
HALDIMAND COUNTY

Report CLE-03-2022 Amendment to Election Protocol Policy 2003-07

For Consideration by Council in Committee on March 29, 2022



OBJECTIVE:

To update Election Protocol Policy 2003-07 with the removal of details related to the process and remuneration conditions for staff volunteering as election workers.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT Report CLE-03-2022 Amendment to Election Protocol Policy 2003-07 be received;
2. AND THAT Election Protocol Policy 2003-07 be amended as outlined in Report CLE-03-2022;
3. AND THAT authority be delegated to the Senior Management Team to approve any future minor or housekeeping amendments to the Election Protocol Policy 2003-07.

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Approved: Craig Manley, MCIP, RPP, Chief Administrative Officer

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Having County staff volunteer as election workers is a key factor in the success of running a municipal election. In order to encourage staff to volunteer in those roles, more flexibility is required in ensuring that the process for volunteering is a sufficient incentive for staff to volunteer, while continuing to ensure that the election is administered as efficiently as possible. Senior Management wishes to focus on the election being a corporate priority, encouraging staff to better understand and support the local election process and to recognize the significance of the election as a whole to the municipal framework. In order to best address this matter, it is recommended that the process and details related to staff volunteering for the election be removed from Policy 2003-07 and additionally that future minor or housekeeping amendments to the policy be delegated to Senior Management.

BACKGROUND:

The existing Election Protocol Policy 2003-07 was established for the first municipal election that was administered by Haldimand County in 2003. The intent behind the policy was to provide guidance to staff and candidates with respect to the involvements/activities of any Haldimand County employee related to the municipal election. In addition to outlining the expectations of staff during an election year in terms of professional conduct, communication, responding to information requests, assisting with election campaigns and opportunities to work the election, the policy outlined the process for staff to volunteer to work the election and assigned a pay rate for County staff who volunteered as election workers. The policy also addresses the use of corporate resources by election candidates.

ANALYSIS:

A copy of the Election Protocol Policy is included as Attachment 1 to this report with the wording that is being recommended to be removed, highlighted in yellow. The key elements of the policy required to ensure County Staff expectations relative to professional conduct are to be retained. The proposed change is intended to allow County Administration the flexibility to address administrative processes and parameters associated with encouraging staff to assist with the election process. The rationale for this is as follows:

While the administration of municipal elections was fairly manual 15 to 20 years ago, the increased use of technology has changed the face of election work. Since 2006, Haldimand County has used optical scan tabulators for the counting of ballots, doing away with manual counts. Since 2010, an electronic voters list has been utilized to manage voters. These changes allow for voters to vote at any voting location in the County rather than at a specific assigned location.

With the increased reliance on technology, it has been valuable to have County staff in place as election workers as they are familiar with regular use of laptops and multiple types of software. County staff are also accustomed to working with the public, providing customer service and explaining processes and procedures to the public.

In recent elections, fewer staff have volunteered to participate as election workers. This trend may be occurring for a number of reasons - newer staff may be less familiar with the election process, they may not be aware of the significance to the municipal operation, or the process and remuneration may not be sufficient incentive to volunteer. It is important for the success of the election to have the involvement of as many internal staff as possible. In order to achieve this goal, some adjustments may need to be made to the process by which staff volunteer or to the remuneration conditions provided to staff. In order to best address incentivizing staff to volunteer as election workers, it is recommended that the process and specific pay grade be removed from the Election Protocol Policy and be assigned to Senior Management for determination as the situation requires. The key benefit of the proposed change is it will allow the County to be nimble in setting parameters that encourage staff to volunteer as election workers, whereas having those aspects embedded in policy require report and decision by Council on what is essentially an operational issue no different than other staffing/administrative matters.

FINANCIAL/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

Not applicable.

STAKEHOLDER IMPACTS:

Not applicable.

REPORT IMPACTS:

Agreement: No

By-law: No

Budget Amendment: No

Policy: Yes

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Election Protocol Policy 2003-07