



## Clerks Services Staff Report

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Report Title: Election 2022 Report 3 – Internet, Phone and Paper Ballot Voting  
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### Recommendation:

That the Council of the Township of Woolwich, considering Report C05-2022 respecting Election 2022 Report 3 – Internet, Phone and Paper Ballot Voting:

1. Pass the by-law authorizing internet and phone alternate voting methods as attached to this report; and
2. Direct the Clerk to continue preparing for the election with internet, phone and paper ballot voting options.

### Background:

Municipal and school board elections must be held every four years pursuant to the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 (“MEA”). The next election will be October 24, 2022. In preparation for the upcoming election, on October 5, 2021, Council received Election 2022 Report 2 (Report C04-2021) which set out options for the voting method and passed the following resolution:

“That the Council of the Township of Woolwich, considering Report C04-2021 respecting Election 2022 Report 2 – Voting Method:

1. approve in principle the use of internet voting in the 2022 Municipal and School Board Election; and
2. delay the final decision and the passage of an authorizing by-law until staff report back to Council on vendor solutions, including functionality, flexibility, security, accessibility, and pricing.”

The MEA requires that the voting method will be a hand counted, paper ballot unless the Township passes a by-law authorizing an alternative voting method. If Council wishes to do so, a by-law must be passed by May 1, 2022. When considering voting method Council should consider the following voting principles:

- fair and consistent treatment of voters and Candidates,
- certainty that election results truly reflect electorate vote,
- secrecy, confidentiality, and privacy of voters is paramount,
- voter accessibility, convenience, integrity, and scrutiny of the election process takes priority over administrative convenience and efficiency.

Since October of last year:

- staff explored vendor solutions;
- conducted a mock election in partnership with Brock University to explore new end-to-end verifiable voting technology; and
- began discussing possible partnership opportunities with nearby municipalities.

## **Comments:**

### **Partnership Opportunities**

Staff reached out to other local municipalities and found the Council of Wellesley Township had authorized internet and telephone voting and the Council of Wilmot Township had approved internet voting in principle. Clerks staff in Woolwich, Wellesley and Wilmot Townships began meeting to see if there were opportunities for partnering on an internet voting provider and in early 2022 issued a joint request for proposal (RFP) for internet voting services that provided both flexibility for each partner municipality to choose their own provider or costing if the system was provided jointly.

After reviewing proposals, all municipal partners found cost savings with the joint proposal and other benefits in the partnership, including shared resources, training, support, and procedures. Staff in Woolwich, Wellesley and Wilmot support purchasing internet voting services jointly.

### **Request for Proposals**

On February 24, 2022, the three Townships jointly released RFP 2022-05 through the Township of Wilmot. The RFP closed on March 1<sup>st</sup> with four submissions being received from:

- Neuvote Systems Inc.
- ScytI Canada (ScytI Election Technologies, S.L.U.)
- Intelivote Systems Inc.
- Simply Voting Inc.

Staff in all three municipalities reviewed proposals submitted by vendors and viewed demonstrations of each voting provider's solution. Proposals were scored based on the following criteria:

1. Understanding & Approach: 40%
2. Experience & References: 25%
3. Project Manager & Team: 10%
4. Price: 25%

Following a thorough review, Scytl Canada was the highest-scoring vendor and was selected as the preferred vendor by all partners.

Staff believe Scytl's internet and telephone voting system "Invote" provides the following benefits:

- highly secure system enabling voters to cast their ballot from any location on any modern device with an internet connection
- accessible for voters with a disability
- hosted on a cloud platform in Canadian data centres
- allows internet and telephone voting simultaneously with paper ballot voting
- provides end-to-end verifiable voting

### **End-to-end Verifiable Voting**

In the fall of 2021, Woolwich Township partnered with researchers from Brock University to conduct a mock election using a new technology called end-to-end verifiable voting. This technology provides added confidence in the results for voters who chose to verify their vote. This is an option for voters which allows them to anonymously verify that their vote was recorded by the system as cast while maintaining privacy and preventing voting coercion. While some residents who participated in the mock election said they would not check their ballot, others thought it was a useful technology and made them more confident voting in an online election.

While the voting system will look a little different from the mock election conducted last fall, Scytl's voting system provides similar end-to-end verifiable voting technology that will provide voters additional confidence their vote was cast as they intended.

### **Internet, Telephone and Hand-counted Paper Ballot Voting Methods**

As noted in Election 2022 Report #2, staff believe internet voting as one method that would provide the best possible voting experience for the electors in the Township, especially given the satisfaction with internet voting recorded in the post-election voter survey and the benefit of having a remote voting option while the impact of COVID-19 continues to be uncertain. Scytl's voting system provides all the benefits of internet voting outlined in earlier reporting.

Scytll's voting system also provides the option for telephone voting with a human voice recording of candidates' names, ensuring proper pronunciation. Since the telephone voting system is provided at no extra cost, staff recommend providing this as an accessible option for voters. Election 2022 Report #2 recommended internet voting be offered in future elections with an alternative method for increased voter choice and redundancy. With only seven percent use of telephone voting in 2018 and little positive feedback about past telephone voting options, staff recommend another method for improved voter choice.

Staff recommend internet, telephone and hand-counted paper ballot voting methods for the 2022 municipal election. These methods combined offer the following benefits:

- high level of voter choice, providing exceptional customer service
- options for electors with disabilities, who do not have internet or phone access, who are not comfortable with technology or those who have concerns or cannot attend an in-person voting place
- options for electors away from home and non-resident electors to vote independently
- all legal, secure and accurate voting methods

### **Voting Experience**

With internet, phone and paper ballot voting, staff believe the Township can provide electors with a high level of convenience and choice. Before voting period begins, all voters on the voters' list will receive a voter notice letter with a personal identification number (PIN) and instructions for how to vote or how to receive assistance. During the advance voting period, only internet and telephone voting channels will be open. On October 24, 2022, Voting Day, internet, telephone and paper ballot voting will be available.

Staff expect most voters will vote remotely using either the internet or telephone option as was the experience in 2018. Help centres will be established in larger settlements within the Township to:

- help voters add or amend their information on the voters' list,
- access a computer for the purpose of internet voting, or
- vote with a paper ballot on election day.

As in 2018, help centres will not offer telephones to access the telephone voting system. All help centres in Woolwich will operate using a vote-anywhere model allowing voters to get help wherever is more convenient for them rather than only at a designated ward or poll. After voting closes, internet and telephone results are expected within 10-15 minutes. Results from hand-counted ballots are expected to take slightly longer, but less time than an exclusively hand-counted paper ballot election due to the lower volume. Preliminary results are expected before 10 pm on the night of the election.

## Interdepartmental Impacts:

All departments will be impacted by the 2022 municipal election.

## Financial Impacts:

Total estimated voting costs for 2022 before HST are shown in the table below.

|  | <b>2022 (Estimated)</b> | <b>2018 (Budget)</b> |
|--|-------------------------|----------------------|
| Internet and Telephone Voting System   | \$18,000                | \$28,300             |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> Party Security Testing | \$1,800                 | \$1,700              |
| Ballots                                | \$7,000                 | -                    |
| Election Day Staff                     | \$7,400                 | \$4,800              |
| <b>Total</b>                           | <b>\$34,200</b>         | <b>\$34,800</b>      |

These costs will be paid from the election reserve and are within budget. The election budget also covers costs like advertising, supplies, voter notice letters, the inaugural Council meeting and Council orientation. The 2022 estimated costs include the following efficiencies:

- partnering with Wilmot and Wellesley to purchase and test the voting system,
- additional election day staff to manage paper ballots, but fewer than would be required for an election with only hand-counted paper ballots.

For comparison, actual voting costs in the 2018 election are also shown in the table above. Staff believe 2022 costs are reasonable considering inflation, growth in number of electors, additional staff, and the higher level of service by offering three methods.

## Strategic Plan Impacts:

Choosing internet, telephone and hand-counted paper voting methods for the 2022 municipal election provides exceptional customer service and a lower risk of being impacted by COVID-19. This recommendation supports the strategic plan focus area of Best Managed and Governed Municipality.

## Conclusion:

Staff recommend proceeding with internet, telephone and hand-counted paper ballots for the 2022 Municipal Election to provide superior choice and exceptional customer service

for electors within budget. While hand-counted paper ballots are authorized by the MEA, Council is required to pass a by-law to authorize internet and telephone voting.

**Attachments:**

1. Report C04-2021: Election 2022 Report 2 – Voting Method
2. Draft By-law to Authorize Internet and Telephone Voting