



Hamilton

# INFORMATION REPORT

<b>TO:</b>	Mayor and Members General Issues Committee
<b>COMMITTEE DATE:</b>	July 6, 2015
<b>SUBJECT/REPORT NO:</b>	2014 Post Election (CL15003) (City Wide) (Outstanding Business List Item)
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	City Wide
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<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	Rose Caterini, City Clerk
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	

## Council Direction:

At the January 14, 2015 General Issues Committee meeting, staff was directed to carry out a comprehensive review of the 2014 Municipal Election and report back to the General Issues Committee.

## Information:

This report is to provide City Council with an overview of the 2014 Municipal Election.

## Facts and Figures from the 2014 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). Special Advance Poll locations were primarily for senior residences.
- The 5 Advance Poll Days saw 13,242 electors vote. This compares to 2010 when 12,361 electors voted.
- On Election Day there were 152 regular polls and 42 Institutional polls.
- 1,800 positions were filled for Advance Polls, Special Advance Polls, and Election Day.
- 146 candidates filed nomination papers, 11 for Mayor, 72 for Councillor and 63 for various school trustee positions. Including all races 75 distinct ballot faces need to be created.
- There were 366,124 electors on the Voters' List. Voter turnout was 34.02 %, a drop from 2010's 40.45%.

- One recount for a school trustee position. The recount was in Ward 15 for the Hamilton Wentworth District School Board and the Election Day results were confirmed.

### Administration

For the 2014 Election, 6 temporary staff members were hired to assist the Manager of Elections with the numerous tasks that are required. The *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* (MEA) provides guiding legislation with additional mandatory requirements from the *Municipal Act, 2010* and the *Accessibilities for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA).

The additional temporary staff was instrumental in assisting with the administration of the election. They were involved in many of the following duties:

1. Receiving Nominations,
2. Cleansing of the Voters' List. (Removal of duplicate names, correction of addresses, etc.)
3. Responding to calls, e-mails and counter inquiries concerning the Voters' List,
4. Design, preparation and ordering of forms and supplies,
5. Handling of approximately 75 materials for the supply boxes.
6. Insertion of 370,000 ballots into the ballot boxes.
7. Interviewing, hiring and placement for approximately 1,800 Election Day and Advance Poll Day staff,
8. Review of approximately 300 polling locations, institutions, retirement and seniors residences,
9. Tabulator calibration and testing,
10. Ballot ordering and testing,
11. Distribution and receiving of tabulators, ballot boxes and supply boxes,
12. Updating of the website, and
13. Advance Poll and Election Day troubleshooting.

The secondment of an IT specialist and an Election Coordinator streamlined a number of processes as their previous election experience was immeasurable.

Each Election the staff are hired for 6 month to 1 year assignments to assist in the administration of the Election. We have been fortunate that the majority of people hired have been conscientious, quick learners and professional. They are lacking in election experience which puts enormous pressure on management to micromanage the entire process. As the administration of Elections continues to evolve, either through technology or legislatively, and the considerable growth in the City of Hamilton continues, it is time to consider alternatives to staffing the election office.

A proposal increasing the number of Election staff will be submitted for consideration during budget discussions at the appropriate time.

### Staffing (Election Day and Advance Polls)

A significant challenge exists to hire a large contingent of temporary staff for the Election.

The hiring process for Election positions was reviewed and changed for 2014. Due to the number of people that quit each year the City Clerk enlisted the assistance of the City Manager and the Senior Management Team to promote and encourage city staff to work on Election Day. With their support we were able to hire 540 city staff to work on Election Day. This was an increase of 240 staff from 2010 and made a significant positive impact on the administration within each poll.

The issue of filling each position with a competent person continues to be a province wide issue. For 2014 we used an interview and testing process to ensure that the best possible candidate was hired. This allowed us to put each successful applicant in the position best suited to their skills.

This process proved to be very effective as the number of issues at polling locations was significantly reduced on Election Day.

In addition the election office hired 2 staff to handle interviewing, hiring, assigning and training practices. This allowed for greater service to those applying for positions and for ensuring all polls were properly staffed.

Overall the hiring process was much improved from 2010 and was reflected in the voting process at the polls.

### Training

The training process was revamped for 2014. Each of the positions had a job specific training manual that was streamlined to match their specific functions on Election Day. In previous years the manual included all positions and was extremely cumbersome.

The election training was broken down by position where only the functions of that position were detailed. This allowed for common questions to be shared by all and to keep the training on topic. All forms were reviewed as to their purpose and the correct manner for completion. A sight was secured for election training which allowed for a mock polling station to be set up for training. This provided an opportunity for each position to see setup and progression of electors on Election Day. Each training session was 2 hours in length with additional follow up provided for those who requested it.

Listening to feedback from the 2010 Election all Managing Deputy Returning Officers (MDRO) were instructed on all positions at the poll. To accommodate this training all

MDRO's were required to attend 2 training sessions. These proved to be critical on Election Day as our MDRO's were able to handle situations in a professional and expedient manner.

The training for 95% of the positions was provided by the Manager of Elections. This provided consistent training programs for each position and allowed staff to ask any questions as it pertained to their position and the Election process.

### Polling Locations

When selecting polling locations a number of criteria were considered. Following is a sampling of what information was considered:

- 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 electors within an area, and
- Accessibility, as required by the MEA and the AODA

For 2014 signage available at each poll was doubled and staff was encouraged to use all available signs to make the polling locations highly visible.

A concern continues to exist with the school boards. Although it is not legislated in the *Education Act*, schools continued to keep their doors locked throughout the day. We were prepared for this and assigned greeters at each of the schools.

We will continue to meet with the school boards and encourage them, and the Province of Ontario, to have professional development days legislated for Municipal Elections.

With the continued growth within the City of Hamilton all election polling locations will be reviewed for 2018.

### Voters' List

The Voters' List continues to be a topic of considerable conversation.

The preliminary list of electors is provided by the Municipal Property and Assessment Corporation (MPAC) to each Clerk in the province. This list is received in Hamilton at the end of July in an election year as legislated in the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* (MEA).

Once the list has been delivered staff review anomalies and begin to cleanse the list.

This process takes one month to complete and ensures that addresses are correct, duplicates are removed and other obvious corrections are made.

Prior to Election Day the election office received a higher volume of questions pertaining to the Voters' List. These questions came in the form of e-mails, tweets, and phone calls. A part time staff member was reassigned, so that timely and informative information could be provided.

MPAC no longer mails out Municipal Enumeration Forms in an Election year. This process was costly and the return rate was minimal. MPAC provided municipalities with a voter look up tool in the 2014 Election to provide electors with a web program to see if they were on the voters' list.

Voterlookup.ca was available on twitter, Facebook and the City of Hamilton website. This tool allowed electors to determine if the information on the voters' list was correct. If changes needed to be made a process was provided to allow electors to easily provide correct information to MPAC.

This tool was available early in 2014 and advertised through local media outlets. There were 1,596 searches which resulted in 647 changes to the data collected.

This program provides the elector with an opportunity to ensure they are on the Voters' List and that the information is correct. We plan to utilize voter look up again for 2018 and will have a communication plan utilized around the process to promote its use.

The onus continues to be on the elector to ensure that the information that MPAC provides each municipality is correct. It is encouraging that more electors in 2014 took advantage of reviewing the Voters' List prior to Election Day and made the appropriate changes.

MPAC has provided an examination of their 2014 enumeration process, attached as Appendix A to Report CL15003, and will have representatives available at the General Issues Committee meeting to answer questions.

### Voter Information Notices

Voter Information Notices (VIN) are provided 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 vote, either on Advance Poll days or Election Day.

A review was conducted on the VIN process after the 2010 Election which saw numerous VIN's with either incorrect information, cut off information and incorrect polling locations and times.

After several meetings with MPAC and Datafix, which is the company the City of Hamilton uses for compilation of our Voters' List, changes were made to modify and correct the way information was provided on the VIN's. This process was successful in eliminating the errors from 2010 and reduced the number of returned VIN's significantly in the 2014 Election.

### Alternative Voting Methods

In 2014 the City of Hamilton awarded a contract to Dominion Voting for the tabulators leased on Advance Poll and Election Days.

These tabulators replaced devices that had been used since 2000. The new tabulators provided reliable service and were the most current technology available. The company provided excellent service and were locally located which eliminated problems encountered in previous elections.

### Advance Polls, Special Advance Polls, Institutional Polls/ Retirement Homes

In 2014 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.

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 are defined as 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 reviewed the eligibility of retirement homes and added polling locations to those that met the criteria stipulated in the MEA and the RHA.

Meetings were held with Administrators from the Institutions, and hours of polling were increased, where required, to give electors greater opportunity to cast their ballot.

### Election Day

Election Day continues to be the most challenging day in the Election process. Several years of preparation are tested on this day, and the resolve of election staff is tested.

Each election a limited number of staff hired for the day do not show up for their assignments. Ward Captains were able to fill all of these positions with stand by staff provided at each ward centre.

There were line ups at some polling locations which occurred for some of the noted of reasons:

- The MEA requires each elector to provide proof of identity and residence. The VIN notice is not a prescribed piece of identification which some electors did not understand,
- Since 2010 the MEA requires additional forms to be completed, if an elector does not provide prescribed identification.
- Popular voting time - when the polls first open, or at the end of a day.
- Staff hired for one day's work not fully comfortable with the volume.

The following factors made the majority of polls run smoothly throughout the day:

- Additional staff were hired for high turnout polls based upon the 2010 data,
- Training programs and manuals were more detailed and job specific,
- Additional supplies and ballots were provided at each polling location,
- The addition of over 225 City of Hamilton staff created a work force comfortable in long days and administrative duties,
- The increase in training for all Managing Deputy Returning Officer's
- An increase in staff hired for the Election office. This allowed for the triple check of processes, supplies, ballots and the administration of day to day functions.

Municipal Election 2018

As we prepare for the 2018 Elections there will hopefully be many new changes to the MEA. The Province of Ontario is currently conducting a Municipal Elections Act Review. The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Municipal Elections Act Review Public Consultation Discussion Guide is attached as Appendix B to Report CL15003, for your information.

This is an opportunity for citizens in all communities in Ontario to let the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing know that the MEA needs to be reflective of the times, and that the legislation needs to be clear and simple.

Everyone is encouraged, including public, and members of City Council to take this opportunity to provide ideas, comments and concerns with regard to municipal elections legislation.

Submission deadline to the province is Monday, July 27, 2015. Comments can be submitted online at [www.ontario.ca/municipalelections](http://www.ontario.ca/municipalelections) or by e-mail at [mea.info@ontario.ca](mailto:mea.info@ontario.ca).