

INTRODUCTION

The Town of Collingwood will be utilizing the internet and telephone as the voting method for the 2018 Municipal and School Board Election. The Town feels that these alternative voting methods provide greater flexibility to the voter allowing them to vote anytime, anywhere within a ten (10) day voting period (October 12-22). Not only is it flexible, it is quick, easy, secure and completely anonymous. Election results are completely accurate and will be available shortly after the close of voting on October 22, 2018.

INTERNET & TELEPHONE VOTING

Voters will be able to use a device of their choosing, whether it is an analogue telephone, personal cell phone, or smart phone, computer or tablet with access to the internet. To access the voting system, registered voters will receive a Voter Information Letter in the mail which will contain the website and telephone number required to access the ballot, along with a Voter ID number and PIN which is unique to each voter.

Voters with varying abilities will be able to access software available on their personal devices, such as sip and puff, assisted hearing devices, audio readers, etc. that they are accustomed to when voting, making it a comfortable and familiar environment for the voter. The accessibility settings on the internet system for a smart phone, tablet or computer enable the user to display larger or bold text, reverse the font from black on white to white on black, and adjust the contrast for voters with visual disabilities.

Voters also have the option of an audio ballot if they choose to use the telephone to vote. This will assist voters if they are not comfortable voting online or have a disability that prohibits them from using a device to access the internet.

Should a voter not have access to the internet or telephone, tablets will be available for use at a Voter Help Centre being provided by the Town of Collingwood. A touch screen voting unit, such as a tablet, permits individuals to vote by tapping the box next to the candidate's name on the screen, without having to maneuver a mouse or handle a keyboard.

AODA - ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARD

In accordance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Services, reg. 429/07, the following provisions will be met by the Town of Collingwood:

- Provide accessible customer service training for all elections staff
- Provide opportunity for feedback or barriers a voter may encounter
- Allow for the use of service animals and support persons
- Provide notice of temporary disruptions of service
- Provide documents in alternate format that take into account a person's disability
- Provide notice of availability of the above documents

Making Provisions for Support Persons

A support person may assist a voter by marking their ballot or reading the ballot aloud to them as long as the prescribed oaths have been taken.

Staff Members

All election staff assisting with the 2018 municipal election are employees of the municipality. As a municipal employee, the Town is required to provide training to meet accessible customer service standards. All election staff are required to review a training video provided by the Province on the Accessible Customer Service Standards specific to elections (Resource 1). Staff are trained to provide a voter with the appropriate options available when required. Staff maintain a friendly and approachable demeanour throughout the election, assisting electors in any way possible.

MAKING IT CONVENIENT

Online and in-person voter registration

The Town of Collingwood has implemented an online voter registration portal which allows a potential voter to see if they are on the voters' list for the upcoming election or to apply to be added to the voters' list wherever it is convenient for them, pending access to the internet. This allows them to register anytime, anywhere at their convenience.

The Town of Collingwood has also strived to be at various events and locations throughout the municipality to register voters in person. To date, the Town has attended four Farmers' Markets and various non-profit organizations, as well as three all candidates meetings. This is in addition to being able to register at the Town Hall during regular business hours and at the Help Centre provided at the Collingwood Public Library.

Voter Help Centres

To accommodate those voters that prefer a "polling station" type atmosphere when voting, or that may require some assistance in voting, the Town of Collingwood will be offering a stationary Voter Help Centre at the Collingwood Public Library during various hours over the voting period, as well as roving Voter Help Centres at various locations within the municipality.

At these Voter Help Centres, a tablet will be available for anyone who does not have access to a device or the internet for voting purposes.

What makes touch screen voting accessible?

At any time during the voting experience, election staff will be available to assist electors when necessary. All election staff at the Voter Help Centre will be trained on the voting devices and will be required to take an Oath of Secrecy prior to assisting a voter in voting upon consent of the voter.

The accessibility settings on a tablet such as an iPad enables the user to display larger or bold text, edit contrast, and use 3D Touch to magnify sections for voters with visual disabilities.

Touch screens do not require the use of a mouse or keyboard.

Accessible Features - Voter Help Centre

The Voter Centre located in the Collingwood Public Library provides the following accessibility features:

- Automatic door openers as you enter the building from the parking lot or Ste. Marie Street and traverse to the FreeSchools World Literacy Room on the main floor.
- Door handles with a lever style allowing for ease of opening.
- Two accessible public washrooms.
- Service animals and support persons are permitted in the Library facility.
- One accessible parking space (Accessible Parking Permit is required) and an additional accessible parking space in the adjacent parking lot. Additional accessible parking spaces may be added if required.
- Flush curb adjacent to parking area
- A wheelchair available for use in the Library (request for use upon arrival at the front desk).
- Public transit stop located adjacent to the Library.

In addition to the above features, magnifying sheets will be available for those voters with low vision to better view the Voter Information Letters required to access the ballot.

Roving Voter Help Centres

The Town of Collingwood will be hosting roving Voter Help Centres. Election staff will attend all nursing and retirement homes in Collingwood to ensure eligible electors residing at these facilities are given the opportunity to vote. Residents that did not receive a voter card in the mail will be provided with one in person.

Should a voter not be able to leave their home, election staff may go directly to his/her home upon request to assist them in voting.

COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION

Election notices and general information for candidates and electors were provided in a variety of formats including radio, newspaper, the Town's website, Twitter, Facebook, Town Hall, non-profit organizations upon request, candidate sessions, and farmer's markets. On the Town's Election page, there are two videos that outline how to vote on the internet and how to vote by telephone.

Information related to the municipal election is posted on the municipal website on a dedicated "Elections" page and in the local newspaper in the same location within the paper each week.

"Have A Question" forms are available on the municipal election website to allow candidates and electors the opportunity to ask questions and submit comments or concerns with respect to the election.

A copy of the *Candidates Guide to Accessible Elections* produced jointly by the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario and the Province, was provided to all candidates upon nomination and links to the guide and other related information are provided on the municipal election website.

Radio advertising is used to inform the electorate of the election, deadlines, and voting methods available to them and where to go for information and questions.