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**Subject:** Election Wrap-up  
**Prepared by:** Michael de Rond, Town Clerk  
**Department:** Corporate Services  
**Date:** June 18, 2019

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**In accordance with the Procedure By-law, any Member of Council may request that this Information Report be placed on an upcoming General Committee or Council meeting agenda for discussion.**

## **Executive Summary**

This report provides information to Council regarding the administration of the 2018 Municipal Election. The report provides detail a high level of the following;

- Internet voting in Aurora was a success
- The total cost of the election came in under budget at \$309,885.67.
- Staff have identified a number of successes that will be incorporated into planning for the 2022 Municipal Election
- Staff have identified challenges faced in administering the 2018 Municipal Election that should be taken into consideration in planning the next election

## **Background**

The Municipal Election occurred on Monday, October 22, 2018. Council approved Internet Voting in conjunction with a paper ballot as the methods of voting for the election. The total approved budget was \$476,000.

## **Analysis**

### **Internet voting in Aurora was a success**

Internet voting was deployed in the advanced voting period from 12:00 a.m. on Friday, October 12 to 5:00 p.m. on Sunday, October 21. Overall, staff are very pleased with how residents of the Town adapted to the first ever use of this voting method. The

overwhelming majority of the comments received were positive and mostly centered around the added convenience the system provides. Approximately one-third (4,226 of 12,518) of the total votes were cast using the internet. This exceeded staff's expectation by almost double and is the highest first time user rate staff have observed in an election that incorporates internet voting.

The internet voting experience across Ontario was not as successful as it was in Aurora. An overload of users attempting to enter the internet voting system at about 6:00 p.m. on voting day crashed the system and made it inaccessible to voters for about an hour and a half. Aurora was able to avoid this issue by ending internet voting a day before the problems were experienced. While internet voting providers have attempted to alleviate concerns since election day by confirming that the problem has already been fixed, staff will be diligent in ensuring this before recommending its use for the 2022 Municipal Election.

**The total cost of the election came in under budget at \$309,885.67.**

Staff are pleased to report the total cost came in well under the approved budget of \$476,000. This is mostly due to an unexpected savings with the Town's election vendor Dominion Voting Systems. Along with the City of Richmond Hill and Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville, the Town piggybacked on the City of Vaughan's Request for Proposals (RFP) for voting equipment. By doing this, the Town gained the same 20% discount that was offered to Vaughan. The total cost to the Town for the internet voting system and to rent 30 vote tabulators was \$99,989.42, about half of what was forecasted, and it would appear well less than if the Town issued its own RFP.

Staff gained additional efficiencies through reducing the number of in person voting locations open on voting day from 21 to 19. This provided reductions in staffing costs, supplies and rental costs. Further to this, staff were unable to recruit a suitable second Election Coordinator until August, which also reduced the total cost of the election.

There will be minor additional costs associated with the Compliance Audit Committee still to come, but staff anticipate these to be less than \$300.

**Staff have identified a number of successes that will be incorporated into planning for the 2022 Municipal Election**

- Two vote tabulators were deployed to our busiest voting locations. This provided efficiencies in resource allocation as well as rental costs. Further, even between

the busiest voting times of 5-8 p.m., staff were not made aware of any lines considered unacceptable

- A Project Manager was assigned to the election. This kept staff organized and focused on deadlines for having components (ie, staff at voting locations) in place.
- Both the public and separate school boards made voting day a P.A. day for all students. The importance of this can not be understated as jurisdictions without P.A. days for all students consistently report immense difficulties in logistics at voting locations.

**Staff have identified challenges faced in administering the 2018 Municipal Election that should be taken into consideration in planning the next election**

- The voters' list continues to be an issue. Despite significant growth in the Town, the list that was provided to the Town had less than 1,000 additions since 2014 (staff were expecting about 2,500-3,000). This led to a targeted mail-out in the '2C' lands aimed at getting as many new residents in that area as possible to add themselves to the list. Staff are optimistic that this will improve in 2022 as the Chief Electoral Officer of Ontario has provided a report to the Provincial Legislature recommending that Elections Ontario assume the responsibility for creating the municipal voters' list from the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC).
- Assuming the same voting methods are deployed in 2022 with internet voting only in the advanced period, an opportunity exists to further save costs by eliminating more voting locations. It would appear internet voting had a significant impact in reducing the number of voters who attended our advanced in-person polls and polls on voting day.
- Further to the previous point, staff would also look to end Internet Voting slightly earlier than 5:00 p.m. the afternoon before Election Day. There are important tasks to handle between the end of Internet Voting and the opening of polls the following day and staff could have benefitted from having more time.
- Unfortunately for municipal elections across Ontario, it seems that the end of the collective bargaining agreement between Canada Post and its union tends to fall a month before voting day. This caused staff to send the voter notification cards about two weeks before what would be considered optimal.

### **Advisory Committee Review**

None

### **Legal Considerations**

None

### **Financial Implications**

None

### **Communications Considerations**

None

### **Link to Strategic Plan**

The successful administration of an election is a hallmark of good governance.

### **Alternative(s) to the Recommendation**

None

### **Conclusions**

The effective implementation of internet voting, along with the use of a traditional paper ballot, helped make the administration of the 2018 Municipal Election a success. This report notes high level details of what worked well as well as areas for improvement that will be incorporated into the planning of the 2022 Municipal Election.

### **Attachments**

None

### **Previous Reports**

None

**Pre-submission Review**

Agenda Management Team review on May 30, 2019

**Departmental Approval**



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**Techa van Leeuwen**  
**Director**  
**Corporate Services**

**Approved for Agenda**



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**Doug Nadorozny**  
**Chief Administrative Officer**