings and Councillors should know and follow the rules of procedure. Before a council meeting, the Town clerk distributes an agenda, minutes of the previous meeting and any background information. Councillors read this material to prepare to deal with the issues and to engage in informed discussion. Councillors must attend regular Council and committee meetings. Missing meetings on an irregular, but consistent basis, causes problems in obtaining a quorum, delays Council business and wastes the time of other Councillors.

The Mayor is the principal representative of Council and he/she appoints Councillors to various committees. The Mayor chairs the Public meetings and in the Mayor's absence the Deputy Mayor steps in. I am on the Human Resources Committee; Finance Committee and I am also the liaison for the Library Committee. It is a four-year commitment so you have to have that in your mind when you put your name forward that it is a four-year commitment. If you decide two years into it that this really isn't for me, then the Council will have to run a by-election and fill that seat. This happens from time to time and it does cost money to the Town. We did run a by-election last year to fill the seat of Councillor Nichols. We ran a competition for Lead Hand in our Public Works Dept and Scott was the successful candidate. So, we had to have a by-election to fill his seat. Councillor Knight was the successful candidate. Councillors receive remuneration every quarter. The Mayor receives \$10,000 per year, Deputy Mayor receives \$6000 and the Councillors receive \$4800 which is well deserved for the time and dedication that is put in. The amount is based on up to 2% of the overall budget. So, for each Town, the amount will differ. The larger the Town, of course the more you would receive. Flatrock and Bauline are smaller Towns, so their remuneration would be less.



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There is a Municipal Council Handbook that is provided to all Councillors when you are elected. It is a resource for all municipal councils, councillors and administrators in the province regardless of experience.

We are in the process of developing a “Trails Committee” which will include members of the Community so watch for that. We will need volunteers for this committee. I have been trying to get this started since I first came on Council. I first tried to develop an Environmental Committee which did not fly. I got one resident from the Town come forward and so that went to the wayside. I wanted the trail division to be part of that committee. My goal is to construct a walking trail around Shoe Cove Pond. Of course, there is a lot involved in getting this moving. We have to obtain permits from Crown Land and Environment Canada. Once we can get all of this in place, we will bring it to Council for approval and then go out to the Community for Volunteers. Of course, this will be extremely costly but as a Community, we can do it. It may take a few years to complete that project but we need the help of Volunteers in the Town to make it a reality. Things like that attract people to come and live in our beautiful Town. So, if you want to help out with that committee or if you have friends or neighbours willing to help out, bring them to us please.



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7. What are the Council tasks that typically take up your time? How many hours a week do you spend on Council activities?

Council holds Public meetings once per month. They are held in Council Chambers and can go from half an hour to an hour or longer depending on length of discussions and agenda. The Mayor may call a special meeting or privileged meeting now and then to discuss something Urgent that comes up. The Committees that we are on meet once per month or again depending on situations, it could be every two weeks. We also communicate through e-mail so we are responsible for checking our e-mail throughout the day and respond in a timely manner. Of course, Town events, I always attend Town functions. As I mentioned earlier, I like to socialize so I like to be out there. And of course, some Councillors may spend a lot more time than others and that is up to the individual. But I think some residents know who shows up and who don't. It is noticed.

We also have an annual general meeting once per year for all Municipalities. That usually takes place in Gander. Councillors express an interest if they want to attend and usually, we fund 3 Councillors to attend. There usually isn't a problem there as not everyone can or wants to attend. MNL also have a Conference once per year and that is held in usually three alternating locations. One year it will be held in Gander, the next year Corner Brook or St. John's. Again, Councillors express an interest to attend. FCM (Federation of Canadian Municipalities) hold a conference each year. I attended one in Quebec last year along with Mayor Wall and Councillor King. That was a great conference and great opportunity. I find it very fulfilling to attend conferences and meetings. You don't always walk away with a wealth of knowledge but you do get to meet Councillors from other Towns and you get to hear their struggles and their accomplishments and you get ideas that we can use in our Town. There may be programs or funding that we are not even aware of that we learn about at these events.



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8. Why do you think that so few women run for Council?

I think women are beginning to become more involved in Politics but a lot of women choose to sit on the sidelines and are not confident enough to put their name out there. Some women feel they don't know enough or feel that they are not good enough. But women have to remember that we have a voice and we are good enough and that we need to be heard and we do have something to bring to the table. Some women may feel it takes up too much time, they have homework with their kids and soccer and hockey and ballet and music lessons. They think "How can I fit this in?" But you can put in as much or as little time as you have. You still have a voice and we want you to step up and go out and volunteer or run for Municipal or Provincial or Federal Election. I am one woman out of 7 Councillors. Think about that. I would absolutely love to have another woman sit at that table. I would love to have another woman that I can discuss things with. Also, a lot of women don't like conflict and God knows that our Town has had enough of that. But at the end of the day, we want to do what is best for our Town and we need more Women to step up and become involved.



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9. Women tend to be under represented in leading community projects and on Town Councils. Do you see this trend shifting at all over the last few years? If so, How?

I do see this trend shifting. More women are putting themselves out there. We have more women coaching these days. We have women heading up committees and running for School Council. However, as Kathy said earlier, we are still only 22% represented. So, we need more women to become involved. There seems to be more women becoming involved in Recreation and leading these programs. Did you know that the Towns of Pouch Cove, Flatrock, Torbay, Logy Bay, Middle Cove, Outer Cove, Portugal Cove St. Philips all have women as their Recreation Leaders in the Town? That is so awesome.

When attending MNL conferences, of course there is a lot more men Councillors in the room. Women are definitely outnumbered but women are starting to step up and run for more Leadership roles. You need to put yourself out there.

10. What advice would you give a woman who is considering running for Council?

My advice would be, we all have something to offer, we don't have to be knowledgeable about Municipal politics but you are considering it, you can prepare if you want to, you can attend a Public meeting and see what it is all about. You can visit the Town website and read the minutes of meetings. You can also visit the website for MNL which the information for that is in your tote bag. You can obtain a lot of information on their website and they encourage women to run for Municipal politics. I encourage each one of you to get out there and Volunteer within your community and/or your workplace and if you are shy or need a course or two to help you with that, that is a great thing. There are a lot of online courses or tutorials that you can avail of these days. If you have an interest at all for running for Council, you can feel free to call me and I will answer any questions you have or I will be happy to mentor you.

I would personally like to thank you all for coming here today. I think it is a great incentive for women in our community. I would like to thank Kathy, Pam and Josh for organizing this event. I was really excited when our CAO Brian Peach told me that we had secured funding to hold this workshop. It was really great to work with Kathy and Pam to



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make it a reality. I hope that you all leave here today with a little more confidence or clarity as to what being a woman on Council consists of. Or if you are not a Volunteer right now in our Town, to put your name out there. We have lots of committees that you can be part of and pick one that is of the most interest to you and grow from there. We have Library Committee, Heritage committee, recreation committee, soon to be "Trails committee. We have a committee that organizes Pouch Cove days and Come Home year celebrations. WE have a wonderful group of Volunteer Firefighters who go above and beyond for our Town. Of course, there is a Ladies Firettes committee as well. We have the Lions Club who could always use new Volunteers. They do great things for our Community. There are so many great Volunteers out there right now in our Town and each Committee is always looking for new Volunteers. I just read today that Girl Guides is looking for Leaders, Scouts is always looking for Leaders. We need you; we need to hear what you have to say. Please step up. I want to see some of your names on the next ballot at Election time or to see you Volunteer on one of our great committees or start your own committee. Something that is of interest to you.

I will leave you with final words of encouragement. You are good enough, and your voice and your presence are very important.

Thank you.