



CITY OF  
VICTORIA

## Committee of the Whole Report For the Meeting of January 16, 2020

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**To:** Committee of the Whole  
**From:** Chris Coates, City Clerk  
**Subject:** By-election

**Date:** January 8, 2020

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### RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Appoint Chris Coates as Chief Election Officer.
2. Appoint Christine Havelka, Monika Fedyczkowska, and Sonia Santarossa as Deputy Chief Election Officers.
3. Confirm an addition to the Financial Plan for 2020 of a total budget for the by-election of \$170,000 from Surplus.
4. Direct the Chief Election Officer to advise the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing of the by-election date of April 4, 2020.
5. Authorize forwarding the above motions to the daytime Council meeting of January 16, 2020.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the December 12, 2019 Committee of the Whole meeting, Council received the staff report attached as Appendix A in connection with holding a by-election to fill a vacant Councillor position resulting from the resignation of Councillor Laurel Collins. At the December 12, 2019 Council meeting the following motion was passed:

***That Council direct staff to proceed with Option 1 a modified by-election process and report back on final timing, cost estimates and appointment of a Chief Election Officer in January 2020.***

The legislative requirements require general voting day to occur on a Saturday no more than 80-days after the appointment of a Chief Election Officer. Should the appointment of the Chief Election Officer be confirmed on January 16<sup>th</sup>, general voting day would be Saturday, April 4, 2020.

The City's Election Procedures Bylaw delegates authority to the Chief Election Officer to undertake the arrangements for conducting the voting. The December staff report sought input from Council to formulate the approach which would consist of a modified approach from full elections in recent times, recognizing that one seat on Council is being elected.

Upon closer analysis, five voting locations (an increase of one from the recommended four) will be utilized and selected on the basis of population distribution, geography, accessibility, and availability, in addition to up to eight advance voting opportunities at City Hall before general voting day. Appendix B, attached, indicates the 12 locations used during the 2018 general election and the locations being selected for the by-election, subject to final confirmation of availability, for general voting day for the by-election.

A number of other features resulting from Council's input in December will be incorporated including the use of an accessible voting machine, the candidate guide hosting, cost efficient bulk mail resident notification and specific outreach to care facilities that had special voting opportunities in 2018, advising of the mail ballot option available for the by-election.

In terms of the budget to conduct the by-election, \$170,000 from Surplus is estimated as the total cost based on the approach that Council consented to on December 12. In order to maintain the workflow in the Legislative Services department and to meet core service obligations, additional resources would be engaged for the by-election, which were contemplated initially, and are reflected in the projected costs.

#### *Accessibility Impact Statement*

Election processes are not yet barrier free. Council's direction to employ an accessible voting machine along with the standard practices of mail ballot voting and curbside voting add to the statutory requirement to permit assistance in ballot marking to occur, and provide a way to accommodate different accessibility considerations to enable most citizens who wish to vote the ability to do so.

#### *2018 – 2022 Strategic Plan*

The election process is a statutory function and as such is not specifically represented in Council's Strategic Plan. Elements of public engagement, good governance, accessibility are woven through the City's process in addition to the legislated requirements.

#### *Impacts to Financial Plan*

Funding for the by-election requires a 2020 allocation of \$170,000 from Surplus.

#### *Official Community Plan Consistency Statement*

Election procedures are established in the *Election Procedures Bylaw* and are not referenced in the Official Community Plan.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

Legislative requirements necessitate moving a by-election forward as soon as practicable. With that in mind, staff have developed the planning for the by-election in as expedited a manner as time permits and have received direction, reviewed the process requirements, and taken the necessary steps to enable appointment of election officials and move the process forward for an April 4, 2020 general voting day for the by-election.

Respectfully submitted,



Chris Coates  
City Clerk



Mandi Sandhu  
Head of Service Innovation and Improvement

  
Susanne Thompson  
Deputy City Manager

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager:

  
Date: Jan 9, 2020

**List of Attachments:**

**Attachment A – December 12, 2019, Staff Report**  
**Attachment B – Voting Locations Map**