



Staff Report

Report Title: Voting Method 2022 Municipal Election

Prepared By: Emily Dance, Clerk

Department: Clerk

Date: Feb. 1, 2021

**Report Number: CLK-2021-02-11
2022**

File Number: C07-Elections

Attachments:

Recommendation:

THAT the Township of Huron-Kinloss Committee of the Whole hereby approves Report CLK-2021-02-11 prepared by Emily Dance, Clerk and authorizes the e-voting method (telephone/internet) for the upcoming 2022 Municipal Election.

Background:

The next Municipal Election is scheduled for Monday October 24, 2022. Council must consider the type of voting method that will be used in the upcoming election.

Discussion:

E-Voting

Township of Huron-Kinloss has used the e-voting (telephone/internet) method for elections in the 2010, 2014 and 2018.

In an e-voting system, all electors are mailed a voter information package that includes an individual, secret Personal Identification Number (PIN) and voting instructions.

Electors may vote from home online or by phone or may choose to attend the voting help centre usually located in Council Chambers. This will allow voters without access to the internet a way to cast their ballot.

In addition, staff attends all long-term care facilities and retirement homes with the necessary technology to enable those voters who may not have access to the internet or a telephone and may not have the ability to attend the voters help centre.

Regardless of the method used, once a voter has voted, the system will prevent them from being able to vote again.

In 2018, the Township experienced a major technical issue which forced the voting period to be extended by one day. This was due to the internet colocation provider placing an unauthorized limit on incoming voting traffic, that was roughly 1/10th of the system's designated bandwidth. This issue was only experienced by municipalities with using the Dominion Voting Service Provider. Municipalities with other suppliers did not experience this issue.

Vote by Mail

Vote-by-mail is used in some rural municipalities where electors would otherwise be required to travel some distance to vote at a polling station. This system requires significant printing and mailing costs, as each qualified elector is mailed a voting kit including instructions, a voter declaration form, a ballot, a secrecy folder and a postage-paid return envelope. Once ballots are returned to the municipality's designated return point, ballots must either be counted manually or using an optical scan vote tabulator.

Polling Station Voting

The traditional model is based on the use of decentralized voting places designed to process ballots for a particular subset of the electorate.

Staff Recommendation

It has been argued that some of the principles of the Elections Act cannot be fully upheld by an alternate voting method (e-voting or vote by mail) where direct supervision of electors does not occur. It is important to note, however, that Section 89 of the Act clearly outlines certain responsibilities on the voter such as ensuring that one is entitled to vote prior to doing so as well as ensuring that one does not vote more times than allowable.

Voter impersonation, coercion and fraud are concerns which are mitigated through the design of any voting system, regardless of whether it is a supervised or unsupervised model.

E-voting is the most cost-effective method and voters appreciate the ease of voting from their phone or electronic device without leaving their home. This method of voting is still particularly important during a public health pandemic and for persons with disabilities.

Due to the costs involved with traditional voting method and vote by mail, staff is recommending that for the 2022 Township of Huron-Kinloss Municipal Election voting method be e-voting.

Following Council's decision, the Clerk will bring back a report regarding an Election Method service provider in the upcoming months.

Financial Impacts:

Should Council choose the Vote by Mail or Traditional voting option, additional funds will need to be allocated to the Election Reserve.

Currently, staff is allocating funds to the election reserve based on the e-voting method any additional resources will need to be funded from the 2022 Budget alone.

Strategic Alignment / Link:

We are an accessible community by being open and transparent.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Emily Dance, Clerk

Approved By:

Mary Rose Walden, Chief Administrative Officer