



TOWNSHIP OF EDWARDSBURGH CARDINAL ACTION ITEM

Committee: Committee of the Whole – Administration & Finance

Date: September 13, 2021

Department: Administration

Topic: 2022 Municipal Election – Alternative Voting Methods

Purpose: To recommend authorization for the use of electronic voting (internet and telephone) for the 2022 Municipal Election in addition to paper ballots.

Background: In accordance with the Municipal Elections Act, municipal elections are to be held every fourth year and voting day is to be held on the fourth Monday in October. The upcoming municipal election will be held on October 24, 2022. Various alternative voting methods have been available to municipalities in Ontario. Three common benefits for such methods include: improved convenience for voters, enhanced accessibility, and the opportunity for increased voter turnout.

In the past four municipal elections, 2006, 2010, 2014, and 2018 a combination of internet, telephone, and paper balloting methods were utilized.

Through the alternative electronic voting method, the following results have been achieved in past election cycles for the Township:

- The percentage of voter turnout has increased since the introduction of alternative voting methods, with an average turnout rate of 50.47% between 2006-2018, compared to only 35% in 2003 when only paper ballot was offered.
- Increase in voter participation:
 - 2006: 46.26%
 - 2010: 47.4%
 - 2014: 55.1%
 - 2018: 53.1%
- According to AMO municipal election statistics, with 430 municipalities reporting in 2018, there was on average a 37.66% voter turnout provincially, compared to Edwardsburgh Cardinal's 53.1%.
- Of those who voted in the 2018 election, 34.7% chose to vote by paper ballot, and 65.2% by internet and telephone.
- Provides more accessibility to the election for people with disabilities that did not want to or were not able to attend in person for the paper ballot.

- The increased public awareness of the election through direct mailing of voter information letters to each elector was continued in 2018 to assist in maintenance of a more accurate voters list.

In recent elections, many electors have become more comfortable and involved in various types of electronic and technological devices that can be used for electronic voting. This view may be supported if voter letters, and electronic voting methods, with paper ballots remain consistent in the 2022 election.

The Clerks of municipalities within the UCLG area have created a subcommittee to review the electronic voting and develop a joint RFP to achieve cost savings in training, provide regional support, and a similar voting platform for the electors. The Clerk's group will review the submissions and will make a recommendation regarding the preferred vendor later in October or November.

Policy Implications: The Municipal Elections Act gives the duties and responsibilities for conducting the election to the clerk and authorizes that person to provide for any matter or procedure that is not otherwise provided in an Act or Regulation, and which in the clerk's opinion is necessary or desirable for conducting the election. The Municipal Elections Act permits Council to pass a bylaw that authorizes electors to use alternative voting methods, such as internet and telephone, which do not require them to physically attend a voting location in order to cast their vote. Closer to the election, the Clerk and Township will take necessary steps to ensure that there is safe access to voting locations for electors and/or candidates with disabilities, as required by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

Financial Considerations: There are no financial considerations for the passage of the bylaw to authorize alternative voting methods. Once the Clerks subcommittee issues and reviews the joint RFP, the results will be provided to Council with a vendor recommendation.

Recommendation: That Committee recommends that Council pass a bylaw to authorize the use of alternative voting methods, specifically internet and telephone voting for the upcoming 2022 municipal election.



Clerk



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