



# The Corporation of the Township of Huron-Kinloss

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## Staff Report

**Report Title: Modernizing the Municipal Elections Act Advocacy Efforts**

**Date: May. 6, 2024**

**Report Number: CLK-2024-05-22**

**Department: Legislative Services**

**File Number: C11 CLK 24**

**Prepared By: Jennifer White, Manager of Legislative Services/Clerk**

**Attachments: AMCTO Submission, MEA Submission Issue at a Glance, proposed Resolution**

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### **Recommendation:**

THAT the Township of Huron-Kinloss Committee of the Whole hereby receives for information Report CLK-2024-05-22, as prepared by Jennifer White, Manager of Legislative Services/Clerk;

AND FURTHER THAT Staff be directed to place the proposed resolution on a Council agenda for consideration.

### **Background:**

The Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO) has released their submission to the Province of Ontario to request updates to modernize municipal elections.

Staff have included a resolution for consideration which would enhance these advocacy efforts.

### **Discussion/Analysis/Overview:**

The Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks, and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO) has for 85 years provided education, accreditation, and expertise to municipal professionals. It is the largest voluntary municipal association in Ontario, and provides education, engagement and advocacy on issues that impact municipal professionals.

As part of advocacy efforts on behalf of members, the AMCTO has reviewed the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* (MEA) and provided several recommendations including modernizing the legislation, harmonizing rules, and streamlining and simplifying administration.

The attached document "Modernizing the Municipal Elections Act for the 21st Century" is the submission of those recommendations to the Province of Ontario. Briefing notes have been prepared on the submission and are attached to this report as "Issues at a Glance".

The recommendation focus on three broad themes:

1. Strengthening Public Trust and Electoral Integrity,
2. Enhancing Accountability and Transparency while making compliance and enforcement easier,
3. Permissive Legislation that reduces administrative complexity.

The submission is the result of feedback received following the 2022 elections from clerks, and ongoing conversations and work from AMCTO members and the MEA Working Group. The MEA will be 30 years old at the time of the next election and should be updated to reflect the current circumstances and technologies.

As noted in the attached "Issues at a Glance"

*"While the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 (MEA) sets out the rules for local elections, the Assessment Act, 1990 and the Education Act, 1990 also contain provisions impacting local elections...With rules across three pieces of legislation...there are interpretation challenges and inconsistencies that need to be addressed and clarified to ensure accountability, transparency and to address technological changes."*

Recommend changes in the submission are intended to provide clarity to clerks, electors, candidates, supporters and third-party advertisers. Staff are supportive of the recommendations, particularly those that will provide updates to the treatment of personal information on election forms, clarity around definitions in the MEA, eligibility of electors, and those intended to reduce the administrative burden to municipalities, candidates and staff.

The attached resolution is provided for consideration.

**Financial Impacts:** There are no financial impacts to the Township at this time. Recommendations if implemented by the province are anticipated to streamline requirements and reduce the administrative burden of conducting elections.

**Performance Measurement:**

The proposed resolution advocating for updates to modernize the conduct of municipal elections is attached for review.

**Strategic Area:**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Embrace a thriving rural lifestyle | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Enhance Municipal Service Delivery |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare for Inclusive Growth       | <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure Financial Stability                    |

**Strategic Goal: Encourage citizen first delivery**

**Respectfully Submitted By:**

Jennifer White, Manager of Legislative Services/Clerk

**Report Approved By:**

Jodi MacArthur, Chief Administrative Officer