



2025 ELECTION BYLAW POLICY DECISIONS

Council / Governance Issue

Bill 20 requires amendments to the Town’s Election Procedures Bylaw prior to December 31, 2024 in preparation for the 2025 General Election.

Recommendation

Committee direction is requested.

Background and Considerations

The majority of election procedures are prescribed under the Local Authorities Election Act (LAEA). Although the majority of the procedures are set out in the LAEA, there are a number of discretionary procedural modifications for elected authorities.

Bill 20 that amends the LAEA received Royal Assent on May 30, 2024 but has not yet been proclaimed. Administration is assuming that Bill 20 will be proclaimed before year-end and is recommending a new election bylaw that will incorporate changes in order to be compliant with the new legislation.

Administration is also taking the opportunity to confirm current processes that will remain unchanged and those that will require updating with recommendations. The table below outlines the discretionary election procedures with Administration’s recommendations for Committee consideration.

2021 Election Processes	Recommended for 2025
<p>Nominations Deposits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillor - \$250</li> <li>• Mayor - \$500</li> </ul> <p>Previously only cash, certified cheque, or money order were accepted.</p>	<p>No changes to nomination deposit amounts</p> <p>Include payment methods of credit card, debit card and electronic fund transfers</p>
<p>Criminal records checks for candidates were not required as part of the filing of nomination papers.</p>	<p>Require nomination papers to be filed with a criminal record check.</p>
<p>During the 2021 general election, nomination papers were accepted by appointment with the Returning Officer or Substitute Returning Officer.</p>	<p>Continue this practice noting that the Returning Office may further establish locations and times during the nomination period for receipt of nomination papers.</p>

<p>Council must appoint the Substitute Returning Officer by resolution or bylaw.</p>	<p>Appointment of the Substitute Returning Officer be delegated to the Returning Officer.</p>
<p>Returning Officer is delegated the authority to determine and designate more than one voting station and the locations of those voting stations for the voting subdivisions.</p>	<p>No change in authority.</p>
<p>The Returning Officer is authorized to enter into a joint agreement to conduct a public or separate school division general election.</p>	<p>No change in authority.</p>
<p>The Returning Officer is authorized to determine the locations, dates, and hours of advance votes.</p>	<p>No change in authority.</p>
<p>Discretionary use of a voters list or permanent electors register - which the Town of Okotoks has never done.</p>	<p>The Returning Officer must prepare a permanent electors register and enter into an information sharing agreement with Elections Alberta.</p> <p>It is proposed that the Returning Officer be delegated the authority on how to compile or revise this list - manually or using a computer based system.</p>
<p>Composite ballots printed alphabetically to be tabulator compliant.</p>	<p>In order to facilitate mandatory hand counting processes, it is recommended separate colour coded ballots be used for each office and printed in alphabetic order.</p>
<p>Special ballots were discretionary and not used in Okotoks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special ballots are now mandatory. An elected authority can specify how voters may apply for a special ballot. It is proposed that voters only be allowed to apply by telephone, in person, or by email; and not by fax or regular mail.</li> <li>• It is proposed that a timeline be specified for the application of voters for special ballots between August 1<sup>st</sup> and cuts-off seven (7) days prior to election day.</li> <li>• It is proposed that the submission completed special ballot return deadline be set at 4 p.m. on election day.</li> </ul>

Election day voting stations opened at 6 a.m. and closed at 8 p.m.	It is recommended that election day voting stations open at 10 a.m. and close at 8 p.m. to facilitate the manual counting period after the close of stations for core election workers. Approximately 250 electors voted during the earlier voting station hours.
Institutional voting and incapacitated voting were provided as options in 2021.	It is proposed that institutional voting and incapacitated voting not be offered, as special ballots will replace these processes.
Centralized counting centre used for compilation of election results on election day.	It is proposed to again use a centralized counting centre for manual counting to ensure security and consistency in new processes for counting.

### **Current Policy or Bylaw Analysis**

- LAEA
- Bill 20
- Bylaw 35-20 Election Procedures

### **Municipal Comparisons**

n/a

### **CAO Comments**

Bill 20 fundamentally changes the rules for election and a complete review is required. Committee input is requested.

### **Attachment(s)**

1. Election Procedures Bylaw 35-20

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