

Subject: 2022 Municipal and School Board Election Update

Recommendation:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council receive Report #2022-0003 – 2022 Municipal and School Board Election Update, for information.

Background:

This report is intended to keep both Council and the public informed with respect to the upcoming 2022 Municipal and School Board Election important dates, general information and events.

Analysis:

Niagara Area Clerk Election-Working Group

With the upcoming 2022 Municipal and School Board Election approaching, the Niagara Area Municipal Clerks have created an Election-Working Group with the aim to create consistency throughout the municipalities.

This group anticipates working together to create best practices, develop and adopt important election policies and procedures, coordinate information and create a consistent election experience for both candidates and the electorate.

Nomination/Campaign Period

Candidates may file a nomination paper, including the prescribed fee and submission of 25 endorsement signatures of eligible voters supporting the nomination, starting Monday, May 2, 2022 during normal business hours (8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) with the Clerk's Department. The last day to submit a nomination is between 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. on Nomination Day, being Friday, August 19, 2022.

The nomination fee, at time of writing of this Report, is \$200.00 for the Office of Mayor and \$100.00 for all other Offices, and must be paid by cash, debit, certified cheque or money order.

A candidate's campaign period begins when the candidate has filed the nomination form and ends on December 31, 2022. Alternative time periods are in effect if the candidate withdraws the nomination.

Nomination Requirements

The *Municipal Elections Act* states a person may be nominated for an office only if as of the day the person is nominated:

- He or she is qualified to hold that office under the Act that creates it; and
- He or she is not ineligible under this or any other Act or otherwise prohibited by law to be nominated for or to hold the office.

The *Municipal Elections Act* requires that nominations for Members of Council (not school board) be endorsed by at least 25 persons. Certain requirements must be met, including:

- A person endorsing a candidate must be eligible to vote on the date of endorsement;
- A person endorsing may endorse more than one nomination;
- Endorsements will be in the form of a prescribed declaration;
- Should the nominee file for a different office on the same Council (withdraw previous nomination), further endorsements are not required;
- Prescribed Nomination/Endorsement forms will be made available once finalized by the Province; and
- Original signatures are required to be filed with the Clerk.

The Clerk's Department will be creating 'nomination packages' for those interested in being a candidate for the 2022 Municipal and School Board Election. These packages are expected to be prepared and ready for pick up early spring.

Nomination Day: Friday, August 19, 2022 (9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.)

The *Municipal Elections Act* states Nomination Day for a regular election is the third Friday in August in the year of the election therefore Friday, August 19, 2022 is Nomination Day. On Nomination Day, nominations may only be filed between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Friday, August 19, 2022 is also the deadline for withdrawing nominations. If a

candidate wishes to withdraw, this is required to be done in writing on the prescribed form no later than 2:00 p.m. on Nomination Day.

Third Party Advertising

Third Party Advertisers may register, in the prescribed form, with the Clerk starting Monday, May 2, 2022 up to Friday, October 21, 2022 during normal business hours (8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.).

A third party advertisement is messaging that supports or opposes a candidate, or a question on the ballot. It does not include issue-based advertising. Advertising that does not cost money to post or broadcast is not considered third party advertising. However, it is important to note that individuals, corporations and unions will need to register with each municipality where they are advertising. Third party advertising is to be done independent of candidates and cannot be a candidate, and most campaign financing rules that apply to candidates will also apply to third party advertisers. Spending limits will be applicable, as will contribution limits.

The Clerk's Department will be creating 'third party advertiser registration packages' for those interested in being a Third Party Advertiser for the 2022 Municipal and School Board Election. These packages are expected to be prepared and ready for pick up early spring.

Campaign Finances

The *Municipal Elections Act* regulates campaign financing to ensure rules are consistent, transparent, accountable, fair and follow modern election finance practices. Corporations and trade unions are not allowed to contribute to municipal election campaigns, including council and school board elections. Spending limits for parties and expressions of appreciation after voting day are also enacted.

Self-funding limits for municipal council candidates are in place and are based on the number of electors voting for the office, to a maximum of \$25,000.

The Clerk will review all contributions reported and prepare a report if a contributor appears to have exceeded a contribution limit, and the report would be forwarded to the Compliance Audit Committee.

2022 Municipal Election Awareness Campaign

The Clerk's Department is currently working on an 'election awareness campaign' with the goal of increasing general election awareness and increase voter turnout.

Starting in January until mid-October 2022, all Town outgoing mail will include the Town's 2022 Election Logo, with the Town's election website. It is estimated that approximately 39,000 envelopes, with the logo, will be used in mail outs from January-October 15, 2022.

The Clerk's Department is also exploring the opportunity of creating customized print media to be delivered to every residence in Pelham to provide information on how to become a candidate and promoting working the election. Additional print media, such as tax inserts and newspaper advertisement are expected to be leveraged.

In addition to traditional print media, the Clerk's Department will leverage the Town's social media and website to introduce an election QR code to further promote election awareness.

Election Workers:

The Clerk's Department will begin the recruitment process for 2022 Municipal and School Board Election workers during the first quarter of 2022.

The Clerk's Department is planning to hire a part-time, temporary Election Coordinator to aid in the management and administration of the 2022 Municipal and School Board Election from the Election Budget. The cost of this position will be borne by the existing election budget.

This position will provide the Clerk's Department with valuable assistance throughout the election preparation process, Election Day and with election wrap-up tasks. The estimated expense for this position from the Election Budget is roughly \$18,663; see the following chart below for the estimated salary breakdown.

The Clerk understands, from the Niagara Area Clerk Election-Working Group, that all Niagara municipalities are planning to hire for this or a similar position. Many Niagara area municipalities, such as Welland, Niagara Falls and Lincoln, have already begun their recruitment process.

Election Coordinator – Salary Estimate

**based on \$28.00 hr*

Month	Estimated Average Hours Per Week	Number of Weeks	Estimated Cost
April 2022 – August 2022	15 hr.	22 weeks	\$9,240.00
	25 hr.	10 weeks	\$7,000.00

September 2022 – mid November 2022 (includes attendance at farmers market, full day attendance at advance polls and on election day)			
Total			\$16,240.00
Plus Benefits or pay in lieu (estimated at 15%)			\$2,423.00
Estimated Grand Total			\$18,663.00

The Clerk’s Department will also begin the recruitment process for election workers in the first quarter of 2022. Positions for hire will include: Poll Supervisors, Deputy Returning Officers (DRO’s), Revision DROs, Float DROs, Vote Tabulator Officer (VTO), Poll Cleaner, Information Clerk and reserve workers. The Clerk’s Department will recruit any other position needed should the COVID-19 pandemic warrant such positions, such as Health Screening Officers and Social Distancing Officers. All applicants will be required to complete an application and aptitude test.

Voters’ List:

In the fall of 2022 the Clerk’s Department will start actively working on updating the voters’ list to ensure the most accurate voters’ list possible is prepared for the election.

Changes to the voters’ list may begin Thursday, September 1, 2022 and continue until the close of voting day being, Monday, October 24, 2022. Applications to amend the Voters’ List must be in the prescribed form. The Clerk’s Department will also be launching a “voter look-up application” on the Town’s municipal website.

The Clerk’s Department will also have an “Are You on the Voters’ List” booth at the Pelham Farmers’ Market Thursday nights in September. The Clerk’s Department has found this to be a highly effective way to update the voters’ list and increase election awareness.

Vote Opportunities (In-Person and Alternative Voting Methods)

Council for the Town of Pelham approved a hybrid voting approach for the 2022 Municipal and School Board Election comprising of both in-person voting and residents being able to pre-register to receive a ‘special on demand mail in ballot’.

The Clerk’s Department is currently securing voting locations for both Advance Polls and Election Day. The Clerk’s Department are planning to hold three (3) full days

of advance in-person voting. The Clerk will announce advance voting dates and locations once dates and locations are finalized.

The Clerk's Department will also be offering the 'special on-demand mail-in ballot' option, which was implemented during the Town's 2020 By-Election. The Clerk's Department will release further details on this voting method when available.

Financial Considerations:

As this report is for information only, there are no financial considerations.

Alternatives Reviewed:

As this report is for information only, no alternatives were reviewed.

Strategic Plan Relationship: Build Strong Communities and Cultural Assets

A municipal election is a significant community event which encourages active civic engagement. It is important that the Clerk updates both Council and the community with respect to important election information on a continual basis.

Consultation:

Brianna Langohr, Human Resources and Health and Safety Coordinator

Other Pertinent Reports/Attachments:

2022 Municipal and School Board Election: Key Dates

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