INFORMATION REPORT

TO: Mayor and Members General Issues Committee	**WARD(S) AFFECTED:** CITY WIDE
COMMITTEE DATE: December 12, 2011	
SUBJECT/REPORT NO: 2010 Post Election Report (CL11005) (City Wide)	
SUBMITTED BY: Rose Caterini City Clerk Corporate Services, Clerk's Division	**PREPARED BY:** Tony Fallis x2753
SIGNATURE:	

Council Direction:

Not applicable

Information:

This report is to provide City Council with an overview of the 2010 Municipal Election and to highlight new initiatives that will be considered in the 2014 Municipal Election.

The Election office provided feedback forms to all candidates, the public and staff members from the 2010 election. The following report was compiled from these forms and first hand observations by election personnel.

Facts and Figures from the 2010 Election

➢ There were 5 Advance Poll Days (1 location within each of the 15 wards) and 1 Special Advance Poll Day (21 locations throughout the city). The Special Advance Poll Day had 21 locations which consisted mostly of senior residences.

➢ The 5 Advance Poll days saw 12,361 electors vote. This compares to 2006 when 10,057 electors voted over 3 Advance Poll days.

➢ On Election Day there were 151 regular polls and 41 Institutional polls.

➢ 1,811 positions were filled for Advance Polls, Special Advance Polls, and Election Day.

➢ 141 candidates filed nomination papers, 15 for Mayor, 71 for Councillor and 55 for various school trustee positions.

➢ There were 353,417 electors on the Voters' List. At the polls an additional 5,902 electors were added, 7,739 made changes or corrections and 4,644 names were deleted.

➢ Voter turnout was 40.45 percent compared to 37.25 percent in 2006.

Administration

During an election year 3 additional temporary staff are hired to assist the Manager of Elections with the numerous tasks that are required. The Municipal Elections Act provides guiding legislation with additional mandatory requirements from the Municipal Act and the Accessibilities for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

Our goal for 2014 is to organize election teams, as early as practicable, that can focus on specific programs that fall under the election umbrella, such as:

1) Receiving of Nominations,

2) Voters' List,

3) Forms and Supply Ordering,

4) Ballot Box Insertions,

5) Hiring of Staff,

6) Training,

7) Polling Place Reviews,

8) Institutional and Retirement Homes,

9) Tabulator calibration and testing,

10) Ballot ordering and testing,

11) Website Creation, and

12) Advance Poll and Election Day administration.

Efforts are being made to second staff from within city departments to gain the expertise required. The involvement for these staff members would vary dependant upon the program area they will be assigned.

We believe this will create a more efficient election process, as the training for these individuals could be worked into their day to day assignments. This training would begin early in an election year and allow us the benefit of a knowledgeable and responsive staff. It will also be beneficial to future elections as the city could now have a trained election workforce for subsequent elections. The cost for these staff members would be absorbed by the election budget.

Staffing (Election Day and Advance Polls)

As indicated in the Facts and Figures more than 1,800 positions were available for the public and city staff to work on Advance Polls and Election Day.

Positions that were hired included:

➢ Managing Deputy Returning Officer's,

➢ Tabulator Deputy Returning Officer's,

➢ Deputy Returning Officer's,

➢ Election Assistant's,

➢ Ward Captain's,

➢ Ward Patroller's,

➢ Greeter's, and

➢ Touch Screen Specialist's

Challenges encountered were:

➢ 211 staff quitting prior to Election Day, (Most of them within two weeks of election day)

➢ An additional 73 staff failing to show up on Election Day,

➢ Staff not comprehending the training and failing to read their training manuals, and

➢ Difficulty in attracting quality candidates for one days work,

The numbers that quit or failed to show up particularly put a drain on election resource scheduling.

The issue of filling each Election Day position with a competent employee continues to be a province wide issue, particularly with the larger municipalities.

In an effort to hire a more qualified staff we will be working with the City's Human Resources staff to develop appropriate hiring tools.

We will also continue to canvas city departments for those wanting to be a part of the Election team. The advantage of city staff is that several training sessions can be scheduled beginning early in the election year.

With the Voters' List continuing to be a concern we will be examining options of either adding additional Election Assistant's to each poll or creating the new position of Revision Officer. This will be determined by the number of people that qualify for hiring.

<u>Training</u>

In 2006 the training for advance poll and Election Day staff consisted of a video and a training program covering pertinent and unusual situations that occur for each position within the poll.

Feedback from those that worked in 2006 encouraged us to create training programs for each position. Training by position offered more time to go over all aspects of the job and what may be encountered on Election Day.

For 2010 we instituted job specific training with each task relevant to the position being reviewed. To ensure that revision forms were completed correctly additional time was dedicated to the completion of the forms.

A survey of election staff conducted by the Manager of Elections showed:

➢ 97% felt that the training materials provided were helpful,

➢ 92.5% believed the training manual was easy to understand,

➢ 72.5% liked the format of the training, and

➢ 98.4% said that their training instructor was knowledgeable.

These results indicate that our training programs continue to provide staff the necessary information and tools to be productive on Election Day.

The training program for 2014 will be reviewed with feedback from Election Day staff and observations made throughout the process.   Some of the changes we are considering include:

➢ Smaller class sizes,

➢ Having forms completed by Election Day staff at the training session,

➢ Running a functional poll at the training session, and

➢ Creating detailed individual DVD's for each position.

➢ Creating task sheets for opening and closing of the poll. In addition to their training manuals these sheets will show the process for opening and closing and the placement of all supplies, forms and ballots.

Polling Locations

When selecting polling locations a number of criteria are considered. Following are a sampling of what we would consider:

➢ Location within the poll,

➢ Familiarity of a location by the residents,

➢ Size and availability of a room within a location,

➢ Access to public transportation,

➢ Parking,

➢ Safety of a location,

➢ Travelling habits of an area, and

➢ Accessibility

On Election Day there was a small number of concerns over the location of polls, the location of the polling room, and issues of accessible entrances. We are continuing to follow up on these concerns as we reassess the polling locations for 2014.

Some of the above issues can be attributed to the availability of signage, location of the signage, and inefficient positioning of staff at the poll. These concerns will all be addressed prior to 2014 with clearer directions in the training sessions and manuals as to the placement of signs and positioning of staff.

Using feedback received a complete review of all polling locations will be conducted prior to 2014. We will continue to ensure that all locations have been carefully reviewed with the consideration of the convenience of the electorate as a priority.

Voters' List

The accuracy of the Voters' List has proven to be problematic for Municipal Elections.

Each election, electors complain about the Voters' List and the errors that it contains:

➢ "I have always been on the list and now my name is not there",

➢ "My information is not correct",

➢ "I am not on the list",

➢ "My children have not lived at home in years and they are still on the list",

➢ "I filled out the form last election and I am still not on the list", and

➢ "My husband/wife died years ago and they are still on the list".

As a matter of process, each complaint is investigated and information amended as quickly as possible. In some cases it is not always possible to make changes as the legislative date for amendments has passed. At that time electors with changes, additions or in some cases deletions, must complete the required paperwork at the polls on Election Day.

In 2006 the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) informed municipalities that a large number of people on the Voters' List had not checked off the information box indicating that they were Canadian citizens. In previous elections MPAC had included these people on the Voters' List but had not informed municipalities.

Under the Municipal Elections Act (MEA) these people were not eligible to be included on the Voters' List. Many municipalities removed them from the list and sent each person a form with a return envelope to allow them to be added to the list. Of the approximately 39,000 letters mailed only 3,100 were returned for updating.

This would be one explanation of why electors who may have been on the list in prior years find themselves deleted from the list. It would also explain why people who did not complete the form in full were left off the list.

In May of an election year MPAC does a limited enumeration of residents in the province. From this enumeration they update their files and create what we call the Voters' List. This list is supplied to the City of Hamilton at the end of July in an election year and obvious corrections are made throughout the month of August.

This list is then printed and becomes available to nominated candidates and the public as of September 1st. At this time the public can review the list and make application to make any amendments to the list they believe are incorrect.

The elector is ultimately responsible for ensuring that his or her correct information is on the Voters' List. From September 1 of an election year there are opportunities to check the list and to confirm the information.   Unfortunately most people assume their information is correct and only find out on Election Day that they are either not on the list or the information is incorrect.

We are meeting with MPAC in an attempt to formulate a process that will allow electors an opportunity to check the information provided to MPAC prior to September 1 of an election year.

Voter Information Notices

The voter information notices (VIN) are mailed to electors on the Voters' List prior to Advance Poll days. These notices inform the elector as to where they vote, and what time they may vote, on the Advance Poll days as well as Election Day.

Additionally they contain information on revisions to the Voters' List, proxy voting, voting locations for blind and visually impaired electors, identification that is required at the poll and telephone numbers for further direction.

People who do not receive a VIN are not on the Voters' List.

Concerns from 2010 regarding voter information notices were:

➢ Electors on the Voters' List not receiving their VIN,

➢ Addresses being cut off the VIN,

➢ Incorrect addressing, and

➢ Incorrect polling location.

We have met with MPAC and forwarded our concerns to them. At this time we are awaiting their response.

For 2014 we are considering a number of options to provide more information on the VIN's and greater availability of these notices. Some of the options we are looking at include:

➢ A larger card that would expand on the information now provided,

➢ A card for each elector (currently one card may include 5 electors in a family),

➢ A coloured card to highlight the pertinent information, and

➢ A mailed out information piece and a VIN mailed in an easily identifiable envelope.

By adding an information piece to the VIN we could provide more information for the elector, particularly which pieces of identification would be required at the polls.

Alternative Voting Methods

Currently the City of Hamilton uses Diebold accuvote tabulators for Advance Polls and Election Day and Diebold Touch Screen tabulators for Advance Polls.

In the 2010 election there was an increase in the number of accuvote tabulators that needed to be replaced or repaired on Election Day. We believe that these tabulators are now past their prime and need to be replaced with equipment that may better serve the City of Hamilton electorate. We are reviewing the types of tabulators that are currently on the market and will report back to City Council at a later date.

Other types of alternative voting would include internet, vote by mail and telephone. It is critical that the secrecy of the ballot and the security from fraud remain paramount with all types of alternative voting methods.

We are currently investigating the various types of voting and will be reporting back to Council in the second quarter of 2012.

Advance Polls/Special Advance Polls/Institutional Polls/Retirement Homes

In 2010 there were 5 Advance Poll days and 1 Special Advance Poll Day for voters to cast their ballot prior to Election Day. Institutional polls were held on Election Day.

In the candidate evaluations 79% felt we should continue with the 5 Advance Poll Days, 18% felt we should increase them, and 3% felt we should reduce them. In the public poll 80% felt the number of polls should remain the same.

The number of days to dedicate to Advance Polls, and the sites where Advance Polls will be held will be reviewed for the 2014 election.

Institutional polls are governed by the Municipal Elections Act (MEA). The legislation requires a poll in facilities that have 20 or more beds occupied by persons who are disabled, chronically ill or infirm.

Retirement homes with 50 or more occupied beds are also required to have a polling location.

Under the *Retirement Homes Act, 2010*, (RHA) retirement homes means a residential complex or the part of a residential complex,

(a) that is occupied primarily by persons who are 65 years of age or older,

(b) that is occupied or intended to be occupied by at least the prescribed number of persons who are not related to the operator of the home, and

(c) where the operator of the home makes at least two care services available, directly or indirectly, to the residents,

but does not include,

(d) premises or parts of premises that are governed by or funded under,

> (i) the *Homes for Special Care Act*,
>
> (ii) the *Long Term Care Homes Act, 2007*,

(iii) the *Ministry of Community and Social Service Act*,

(iv) the *Private Hospitals Act*,

(v) the *Private Hospitals Act*, or

(vi) the *Services and Supports to Promote the Social Inclusion of Persons with Developmental Disabilities Act, 2008,*

(e) premises at which emergency hostel services are provided under the Ontario Works Act, 1997.

For 2014 we will be reviewing the eligibility of retirement homes and adding polling locations to those that meet the criteria stipulated in the MEA and the RHA. Staff will also be examining Special Advance Poll Days and whether those locations meet the criteria for a polling station.

An issue from 2010 was the hours of voting for some of the Institutional polls.

A poll of the candidates from 2010 indicated that 72% felt that the times for institutional polls should remain the same.

Polling hours for the 2010 election were scheduled with input from Administrators at each institution. For 2014 staff will review the number of electors at each institution and increase the voting times appropriately.

Election Day

Each municipality has its own challenges on Election Day and Hamilton was not the exception.

The day began with 73 staff not showing up for their assigned positions. With stand by staff available at all Ward Centres and City Hall, the Ward Captains and the Elections Officer were able to fill all of these positions in a reasonable amount of time.

Although additional Election Assistants were assigned to polling locations, some locations experienced line ups to begin and end the day. Some of this can be attributed to changes in the MEA which now required identification to be shown by each elector, an additional form which needed to be completed by those without identification, and some election staff that failed to adequately learn their assignments.

With an additional 18,285 electors making changes to their records the process took more time to ensure that legislated procedures were followed.

Our plan is to add at least one Revision Officer to each polling location. This will allow electors with VIN's to be directed to the appropriate Deputy Returning Officer, receive their ballot, vote and be on their way in a reasonable length of time. Those electors that are required to complete the legislated forms will be directed to a Revision Officer to have their paper work completed and expedited.

In some locations the placement of signs was a concern. Each polling location was provided with the following outside signs:

> ➢ Sidewalk signs to be placed in close proximity to the road showing the entrance to the poll and parking for the poll,

> ➢ Outside entrance wall signs to be placed as close to the doorway entrances as possible,

> ➢ Accessibility signs to indicate which entrance was to be used for those with accessibility issues,

> ➢ Arrows to direct electors from the parking lot to the appropriate entrance.

Some of the problems we encountered were signs that were being blown away or torn down, signs not placed in strategic areas, and an insufficient number of signs.

Staff are looking into different materials for our signs for better durability. We will reinforce in our training of Managing Deputy Returning Officers the need for sufficient signage and the most suitable location for them.

Signs within the polling location included:

> ➢ The identification requirements for each elector,

> ➢ The designated alphabetical sign for each Deputy Returning Officer,

> ➢ Identification tags for all staff,

> ➢ How to complete your ballot, and

> ➢ Arrows directing electors to the voting room within the building,

These signs proved to be adequate and provided the elector with the information they would need to cast their vote.

The position of Managing Deputy Returning Officer was added in the 2010 election. This brought more stability to the poll, an extra body to help out where needed, and a supervisory position that could address concerns of electors at the poll.

The intent is to keep this position and to add additional training sessions to further their knowledge of each position within the poll and the election process.

All other positions will remain as they were for 2010 with the addition of a Revision Officer being considered to assist in the completion of forms.

At the conclusion of voting the tabulators produce the results for each poll which are stored on a memory card. The tabulator is taken to the Ward Centre where a tabulator technician removes the memory card and downloads the information to a server at City Hall. The results are then posted on line and in the City Hall Council Chambers.

This process has been efficient with Information Services providing the staff support for the transmission and posting of the results. With the advent of new machines this process may change slightly, but the swift posting of results will remain the same.

Accessibility

The MEA requires all polling locations to be accessible. Although all polls were accessible in 2010 there was some concerns regarding entrances to polls, how they were identified, and the proximity to parking.

These concerns will be part of our review of polling places for 2014 where our goal is to continue to make our polls accessible to all.

Accessibility initiatives that we undertook for the 2010 election were listed in Report CL11001 – Accessibility Initiatives Undertaken for 2010 Municipal Election received by Council in January, 2011.

Because of these initiatives the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities recommended that the City of Hamilton election staff be considered for inclusion in the AODA Alliance's best practices.

Budget

The budget for a City of Hamilton Election is approximately 1 million dollars.

Budget considerations for 2014 include:

➢ Replacement of current tabulators – estimate of $300,000 for leasing - $800,000 to purchase,

➢ Potential increase in number of machines, pending polling location numbers,

➢ VIN mail out to each eligible elector – estimate of $200,000 for postage,

➢ Alternative voting considerations, and

➢ Increase in election personnel.