



**Governance Review
Ad Hoc Committee
Meeting Agenda**

**Tuesday, March 28, 2017
10 a.m.**

**Holland Room
Aurora Town Hall**

Public Release
March 24, 2017



Town of Aurora
Governance Review Ad Hoc Committee
Meeting Agenda

Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2017

Time and Location: 10 a.m., Holland Room, Aurora Town Hall

1. Approval of the Agenda

Recommended:

That the agenda as circulated by Legislative Services be approved.

2. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest and General Nature Thereof

3. Receipt of the Minutes

Governance Review Ad Hoc Committee Meeting Minutes of February 28, 2017

Recommended:

That the Governance Review Ad Hoc Committee meeting minutes of February 28, 2017, be received for information.

4. Delegations

5. Matters for Consideration

1. GRAHC17-001 – 2018 Municipal Election – Voting Methods

Recommended:

1. That Report No. GRAHC17-001 be received; and
2. That the Governance Review Ad Hoc Committee provide direction.

6. Informational Items

7. New Business

8. Adjournment



**Town of Aurora
Governance Review Ad Hoc Committee
Meeting Minutes**

Date: Tuesday, February 28, 2017

Time and Location: 10 a.m., Holland Room, Aurora Town Hall

Committee Members: Anita Moore (Chair), Anna Lozyk Romeo (Vice-Chair), Steve Hinder, Bill Hogg, and Terry Jones

Member(s) Absent: None

Other Attendees: Samantha Yew, Deputy Clerk and Nicole Trudeau, Council/Committee Secretary

The Chair called the meeting to order at 10 a.m.

1. Approval of the Agenda

**Moved by Terry Jones
Seconded by Steve Hinder**

That the agenda as circulated by Legislative Services, with the following addition, be approved:

- Item 2 – Draft Governance Review Ad Hoc Committee Work Plan

Carried

2. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest and General Nature Thereof

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest under the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*.

Governance Review Ad Hoc Committee Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, February 28, 2017

Page 2 of 4

3. Receipt of the Minutes

Governance Review Ad Hoc Committee Meeting Minutes of February 10, 2017

Moved by Bill Hogg

Seconded by Anna Lozyk Romeo

That the Governance Review Ad Hoc Committee meeting minutes of February 10, 2017 be received for information.

Carried

4. Delegations

None

5. Matters for Consideration

1. Round Table Discussion

Re: 2018 Municipal Election – Voting Method

Staff and the Committee discussed various voting methods for the 2018 municipal election including the use of voting and vote-counting equipment, such as vote tabulators and the use of an alternative voting method that does not require electors to attend at a voting place in order to vote, such as internet and telephone.

The Committee agreed that discussing voting method is a priority, and requested information on alternative voting methods, such as internet and telephone, including accessibility, budget, staffing and security implications, communication and change management plan. In addition, the Committee requested information from other Ontario municipalities regarding internet and telephone voting including statistics and best practices, along with the position of the provincial and federal governments on internet and telephone voting.

Governance Review Ad Hoc Committee Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, February 28, 2017

Page 3 of 4

**Moved by Bill Hogg
Seconded by Steve Hinder**

1. That the Round Table Discussion regarding 2018 Municipal Election – Voting Method be received and the comments of the Committee be referred to staff for consideration.

Carried

2. Draft Governance Review Ad Hoc Committee Work Plan

The Chair introduced the draft work plan.

Staff and the Committee reviewed and discussed the three activities listed on the draft work plan, being the duties and functions of the Committee, including policies and procedures governing elections, composition and structure of Council, and remuneration and benefits for members of Council.

The Committee requested information related to the activities on the draft work plan including data from other municipalities on remuneration and benefits for members of Council. In addition, the draft work plan is to include a timeline with set targets and deadlines for the Committee to review and provide comment.

The Committee agreed that further information regarding questions on the ballot will not be required as it will not be recommended.

**Moved by Terry Jones
Seconded by Anna Lozyk Romeo**

1. That the draft Governance Review Ad Hoc Committee Work Plan be received and the comments of the Committee be referred to staff for consideration.

Carried

6. Informational Items

None

Governance Review Ad Hoc Committee Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, February 28, 2017

Page 4 of 4

7. New Business

Staff and the Committee confirmed that the next meeting date will be on Tuesday, March 14, 2017.

8. Adjournment

Moved by Bill Hogg

Seconded by Steve Hinder

That the meeting be adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Carried

Committee recommendations are not binding on the Town unless adopted by Council at a later meeting.



**Town of Aurora
Governance Review**

Ad Hoc Committee Report No. GRAHC17-001

Subject: 2018 Municipal Election – Voting Methods

Prepared by: Samantha Yew, Deputy Clerk

Department: Corporate Services

Date: March 28, 2017

Recommendation

1. That Report No. GRAHC17-001 be received; and
2. That the Governance Review Ad Hoc Committee provide direction.

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide information regarding internet voting for the 2018 municipal election.

Background

The 2018 municipal election will be held on Monday, October 22, 2018. In accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, S.O. (“MEA”), a by-law must be passed by municipalities on or before May 1 of the year before the year of the election if the municipality is to provide electors the option of alternative voting methods that do not require attendance at a voting place in order to cast a vote. Additionally, the same deadline applies to a by-law that must also be passed to authorize the use of voting and vote-counting equipment. The last Council meeting before this deadline will be held on Tuesday, April 25, 2017.

Since the 2003 municipal election, the Town of Aurora (“Town”) has used optical scan vote tabulators (“tabulators”) and touch screen voting units for Advance Voting and Election Day. When properly programmed and tested, tabulators have been shown to efficiently provide accurate election results. Tabulators reduce the amount of spoiled ballots and limit the chance of human error or misinterpretation of ballots. This method is used by numerous municipalities in Ontario.

Touch screen voting units allow voters with disabilities to vote in an independent fashion, and generally include assistive devices. The use of this equipment supports the Town's accessibility policies and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*.

All voting methods must be in compliance with the MEA and related legislation. Voting methods are often informed by election principles that have been developed over time, and referred to when evaluating matters related to the MEA. The following principles can be used when evaluating methods of voting:

- Secrecy and confidentiality of individual votes cast;
- Fairness and non-bias;
- Accessibility for all voters;
- Maintain the integrity of voters, candidates and election officials;
- Certainty that the results of the election reflect the votes cast;
- Fair and consistent treatment of voters and candidates; and
- Ensuring valid votes are counted and invalid votes are rejected.

The implementation of online election tools, such as voters lists, is not new and has been in use by many municipalities including Aurora. Municipalities are further leveraging the use of technology in elections in the form of internet voting. This report will focus on three (3) voting options: tabulator only voting (status quo), internet only voting, and a hybrid voting model consisting of tabulator and internet voting.

Analysis

Tabulator only voting (status quo)

Tabulator voting is the status quo for the Town. Tabulators are known to provide accurate and reliable vote counting, are familiar to most voters, and provide a "traditional" voting experience. For these reasons, tabulator voting is widely used in Ontario.

Tabulator voting requires the voter to indicate their selections on a paper ballot by a user-generated mark, such as filling in a bubble. The ballot is fed into the tabulator, which reads the ballot and generates a tally of votes based on the marks on all accepted ballots. Tabulators can be programmed to identify and reject ballots that contain errors, giving voters the option to correct the ballot if necessary. Touch screen tabulators allow voters to vote by selecting candidates on a touch screen. Once the voter has finished voting, an electronic ballot is cast which is later tabulated.

As far back as the 2003 municipal election, the Town has used tabulator voting. In the 2014 municipal election, the Town utilized 21 optical scan vote tabulators and four (4) touch screen tabulators. Currently, the Town owns all 21 optical scan vote tabulators, most of which were purchased in 2003, and two (2) touch screen tabulators, purchased in 2006. The optical scan vote tabulators owned by the Town are considered old technology and the software is no longer supported by the manufacturer. Therefore, they will require replacement prior to the 2018 election. Increased contributions to the Election Reserve have been made to account for the rental of tabulators for the 2018 municipal election.

Internet Voting

Internet voting is the process of casting a ballot on an electronic device that is connected to the internet. It has been used by some Ontario municipalities since 2003. There are many different types of internet voting, including:

- Remote Internet Voting – Voting using a device with internet access such as a computer, laptop, tablet or smartphone from anywhere
- Kiosk Internet Voting – Unsupervised voting at a kiosk set up at a convenient location in the Town, such as a Town Hall, a community centre, or shopping mall
- Internet Voting at Voting Location – Voting using an electronic device at a designated polling station

Increased adoption of internet voting has been the trend amongst Ontario municipalities. Only 12 municipalities utilized internet voting in the 2003, and this number has increased to 97 in 2014, representing nearly 22 percent of all Ontario municipalities. It is anticipated that this number will increase significantly for the 2018 municipal election.

The increasing popularity of internet voting can be largely attributed to the convenience it provides to voters. The ability to vote from anywhere, at any time, provides access to many parts of the electorate, including persons with disabilities, students, seasonal residents, retirees, shift workers. Another benefit of internet voting is that internet browsers can adjust text font size, translate pages to different languages, and convert text to speech for voters who require these services. Typically, telephone voting is bundled with internet voting systems at no additional cost to provide an option for voters who do not have access to the internet but wish to vote. Voters would dial a secure number and cast their vote using the keypad on their phone. Once the vote is complete, the data is transferred to a secure server and tabulated on voting day.

Advantages of internet voting include:

- The opportunity for voters with internet access to vote at any time of day, from nearly any location;
- Accessibility and independence for persons with disabilities;
- The reduction in the amount of paper and other stationary required; and
- The reduction of the need for voter proxies.

Internet voting challenges include:

- The perceived reduction in voting process oversight;
- Availability of internet access for voters;
- Quality of internet at voting locations; and
- Security concerns around internet voting.

One of the greatest concerns with adopting internet voting is security. Typically, there are two (2) processes by which internet voting is administered:

“One Step” Authentication

- A package is sent to the voter that includes instructions and a personal identification number (“PIN”)
- The voter logs on to the voting website and verifies their identity by entering the provided PIN and other credentials
- Once verified, the voter is given access to vote via the internet

Typically “one step” authentication is used when internet voting is used as a primary voting method.

“Two Step” Authentication

- A package is sent to the voter that includes instructions and PIN
- The voter registers for internet voting by logging onto the voting website with the PIN and other credential in order to create unique credential
- The voter is sent a package by mail or secure email with a second PIN
- The registered voter enters their second PIN and unique credential to access voting website
- The registered voter is given access to vote online

Typically “two step” authentication is used when internet voting is used as a supplemental voting method.

March 28, 2017

Page 5 of 7

Report No. GRAHC17-001

If internet voting is approved, a limited number of voting locations would be available for voters without a device or internet access the ability to vote. These locations would also allow electors to be added to the voters list, and provide assistance to voters who are unfamiliar with the internet.

As with all internet transactions, such as online shopping and banking, there are potential benefits and risks when applying the use of technology to a process. Election Officials are unable to control the devices used by voters or the system they are connected to while voting, and internet security threats such as hacking and viruses are concerns. To mitigate risks, many municipalities undertake a third-party security audit as part of the internet voting implementation process to identify any system vulnerabilities.

Additional concerns include voter authentication and fraud as internet voting is unsupervised. Municipalities would need to develop processes with the software vendor to ensure the development of a robust voter identification and authentication system.

There is no evidence that suggests that internet voting increases voter turnout. However some municipalities who have implemented internet voting have seen an increase in voter turnout during the advance voting period.

Hybrid voting method - tabulators and internet

A hybrid approach that includes tabulator and internet voting would allow voters to cast their ballot in person or by using the internet. This option is convenient as it allows the voter to vote remotely during the advance voting period and on Election Day. Voters who prefer casting a paper ballot would also have the opportunity to participate in advance voting on identified days, and on Election Day. A hybrid voting model could also enhance the voting experience for persons with disabilities by providing more options to vote in an independent fashion.

Advisory Committee Review

None

Financial Implications

Since 2015, Town of Aurora has made an annual contribution of \$82,500 to the Election Reserve Fund. It is projected that the budget for the Town of Aurora 2018 municipal election will be \$330,000.

As tabulator voting has been the status quo for many years, there are few additional budget implications if the Town were to continue to use tabulators only. However, due to the age of the equipment, tabulators will need to be rented for the 2018 municipal election.

The cost of an internet voting platform has been estimated at approximately \$2.50 to \$3 per voter. In 2014, there were 36,529 eligible voters. Growth trends indicate that the number of eligible voters will increase for the 2018 municipal election. It is difficult to provide an accurate estimated total cost based on costs reported by other municipalities as not all budgets and costs are calculated in the same manner; however it is estimated that an internet voting platform would cost approximately \$120,000 for a municipality with 40,000 eligible voters. Additional funding will be required for an enhanced communication plan and the potential rental or purchase of voting devices such as tablets or laptops, depending on the approved type of internet voting.

The cost of implementing a hybrid approach would be the combined cost of a tabulator election and internet election. Although this method is more expensive, it provides the opportunity for voter to choose which method they are more comfortable with and could be used to measure the potential for internet only voting in future elections.

Communications Considerations

If Council adopts internet voting either wholly or through a hybrid model, a comprehensive communications plan would be required to inform and educate voters on internet voting. This would include, but is not limited to:

- Enhanced social media presence
- Promotion at Town events
- Infographics and Brochures
- Workshops and open houses with demonstrations
- Multi-lingual educational materials
- Radio advertisements

- Extensive voter support through social media, telephone, and email prior to and during the Advance Voting period and on Election Day.

This plan would need to be implemented in advance of the election, and requires resources from the Town Clerk's department, Communications department, and IT Services department.

Alternative(s) to the Recommendation

None

Conclusions

The adoption of technology in elections continues to grow in popularity amongst Ontario municipalities. Although there are risks with implementing internet voting, enhanced convenience and accessibility could be beneficial to a range of voters.

Attachments

None

Previous Reports

None

Pre-submission Review

Reviewed by the CAO and Director of Corporate Services.