



Hamilton

OFFICE OF THE
AUDITOR GENERAL

Elections

Administration Audit

Management Responses

December 4, 2024

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Management Responses Provided by:

Office of the City Clerk, Corporate Services



Introduction

As a result of the audit completed by the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) with support from Valencia Risk (Valencia) and our Elections Expert (Kris Fletcher, Consultant), many significant opportunities for improvement were identified and a total of 50 recommendations were made.

The Office of the Auditor General requested one high-level management response from management in the Office of the City Clerk. They will be providing the OAG with a detailed response to each individual recommendation within the next few months after they consult with Legal and Risk Management Services, Information Technology, Procurement, Human Resource, and Communications.

Initial Management Response, May 2023 (Office of the City Clerk, Information Technology, Corporate Services)

Management is largely agreeable with the Office of the Auditor General's audit findings and recommendations. Management requires additional time to review the recommendations, including further discussion with the Office of the Auditor General, in order to coordinate complete management action plans. During this period, Management will assess and identify the potential need for additional resources and efforts, including, staffing, IT security, funding requirements, vendor procurement and contracts, and staff training. Management will provide Management Action Plans to the OAG for review and reporting to Committee and Council on the status of the audit results. In that way, any additional financial commitments, staffing resources, by-law amendments or corporate policy changes in relation to the Municipal Election will come before Committee and Council for consideration as per its authority under the Municipal Elections Act.

City Clerk General Response, December 2024

The Auditor General's report has provided the Clerk's Office with a comprehensive review of the 2022 Municipal Election in the City of Hamilton, and I am grateful for the analysis and feedback presented. Generally, I agree with all 50 recommendations, many of which are in-progress with research, staffing or implementation, thanks to the hard work of the Elections team.

Below I have synthesized comments from various divisions with respect to how the Clerk's Office will continue to address these recommendations, and translate lessons learned into better processes and procedures for the 2026 Municipal Election.

Matthew Trennum
City Clerk

Election Preparation and Readiness

Recommendation 1

That consistent with the authority granted to the City Clerk in the *Municipal Election Act*, the City Clerk be granted enhanced corporate signing authority for election related expenditures for a specified time period leading up to and after municipal elections and by-elections.

Management Response

Agree.

The City Clerk will bring forward a Report to seek enhanced corporate signing authority for election related expenditures for the year of, and the year preceding an election year.

Estimated Completion: Q4 2024.

Recommendation 2

Consider regularly reviewing staffing standards with respect to the number of staff needed at poll locations as informed by consultations with the Province.

Management Response

Agree.

Each poll boundary analysis is conducted with consideration of the Province and municipal counterparts (Oakville, Burlington, Ottawa, Toronto, Vaughan, Guelph, Greater Sudbury, Markham), as well as being based on population and geography. Of note, the 2022 election staffing model also considered adherence to possible public health measures.

The 2026 analysis is underway and includes:

- Subdivision analysis with GIS and MPAC data with 2500-3500 potential electors.
- Voter turnout percentages.
- Capacity for each position in terms of the number of electors each can serve.

Estimated Completion: Staffing requirements for the 2026 Municipal Election will be finalized in Q2 2025.

Recommendation 3

Consider rationalizing the staffing levels and evaluating the opportunities for savings and reduction of resources through consolidation of poll locations for the next election in response to the persistent challenges of obtaining a sufficient number of staff that arise during each election and with a voter turnout that is consistently 40% or lower.

Management Response

Agree.

Leading up to the 2022 Election, given the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Election team hired contingency staff that provided the flexibility to ensure that poll locations were resourced appropriately, and that COVID-19 health and safety protocols were met.

Prior to the 2026 Municipal Election, Election staff will look at the feasibility of consolidating poll locations in advance of the 2026 Municipal Election, however, will balance this review with ensuring accessibility of polls and voter turnout within the community.

Estimated Completion: Staffing models will be completed by the end of 2024 to update the staffing standards (recommendation 2) by Q2 2025.

Recommendation 4

In assessing the future use of online voting, ensure that the costs, benefits and risks are thoroughly evaluated.

Management Response

Agree.

Staff reported to Council on the potential use of online voting in report FCS21073. At that time, Council decided not to provide online voting as a method of voting for the 2022 Municipal election. Given Council has authorized the use of Online Voting for the 2025 Ward 4 By-Election for the HWDSB trustee seat, Elections staff will revise the risk analysis document and report back with recommendations on the use of online voting for the 2026 Municipal Election, utilizing data obtained through the By-Election.

Additionally, the City Clerk's Office has partnered with Brock University on an experiential learning project, where a Master's level political science course will run a mock election during their fall term, utilizing a vendor to test online voting. The purpose of the project is policy based and will result in the students providing policy

recommendations based on a municipal scan, research, and the results of the mock election. Their research will focus on security, privacy, ballot/vote submission verifiability and voter turnout. Staff will include updated security and risk recommendations concerning all options for voting with its report for the 2026 Municipal Election.

Estimated Completion: Q1 2025.

Recommendation 5

Improve the training provided to election staff and involve the HR Division in the development and delivery of this training, so that staff adhere to SOP's (standard operating procedures) and are able to effectively activate contingency procedures.

Management Response

Agree.

Following the election, staff surveyed elections workers to gain feedback on training, and have identified areas where improvements can be made.

In advance of the 2026 Municipal Election, the Elections team will engage Organizational Development and Learning in Human Resources to identify opportunities for strengthening training and to build out an enhanced training strategy and approach based on adult learning principle.

To support the development of an enhanced training strategy, the position of Project Manager, Election Education & Supports, has been created and filled (September 2024). This role will oversee the redevelopment of training as a part of their portfolio to ensure that preparatory work can be completed well in advance of the next election and to ensure consistency and regular updates of materials between elections.

Estimated Completion: Training for the 2026 Municipal Election will be finalized in Q3 2025.

Recommendation 6

Ensure the Communications Division (web strategy and user experience team) are engaged to provide timely advice regarding the layout and organization of the candidate's portal and by completing user experience testing prior to launch.

Management Response

Agree.

The Communications Division will be included in setting expectations, and requirements. However, the candidate portal utilized in the 2022 Municipal Election was licensed software supplied by a third party, and the City did not have control over its direct operation. Extensive feedback was provided to the vendor after the election, and discussions around 2026 expectations and requirements are underway.

While we may not have control over the candidate portal software (in that vendor options are limited in this arena), staff will engage with Communications (Web Strategy and User Experience Team), Information Technology, and the Digital and Innovation Office to:

- explore other technological options to providing election-related material to candidates outside of third-party systems,
- to assist with the development of requirements in the development of any Request for Proposal for a candidate portal system in future elections,
- to assist with the provision of requirements for training sessions, and
- to assist with user experience testing.

Any vendor agreements will be reviewed for the inclusion of stronger language around the production and needs of such a portal, as well as protections and audit requirements should systems not function as they did in 2022.

Expected Completion: Q2 2025.

Recommendation 7

Initiate the procurement process earlier in the election cycle (e.g. early June 2026 at the latest for the October 2026 election).

Management Response

Agree.

Staff will initiate the procurement process, including vendor evaluation criteria as outlined in the 2025 workplans, for all elections-related procurement in Q2 2025 to ensure adequate time for the procurement process to proceed.

Expected Completion: Q2 2025.

Recommendation 8

Consider cooperative contracting of elections technology vendors with other municipalities.

Management Response

Agree.

The Elections office will consider this as it moves through its procurement requirements, but the City's ability to pursue cooperative contracting will depend on timing and willingness of neighbouring municipalities to participate. In previous elections the City has made use of the Provincial source contracting to provide the best pricing for technology based on the Provincial buying power.

In advance of the 2026 Municipal Election, Elections Office Staff will reach out to municipal partners to investigate options for group contracting of elections technology and will assess the benefits and disadvantages of engaging in cooperative contracting against the current method.

Expected Completion: Q1 2025.

Recommendation 9

Consider whether it is feasible in a municipal context to follow the process of Elections Ontario in authenticating Vote by Mail applicants.

Management Response

Agree.

Presuming City Council approves Vote by Mail (in any iteration) as a voting method for the 2026 Municipal Election, the Elections Office Staff will consult with the Province to better understand their system, process, and security approach for authenticating identification submitted by vote by mail applicants electronically. Elections Office Staff will work with the Privacy Office and IT to identify secure methods and processes for authenticating vote by mail applicants electronically and will continue to monitor the landscape to keep abreast of changes and innovations in systems that would enable secure electronic updating of the voter's list. Such measures will also be in scope for any election technology vendors.

Expected Completion: Q2 2025.

Recommendation 10

Consider enhancing selection and suitability criteria for polling locations so that they are clear and transparent to the public and informed by Provincial standards and any available guidance and/or standards from the AMCTO (Association of Municipal Manager, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario) Elections Working Group.

Management Response

Agree.

The Elections team will continue to engage with the ACPD, provincial and federal elections agencies, and internal resources to ensure that poll selection criteria remains up to date and addresses the needs of electors.

Expected Completion: Ongoing. Q4 2025.

Recommendation 11

Consider adding dedicated, professional communications resources for a longer period of time before Voting Day.

Management Response

Agree.

The addition of a dedicated communications professional for the next regular Municipal Election would be beneficial to further enhancing communications around the election for Voters, Candidates, Third Parties, and the Community. Additional funding was approved as part of the 2024 budget.

Completed. To be initiated in 2025/2026.

Recommendation 12

Evaluate and identify election office staffing resources that need to be ramped up sooner, with a particular emphasis on logistics expertise.

Management Response

Agree.

Funding requests for 2 permanent project managers and the following additional resources updated to Elections were approved in 2024 budget process:

- a dedicated Communications Specialist aligned with recommendation 11;
- an IT Project Manager for 24 Month temporary placement to ensure delivery of recommendations 14-26;
- temporary election staff with experience in recruitment and training to support recommendation 13;
- funding to support the development or procurement of e-filing software, aligned with recommendation 31; and
- appointment booking software in response to recommendation 32.

Completed.

Recommendation 13

Working with City management, ensure that the use of internal City resources continues in future elections, and involves appropriate professional support, particularly HR (recruiting and training), and communications (web strategy and user experience).

Management Response

Agree.

The Program Manager, Election Education and Supports (the PM), will be tasked with finalizing the details of the recruitment plan. The PM will additionally be responsible for hiring an Election Officer (Recruitment) whose focus will be on implementing the recruitment plan. Poll Specialists and Election Assistants will be available during peak recruitment times to assist with recruitment initiatives, and all is reflected in the 2026 Work Plan to ensure adequate resourcing throughout the process.

As set out in the workplan, the PM will speak with SLT in January 2026 to begin the rollout, message dissemination, etc. Touching base with the City Manager in Q4 2025 will allow for top-down supports and an adequate messaging timeline.

Estimated Completion: In-progress (completion Q1 2026).

Technology

Recommendation 14

Ensure IT staff conduct site visits for all polling locations as part of the planning and logistics process for the 2026 municipal election.

Management Response

Agree.

As a part of the lessons learned exercise conducted following the 2022 Municipal Election, staff identified the need to ensure that IT staff visit each polling station to complete a technical review of each site to ensure that election equipment (i.e. modems) function as required. This is already underway in preparation for the 2025 Ward 4 By-Election.

IT staff will coordinate with Elections Team members responsible for conducting poll site visits for the 2026 Municipal Election to ensure that each site is assessed against technological requirements.

Estimated Completion: Q1 2026.

Recommendation 15

Until such time as Canadian guidance is available, elections management should adopt the principles outlined in Draft NIST IR 8310 and engage the IT department to ensure the expertise needed to address IT Security and Cybersecurity relevant to the Elections process.

Management Response

Agree.

IT Security and Cybersecurity will work with the Elections team to ensure that relevant election processes are safe and secure. The Elections team will look to IT for expertise and to advise of security standards that should be followed, such as NIST IR 8310. IT and Elections staff will continue to engage with AMCTO, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Centre for E-Democracy and the Digital Governance Council to work towards the development of elections standards.

We are monitoring CAN/DGSI 111 - 1:202X Online Voting (current status under public review) as they work to standardize technical design requirements for online voting services and to provide best practices for election administrators implementing online electoral voting in Canadian municipal elections.

Estimated Completion: On-going review.

Recommendation 16

In preparation for the next election, it is recommended that the IT Division review the findings from the Elections Technology Report (Appendix "B" to Report AUD23008), and subsequently collaborate with the Office of the City Clerk to begin planning for the next municipal election.

Management Response

Agree.

The IT Division has reviewed the findings from the Elections Technology Report in tandem with Office of the City Clerk. IT will work with the Elections Team to advise the City Clerk in advance of the 2026 Municipal Election to ensure compliance with City Security and Cybersecurity policies and procedures, and any standards available.

Estimated Completion: Q4 2025.

Recommendation 17

When procuring technology services for the delivery of elections, Elections management should ensure that IT security prepares and reviews the technical specifications and IT security/cybersecurity requirements. A lawyer that is experienced in IT contracts should also review the contracts.

Management Response

Agree.

IT will prepare and review technical requirements for all non-functional requirements (Cybersecurity, capacity, concurrency) for all technology procurements for elections going forward.

A Lawyer specializing in IT contracts and Procurement has been hired by the City and will be available for advising on contracts going forward. Elections staff will consult with this individual during the planning and procurement process for technology services in future elections.

Estimated Completion: Q1 2026.

Recommendation 18

Elections management should make all team meetings and training sessions mandatory for all staff involved in the Elections process. The IT department should be invited to all training sessions. Training for moving to backup processes should be improved as well as adherence to standard operating procedures (SOP's).

Management Response

Agree.

The Training program (including SOPs and manual back-up procedures) will be revamped and improved by the PM, Election Education and Supports (due to start September 2024) to reflect other decisions that are being made but require Clerk input – technology to be used, methods of voting, poll types, poll staffing models, etc.

These SOPs and manual backup procedures will align with the 30 policies and procedures already developed (during and since the 2022 Election), and reflect any lessons learned, or changes to technology, legislation or process that occur prior to the 2026 election.

As was completed for 2022, contingencies will be considered however they will be more thoroughly documented and incorporated into all training and training documents for 2026.

Estimated Completion: In-Progress, completion Q1 2026.

Recommendation 19

Elections management should complete a plan for IT Security Vulnerability Assessment and Management. An IT Vulnerability Assessment that is scoped to deal with controls that could be compromised by the most significant Election day threats should then be completed.

Management Response

Agree.

Staff will work with IT to conduct the Vulnerability Assessment.

Estimated Completion: Q4 2025.

Recommendation 20

Elections management should seek professional advice to determine what additional testing of tabulators and other technologies would be prudent to adopt in consideration of that which is already being done by the Elections Team and by Elections Ontario.

Management Response

Agree.

Elections Management, in collaboration with IT, will continue to engage with Municipal Partners, Elections Ontario and vendors to explore testing approaches used for elections technology and to understand best practices. IT Staff will update testing processes as required based on consultation.

Estimated Completion: Q1 2025.

Recommendation 21

Elections management should consider improving password security for their electronic technologies by requiring at least one capital, number and character, making passwords more difficult to guess. Municipal credentials would be stronger when paired with a password manager.

Management Response

Agree.

IT will work with the Elections team to improve password security. Some work has already been done in this arena, with 2FA implementation and new password length and complexity requirements being enforced by IT post Cyber incident.

Estimated Completion: Q4 2025.

Recommendation 22

IT security should assess and enable detection technologies specific to the Elections process and increase monitoring on election day.

Management Response

Agree.

Detection technologies will be enabled as they pertain to technologies under City Control. IT does not have control over the vendor systems that are utilized during the Elections process, however, Elections Staff will work with IT to ensure that consideration of detection technologies and capabilities is included in requirements for competitive procurements and within contracts.

Estimated Completion: Q3 2025.

Recommendation 23

To protect confidentiality and privacy, Elections management should consider use of a technology appropriate for controlling distribution lists in the Election team's communications instead of relying on the "bcc" function. This type of technology includes email marketing software tools. Existing solutions may already be in use in other areas of the City of Hamilton and these should be considered first prior to procuring another solution.

Management Response

Agree.

The Elections team is working with IT to explore options for technology to control distribution lists for future elections. Additionally, the Elections team will work with IT to develop feedback for vendors of current elections administration systems, which will be provided through the AMCTO election advocacy group. This feedback will include recommendations on enhancements to current systems to provide two-way communications with those voters who subscribe to the Vote by Mail method specifically.

Estimated Completion: Q4 2024.

Recommendation 24

IT incident response scenarios should be developed and tested in a tabletop exercise. This should be researched and implemented for the 2026 municipal election.

Management Response

Agree.

IT will work with Elections staff to determine appropriate test cases and a tabletop exercise to assess incident responses.

Estimated Completion: Q3 2025.

Recommendation 25

Develop more robust contingency plans and processes for the loss or interruption of ePoll book functionality, particularly with respect to when and how to switch to manual backup procedures. Training exercises need to be conducted to ensure the effectiveness of these contingency plans, including a tabletop exercise and easy to understand tools to support staff in the field.

Management Response

Agree.

As a part of the Elections Team's lessons learned exercise, improvements to contingency plans and training for e-poll book functionality and back up processes was identified as an area for improvement. Staff is revising training documents and procedures for future elections and will review documentation prior to future elections to ensure that documentation and processes are up to date with technology, which will include IT input and the suggested tabletop exercise.

Expected Completion: Q1 2025.

Recommendation 26

Stipulate in contracts with election technology vendors, more stringently, the technical and capacity requirements with a mind to ensuring availability of service and minimization of disruption on Voting Day.

Management Response

Agree.

IT will conduct work up front to determine what technical and capacity requirements are needed and will prepare and review all non-functional requirements (Cybersecurity, capacity, concurrency) for all technology procurements.

Legal Services and the Procurement Division will ensure that requirements identified in consultation with IT are reflected in contracts clearly, and that penalties, including penalties pertaining to loss of or reduction of service, for breach of technical and capacity requirements are identified. Additionally, staff will look to include hold-back on payments and options to ensure that the technology works according to technical and capacity requirements on election day.

Estimated Completion: Q2 2025.

Candidate Experience

Recommendation 27

In order to facilitate their post-election needs, consider consultations with Legal Services regarding recent amendments to the Municipal Elections Act with a view to determining if the Voters List can be made available electronically to candidates after Voting Day, and if not whether the City should advocate to the Province to put such access into effect.

Management Response

Agree.

Section 23(8)4 states that candidates provided a copy of the voters lists (or electronic access to it) shall be allowed continued access until the end of their campaign period; after which electronic access will end, and any paper copies must be destroyed, or certified in writing that they have been destroyed.

Estimated Completion: Q3 2025.

Recommendation 28

Consider a service model that offers more dedicated resources to candidates in order to achieve a higher degree of responsiveness to candidate questions and concerns. Features to consider include a dedicated email address, setting and tracking of service standards, and self-help functionality.

Management Response

Agree.

As approved in the budget, a Candidate and Outreach Assistant will act as a dedicated resource to specifically relay information to, and answer questions from candidates. Intended start date of March 2026. Additionally, supporting documents

and training will be updated for candidates, being developed through 2024, recognizing that these may require additional updates as we move closer to the Election period.

Estimated Completion: Q2 2025.

Recommendation 29

Consider a dedicated team, well versed and trained in requirements, to service the needs of candidates.

Management Response

Agree.

As approved in the budget, a Candidate and Outreach Assistant will act as a dedicated resource to specifically relay information to, and answer questions from candidates. Intended start date of March 2026.

Estimated Completion: Q2 2024.

Recommendation 30

Develop guidelines and information tools to assist candidates in understanding the application of the requirement that they may not use City facilities or property for campaign events unless rented or booked.

Management Response

Agree.

Council approved a Use of City Resources During an Election Policy that outlined requirements of Candidates during an election period, including the rental of city facilities and properties for campaign purposes. The Elections Team intends on enhance the existing resources for future elections, including points of contact with candidates and information sessions. Any updates to the current policy will require Council approval no later than May 1, 2026.

Estimated Completion: Q2 2024.

Recommendation 31

Consider the development of a process for the e-filing of nominations, third party registration, and financial filings of candidates and third-party advertisers.

Management Response

Agree.

Staff recognize the convenience that an e-filing system would provide to candidates and third-party advertisers and will explore options for an e-filing process for the 2026 Municipal Election. Staff will work with IT to research and explore internal options and software that would enable secure e-filing of documentation, and secure payments where required.

Estimated Completion: Q4 2024.

Recommendation 32

Consider implementing an electronic appointment management system for booking appointments with the Elections Office for candidate nominations, candidate consultations, vote by mail, proxies, changes to the voters list, etc.

Management Response

Agree.

Staff will research appropriate options to allow for electronic appointment management, consulting IT for the use of software already in existence, such as MS Bookings app, and any functionality that may be realized through our election technology procurement(s). None of this will prevent an individual from calling, or arriving in person to book an appointment, and will do our best to assist individuals who arrive without an appointment.

Estimated Completion: Q4 2024.

Recommendation 33

With respect to the Sign By-law, provide more communication content to candidates regarding how enforcement is administered, retrieval of removed signs is carried out, and the most common enforcement issues during an election.

Management Response

Agree.

By-law Services will enhance existing candidate resources and provide greater detail to candidates about enforcement administration and retrieval of removed signs. Elections Office Staff will take the lead on this project, and additionally include

information regarding the most common enforcement issues in Candidate sessions and associated resources.

Estimated Completion: Q4 2024.

Recommendation 34

With respect to the Sign By-law, develop a policy and standard operating procedure(s) for communicating sign removal to candidates and for handling any requests for sign placement guidance at specific locations or addresses.

Management Response

Agree.

Bylaw Services has added the development of a policy and standard operating procedure to their 2024 workplan, which include direction for communicating sign removal and handling requests for sign placement guidance. The Elections Office Staff will oversee this.

Estimated Completion: Q4 2024.

Recommendation 35

Following on the recommendations of this report, consider a fulsome review of how to improve the entire candidate experience.

Management Response

Agree.

Elections staff will review all Candidate resources and tech with a view to improving the candidate experience, and will ensure that this is actioned through the work of the new position of Candidate and Outreach Assistant.

Estimated Completion: Q2 2024.

Voter/Resident Experience

Recommendation 36

Consider the development of standards for voting hours at retirement and long-term care facilities based on research of other jurisdictions and implement them for the

next municipal election in Hamilton. Research should give consideration to Provincial standards and be informed by the AMCTO (Association of Municipal Manager, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario) Elections Working Group from Elections Ontario in the development of standards for Hamilton.

Management Response

Agree.

Staff will conduct best-practice research, including engagement with municipal counterparts, Elections Ontario and Elections Canada to review approaches to voting hours at retirement homes and long-term care homes. The research will inform the development of standards for voting hours in long-term care facilities and retirement homes for the next regular election.

Estimated Completion Date: Q4 2025.

Recommendation 37

Establish and abide by a service standard for the response time in turning around Vote by Mail applications to vote by mail packages being mailed out.

Management Response

Agree.

Staff will work with vendors to fully understand standards of service, to incorporate those into any vote by mail process and standards including incorporating more frequent mailing of ballots. Standards and delivery expectations will be developed and set with the successful vendor for the 2026 election and will be communicated broadly to candidates and electors.

Estimated Completion: Q1 2026.

Recommendation 38

Develop a clear communication procedure to ensure that on election day, poll locations are positively confirmed to be open.

Management Response

Agree.

A change in poll staffing structures will see a Ward Supervisor (formerly Ward Patroller) confirming in-person with each poll that they are all set and opened on

time. To enhance and clarify processes further, staff will enhance procedures to be followed by poll leadership and implemented on voting days, and will reflect these enhancements in all training and training materials.

Estimated Completion: Q3 2025.

Recommendation 39

Consider a home visit vote program for accessibility purposes.

Management Response

Agree.

A review of the In-Home Voting Program is currently underway – we have reached out to municipal partners (AMCTO Working Group) for policies and procedures in use by municipalities that have implemented an in-home voting program. Additionally, we have requested and compiled costing information, lessons learned and other relevant recommendations from these municipalities. Further cost benefit information has been requested of Elections Ontario – awaiting data.

Recommendations based on the research will be brought to council as directed by MEA s.42(1).

Estimated Completion: Completed and ongoing.

Recommendation 40

Consider implementing a voters-in-training program (for youth).

Management Response

Agree.

Based on the success of outreach initiatives for youth in the 2022 Municipal Election, staff had identified expanding the youth-engagement program as an area of opportunity for the future. Staff will formalize a voters-in-training program for local youth, to be developed by the proposed Project Manager, Education and Supports identified in recommendation 5 and implemented by the elections team.

Estimated Completion: Q2 2025.

Recommendation 41

To improve transparency and accountability to the public, financial information regarding the cost of administering municipal elections and how these costs are broken down and compared to budget should be posted on the City's website (in an easy to understand format, not only a PDF report) and be more broadly shared with the public. Information from prior elections should also be retained and shared on the website.

Management Response

Agree.

Completed. <https://www.hamilton.ca/city-council/municipal-election/election-finances/municipal-election-budget>

Elections management will work with the City's Finance division to enhance the approach to the elections budget, including a buildup to total election line item detail. Additionally, Staff will work with Finance and Communications to include information on Elections budgets on the City's website.

Completed Q1 2024.

Advocacy to the Province of Ontario

Recommendation 42

Advocate to the Province to amend the legislation requiring that polls that open late must automatically remain open past 8:00 pm to make up for the equivalent time lost.

Recommendation 43

Advocate to the Province for clarity regarding the objectives, roles and enforcement of third-party advertisers.

Recommendation 44

Advocate to the Province that Voting Day be held on a day when schools are not in session in order to address concerns about public entry into schools when students are in attendance.

Recommendation 45

Advocate to the Province to increase the amount of time between Nomination Day and Voting Day. One way to accomplish this is to return Nomination Day to the end of July as had been done previously.

Recommendation 46

Advocate to the Province that they be more assistive with legal interpretations of the *Municipal Elections Act*, and procedural requirements, including issuance of guidelines and interpretation notes.

Recommendation 47

Advocate to the Province of Ontario about the need for clarity regarding the responsibility for regulatory oversight of third-party advertisers. Following the determination of a process, ensure that it is communicated so that third-party advertisers and the public understand the roles and procedures for cases of potential non-compliance.

Recommendation 48

Advocate to the Province and/or work with municipal partners toward the development of criteria for assessment of poll location accessibility and general suitability.

Recommendation 49

Advocate to the Province that the endorsement form, Form 2, for candidates obtaining nomination signatures be amended to accommodate collection of more than 25 nominations.

Recommendation 50

Advocate to the Province to provide clarity and guidance regarding when declarations of emergency should be made by a Clerk during municipal elections.

Management Response (Recommendations 42 to 50)

Agree for Recommendations 42 through 50.

For all of these points respecting Advocacy, I agree that more can be done. Clerk's Office staff will prepare a Report to Council (Aiming for January-February) to seek direction to write the province and AMO advocating for these items and changes.

Note: Elections Management has communicated this recommendation to staff at the AMCTO responsible for coordinating recommendations for amendments to the Municipal Elections Act to the Province.

Estimated Completion: January-February 2025.