

**TOWN OF MINTO**

DATE: March 10, 2017
REPORT TO: Mayor and Council
FROM: Annilene McRobb, Deputy Clerk
SUBJECT: 2018 Municipal Election

STRATEGIC PLAN:

12.7 Demonstrate innovation in all aspects of municipal business acknowledging the importance of training, succession planning, transparency, communication and team-based approaches to municipal operations.

12.11 Provide a structure to support a “one Town” identity to improve communication between related town services, organizations, businesses, education, healthcare and tourism, while still allowing local stories and heritage to be recognized and flourish.

12.14 Ensure the Town provides services and facilities accessible to persons of all abilities in compliance with Provincial regulations keeping in mind the needs of the community, ability to pay and best practices of similar municipalities.

BACKGROUND:

According to the Municipal Elections Act, elections are held every fourth year and voting day is to be held on the fourth Monday in October. The next municipal election is October 22, 2018. Under the Act, Clerks of local municipalities are responsible for preparing and conducting elections, ensuring all members of the electorate are given every opportunity to vote in a process that is as accessible and accountable as possible. The Clerk may delegate certain powers under the Act. In 2018 the Deputy Clerk will take the lead on most election related activities.

The Municipal Elections Act allows a variety of alternative voting methods for municipalities with the following goals:

- (1) improved convenience for voters;
- (2) enhanced accessibility; and,
- (3) the opportunity for increased voter turnout.

Section 42 (1) of the Municipal Elections Act, states Council of may pass a by-law authorizing the method of voting, the use of vote counting equipment and for electors to use an alternative voting method. The by-law must be passed on or before May 1st in the year before election year.

Minto used the vote by mail in the 2003, 2006, 2010 and 2014 Municipal Election. Vote by mail has proven to be convenient for the voters and allows for accessible voting for all residents. In 2014 the vote by mail process was augmented with voter kit collection days at three seniors' homes and at each municipal arena. At these locations voters could

conveniently drop off completed voter kits or receive assistance if needed. Voter kits were dropped off at the Town office during business hours, and until 8:00 pm on Election Day.

COMMENTS:

Staff recommends the 2018 election use the vote by mail system. Before Election Day ballot collection locations should again be set in the urban areas of Clifford, Harriston and Palmerston.

The voters list is created by the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation. Staff is able to update the list as people pass away or leave the community where this is known, and do their best to ensure the list is up to date before it is published. Because the original list is based on property ownership, those that rent in the community are often not captured on the list. It is easy to add people to the voter's list so long as they have identification and proof of residency in Minto.

To improve the voters list, staff propose to set up one day clinics in the urban areas where residents not on the list can get voter kits printed and receive assistance with voting if needed. This is a new opportunity to improve access to the voting process. It is proposed that voting places be again held in nursing homes/retirement homes to facilitate ease of ballot collection for these residents. The policy and procedures manual for the 2018 election will be updated and confirmed prior to December of this year.

Provincial average voter turnout for municipal elections remains under 50%, Minto has averaged a 56.05% voter turnout over the last four elections using the Vote by Mail system. Using hired personnel in lieu of tabulators provides allows for the count to be completed in a timely manner, and involves residents in this process.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Council budgeted \$6,000 for reserve each year so that the costs to run the election are not all expensed within the one year's budget. This results in an election reserve of \$24,000. The cost of the 2014 election was \$23,452.73. It is likely the 2018 election will cost slightly more than that figure. In 2018 it is proposed to budget \$30,000 with \$18,000 from reserves.

Leasing tabulators at cost \$16,550 for ballot tabulation equipment and services only, and does not include vote-by-mail ballot kits, voter list products or services, various consumable election supplies, etc. The cost for election personnel in 2014 was \$7,600 including two Deputy Returning officers and personnel to work in the communities and ballot counters on election night. It is proposed that 2018 be a manual count.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council receive the Deputy Clerks report on the 2018 Municipal election and that Council considers a by-law in regular session to confirm the vote by mail voting procedure.

Annilene McRobb, Deputy Clerk