



TOWN OF MINTO

DATE: December 11, 2017

REPORT TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Bill White, C.A.O. Clerk and Annilene McRobb, Deputy Clerk

SUBJECT: 2018 Municipal Election Procedures and Accessibility Plan

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.

12.14 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

At the March 21, 2017 Council meeting Council adopted a by-law confirming Vote by Mail procedures for the 2018 municipal election scheduled for Monday October 22nd. This report provides an update on the Election Procedures and Accessibility Plan. The Clerk will make certain appointments to ensure the election runs smoothly and in compliance with the Municipal Elections Act.

The municipal election process in Minto and across Ontario is based on the following values:

- the secrecy and confidentiality of the individual votes is paramount;
- the election should be fair and non-biased;
- the election should be accessible to the voters;
- the integrity of the process should be maintained throughout the election;
- there be certainty that the results of the election reflect the votes cast; and
- voters and candidates should be treated fairly and consistently within a municipality.

Accessibility

The Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended states:

12 (2) The clerk shall prepare a plan regarding the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities and shall make the plan available to the public before voting day in a regular election. 2016, c. 15, s. 11.

Attached is the 2018 Municipal Elections Accessibility Plan. The Vote by Mail process chosen by Council ensures a more accessible election for the voters. The Town increases accessibility by scheduling vote by mail “polls” in senior homes that allow residents to vote without leaving the building. Each of the three arenas have hosted vote by mail “polls” one day each before the election for the convenience of all persons. Also the accessible

municipal office is open until 8:00pm so vote by mail kits can be dropped off Election Day.

Election Planning

Planning continues for conducting the vote-by-mail election approved by Council. Administrative positions required for the election are:

- 1) Returning Officer: CAO/Clerk
- 2) Deputy Returning Officer (1): Deputy Clerk
- 3) Election Official (8): Various Staff
- 4) Ballot Counters (+60): At large

The Returning Officer will provide this service without additional remuneration. In 2014 DRO's were paid \$400, Officials \$200 and Ballot Counters \$80. There were two DRO's in 2014, there will only be one for the 2018 election so the remuneration for the DRO will be increased to \$600. The remaining remunerations will stay the same for the 2018 Election.

The Town office will be open Election Day from 8:30am until 8:00pm to receive vote by mail kits. After that time the front office will be closed and the Council Chambers open from 8 pm until preliminary results are calculated. Results called in to the Council Chambers and updated on the laptop and projector are preliminary until verified by the Clerk. The Chambers can also function as a reception area for candidates and a place for interested members of the public to attend. Any media interviews can be conducted there should there be such interest. Ballot packages dropped off at the Town office are counted in the Public Works portable. In 2014 the Legion still hosted candidates during and after the election.

The election will be similar in format to 2014.

- 1) Ballot package collection one afternoon at Caressant Care and Royal Terrace.
- 2) Election official and ballot counter training the week prior to the election.
- 3) Ballot package collection from noon to 6 pm at the Community Centres in Clifford, Palmerston, and Harriston will also include the ability to have residents add their name to the Voters list and a Vote by Mail package will be provided to them on the spot. These dates are yet to be determined, but would fall around 2 weeks prior to the election.

Ballot packages collected in advance at the Community Centres, retirement homes or filed at the Town office are stored in locked ballot boxes in a secure area and are brought to the counting centre at the Harriston Community Centre.

In 2014 training was provided to Election Officials and Ballot Counters a week prior to Election Day. This worked well and will be take place again, both in the afternoon and evening in order to capture all workers.

Ballot counting will occur at the Harriston Community Hall beginning after 8 pm on Election Day. Preliminary results will be calculated at the Community Hall and relayed by phone to the Town office so that updated results can be relayed in the Council Chambers. Final

results will be tabulated and reported by the Clerk after Election Day as required by the Act.

COMMENTS:

If Council has concerns with the election planning as outlined, feedback is welcome. The Elections Procedures in regards to Vote by Mail must be past prior to December 31st.

The C.A.O. Clerk reminded Council in 2013 leading up to the last election of the need to separate the current business of the Town from campaign activities. This includes everything from bank accounts, websites, emails, cell phones and Council meetings. For example a Town email account should not be used for campaign purposes during the election period. Candidate's websites or printed materials are to refer to other numbers and email addresses.

Council should continue their excellence focussing on issues at hand and making decisions based on the collective good of the Town. The C.A.O. Clerk is confident Council will not differ it its approach to issues during the election period, and that the platform of being on Council is not perceived or taken as an unfair advantage over candidates not on Council. Members who chose to become candidates in 2018 will maintain the utmost professionalism and integrity through the election period. The later nomination period beginning May 1, 2018 leaves only 10 meetings between then and the election.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

The budget for the municipal election is estimated at less than \$24,000. Total remuneration is projected to be about \$7,700 with the DRO paid \$600, Election Officials \$200 and Ballot Counters \$80. An increase will be seen in 2018 over 2014 with the increase of the cost of mailing.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council receives the C.A.O. Clerk and Deputy Clerks report dated December 11, 2018 regarding 2018 Municipal Election Procedures and Accessibility Plan, and accepts them as presented.

Bill White, C.A.O. Clerk

Annilene McRobb, Deputy Clerk