

Committee of the Whole (Working Session) Report

DATE: Wednesday, November 29, 2023

WARD(S): ALL

TITLE: RETURNING OFFICER'S REPORT 2022 MUNICIPAL ELECTION

FROM:

Wendy Law, Deputy City Manager, Legal and Administrative Services & City Solicitor

ACTION: FOR INFORMATION

Purpose

To report on the planning and execution of the 2022 Municipal Election and recommendations for improvements for future elections in the City of Vaughan.

Report Highlights

- 60% of electors who voted in the 2022 Municipal Election cast their ballot using the internet voting method provided during the Advance Vote.
- There was a 55.93% increase in Advance Vote turnout driven by the implementation of internet voting.
- The attached report contains 18 recommendations for improvements to municipal election planning and delivery.

Recommendation

1. That this report be received for information.

Background

The *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* requires that a regular municipal election shall be conducted every four years on the fourth Monday in October. The 2022 Municipal Election was held on Monday, October 24, 2022. The City Clerk / Returning Officer fixed Advance Voting dates for October 6-20, 2022.

The City Clerk conducts elections accordingly to the principles of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, as confirmed in *DiBiase v. Vaughan (City)*, 2007. These principles include:

- a. The secrecy and confidentiality of the voting process is paramount;
- b. The election shall be fair and non-biased;
- c. The election shall be accessible to the voters;
- d. The integrity of the voting process shall be maintained throughout the election;
- e. There is to be certainty that the results of the election reflect the votes cast;
- f. Voters and candidates shall be treated fairly and consistently; and
- g. The proper majority vote governs by ensuring that valid votes are counted, and invalid votes are rejected so far as reasonably possible.

In advance of the 2022 Municipal Election, Elections Vaughan staff undertook a thorough assessment of internet voting as an alternative voting method, keeping in mind the principles on which the election must be conducted. iSecurity and MNP were contracted to assess internet voting security and best practices and a gap analysis respectively. Staff reported on the findings of this assessment at the Committee of the Whole (Working Session) of December 2, 2020.

With Council's preliminary approval for the adoption of internet voting, staff issued a comprehensive RFP with detailed requirements for security of the internet voting system, including over 100 technical requirements. The process ensured that a suitable vendor was able to meet the stringent requirements to the satisfaction of the City Clerk / Returning Officer.

The City Clerk / Returning Officer returned to the Committee of the Whole (Working Session) on December 1, 2021, to report back on the RFP work, risk mitigation strategy and plan for use of internet voting in the 2022 Municipal Election. Based on the information provided and the recommendation of the City Clerk / Returning Officer to proceed, Council approved the use of internet voting as an alternate voting method for the 2022 Municipal Election and gave approval to By-Law 160-2021 to give effect to that decision.

Previous Reports/Authority

[Item 1, Report No.56 \(2021\) Extract - Internet Voting for the 2022 Municipal Election](#)

Analysis and Options

Attachment 1 – 2022 Returning Officer's Report provides a detailed analysis of the planning and execution of the 2022 Municipal Election based on a comprehensive review of documentation, policies, procedures and interviews with key staff,

stakeholders and vendors. A total of 18 recommendations were identified for improvements to be implemented for future municipal elections in the City of Vaughan.

Financial Impact

The costs associated with conducting a municipal election are funded from the Election Reserve.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

There are no regional impacts associated with this report.

Conclusion

The 2022 Municipal Election saw the successful implementation of internet voting for the first time in the City of Vaughan, with over 60% of electors casting their ballot online during the Advance Vote period. Condo voting locations continue to be a significant challenge due to issues with condo management and are a significant use of resources relative to multi-poll voting locations like community centers and schools.

A total of 18 recommendations have been identified to respond to challenges with project management, condo voting locations, Voter Information Letter production and distribution and other key areas of election operations. Elections Vaughan will action each recommendation in advance of the 2026 Municipal Election.

For more information, please contact: Evan Read, Manager, Elections and Special Projects, extension 8241.

Attachment

1. 2022 Returning Officer's Report, Office of the City Clerk, August 18, 2023.

Prepared by

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Approved by



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