



TOWN OF MINTO

MEETING DATE: August 12, 2025

REPORT TO: Mayor and Council

SERVICE AREA: Clerks

SUBJECT: CL 2025-009 – Alternate Voting Methods for the 2026 Municipal Election

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Council of the Town of Minto hereby receives report CL 2025-009 Alternate Voting Methods for the 2026 Municipal Election, prepared by the Director of Legislative Services/Clerk, for information purposes;

AND FURTHER THAT Council authorizes a vote by mail method for casting ballots in the 2026 municipal election;

AND FURTHER THAT Council authorizes the use of tabulators for counting ballots in the 2026 municipal election;

AND FURTHER THAT the Mayor and Clerk be authorized to sign the by-law to authorize a vote by mail method of casting ballots in the 2026 municipal election;

AND FURTHER THAT the Mayor and Clerk be authorized to sign the by-law to authorize the use of tabulators for counting ballots in the 2026 municipal election;

AND FURTHER THAT the Clerk shall prepare procedures and rules for the vote by mail method of casting ballots in the 2026 municipal election and provide these procedures and rules to the public by posting them on the municipal website.

BACKGROUND:

For the 2022 Election, the Town of Minto provided vote by mail method for casting ballots and used tabulators to count the ballots. The Town of Minto has successfully been using vote by mail since 2003 with 2022 being the first year with the use of tabulators.

Voter Turnout

| YEAR | TOWN OF MINTO | PROVINCE WIDE * |
|------|---------------|-----------------|
| 2003 | 57.93% | 40.18% |
| 2006 | 54.69% | 41.33% |
| 2010 | 56.41% | 44.35% |
| 2014 | 55.25% | 43.12% |
| 2018 | 52.20% | 38% |
| 2022 | 27.79% | 32.9% |

* Information from Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)

As noted above, the Town of Minto has had above average voter turnout except for the 2022 election, where all of Council was acclaimed, with the election run by the Town of Minto for County Councillor and School Board trustees only. According to AMO, the number of acclaimed candidates has been increasing with 390 acclamations in 2014, 477 in 2018 and 548 in 2022. As well, full Councils acclaimed increased with 4% (18 Councils) in 2014, 5% (26 Councils) in 2018 and 8% (32 Councils) in 2022, the Town of Minto being one of the 32.

Wellington County Voter Turnout

| MUNICIPALITY | VOTE METHOD | VOTER TURNOUT 2022 |
|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Centre Wellington | Internet/Phone | 38.95% |
| Erin | Vote-By-Mail | 36.11% |
| Guelph Eramosa | Vote-By-Mail | 28.22% (Mayor Acclaimed) |
| Mapleton | Vote-By-Mail/Internet | 26.32% (Mayor Acclaimed) |
| Puslinch | Vote-By-Mail | 22.68% (Mayor Acclaimed) |
| Town of Minto | Vote-By-Mail | 27.79% (full Council Acclaimed) |
| Wellington North | Vote-By-Mail | 36.18% |

COMMENTS:

The Municipal Elections Act (MEA), 1996, as amended, governs the administration of local elections in Ontario, in a fair and transparent manner. Within the MEA, the Town Clerk is responsible for conducting municipal elections, which includes preparing and administering elections in an independent manner.

The Town Clerk conducts elections for the Municipal Council, County Council and School Boards according to the established principles of the MEA. The use of vote by mail and tabulators upholds all principles of the MEA by:

- Upholding the secrecy and confidentiality of the vote with thorough and established processes for receiving ballots in secrecy folders and separating any link to the voter once a voter declaration is verified and the voter is struck off the list. Of the remote options, this is most similar to the in-person voting process. Any remote voting option is unmonitored, however the voter declaration that must be signed, requires that the voter acknowledge legal responsibility for marking their own ballot and for not being coerced.
- Offering a remote option that is fair, consistent and does not bias or provide increased influence for any candidate or voter.
- Increasing access for voters who are unable to come to a voting location, particularly voters living or temporarily outside of Minto on work or personal matters. This option would provide limited benefit to voters with disabilities that would make picking up or getting to a mailbox difficult. Opportunities to support increased access through designated drop off locations has been used in the past.
- Maintaining the integrity of the voting process by offering voters the option to cast a remote ballot through an established and trusted mail system. Impacts of potential mail delays or strikes could be planned for and addressed through the use of drop off points and it is within the authority of the Clerk to delay official election results should a large scale delay of mailed ballots occur.

- Providing certainty that the results reflect the votes cast and that valid votes are counted and invalid votes are rejected consistent with in-person voting processes. Counting mailed ballots would be open to viewing by candidates or scrutineers. Audit tracking and any questions regarding the accuracy of results could be verified by the physical ballots and a recount, if ordered by a judge, and could be conducted by manual count.

Vote-by-mail is still the most popular alternate voting method in the County of Wellington. Staff has explored the use of internet voting, especially with the current issues seen with Canada Post, but the use of Canada Post is still required no matter the voting method chosen in order to get voter cards out to the residents. If there are concerns with getting the completed kits back, the staff can quickly pivot and provide additional dates and times in each community for drop off points.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Financed through the yearly budget.

STRATEGIC PLAN:

GOAL 5: RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT

Deliver services in an open, accountable, and transparent manner while providing an outstanding working environment for our employees and community.

PREPARED BY: Annilene McRobb, Clerk

RECOMMENDED BY: Gregg Furtney, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)