



Clerk's Election Procedure Manual

**2026 Municipal Election
October 26, 2026**

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Table of Contents

Section 1 — General	8
1.1. Authority	8
1.2. Administration	8
1.3. Amendments and Supplementary Directions	8
1.4. Language	8
1.5. Clerk's Office	8
1.6. Directions	9
1.7. Form and Manner of Notice	9
1.8. Additional Notice	9
1.9. Interpretation	9
Section 2 — Nominations	9
2.1. Place and Time of Filing	9
2.2. Filing Requirements	10
2.3. Satisfaction of Filing Requirements	10
2.4. Endorsements	10
2.5. Examination and Certification	10
2.6. Candidates	11
2.7. Withdrawal	11
2.8. Acclamation and Additional Nominations	11
Section 3 — Campaign Finance	11
3.1. Preliminary Certificates	11
3.2. Final Certificates	11
3.3. Notice to Candidates	12
3.4. Administrative Record	12
Section 4 — Third-Party Advertising	12
4.1. Registration	12
4.2. Examination and Certification	12
4.3. Registered Third-Party Advertisers	12
4.4. Preliminary and Final Certificates	12
4.5. Campaign Finance Filings	13
Section 5 — Voters' List	13
5.1. Administration of Voters' List	13
5.2. Candidate Access	13

5.3.	Sharing by Candidate	13
5.4.	Application to Amend the Voters' List	13
5.5.	Removal of Deceased Elector.....	13
Section 6 —	Paper Ballot and Vote-Tabulation Equipment	13
6.1.	Voting Method.....	14
6.2.	Form of Ballot.....	14
6.3.	Manual Counting Where Required.....	14
6.4.	Death or Ineligibility of Candidate	14
Section 7 —	Testing and Security of Vote-Tabulation Equipment	14
7.1.	Pre-Election Testing.....	14
7.2.	Expected Results	15
7.3.	Discrepancy	15
7.4.	Zero-Results Condition	15
7.5.	Post-Test Security.....	15
7.6.	Certification and Records.....	15
Section 8 —	Opening of Voting Location	16
8.1.	Responsibility for Opening	16
8.2.	Readiness.....	16
8.3.	Ballot Box Verification	16
8.4.	Tabulator Verification	16
8.5.	Opening Discrepancy.....	16
8.6.	Opening Record.....	17
Section 9 —	Voting Procedures.....	17
9.1.	Issuing Ballot.....	17
9.2.	Authentication of Ballot	17
9.3.	Objections to Ballot Issuance.....	17
9.4.	Recording Ballot Issuance	17
9.5.	Marking and Secrecy	17
9.6.	Spoiled or Damaged Ballot Before Deposit.....	18
9.7.	Presentation to Vote-Tabulation Equipment	18
9.8.	Ballot Accepted by Vote-Tabulation Equipment.....	18
9.9.	Ballot Returned or Not Accepted by Vote-Tabulation Equipment.....	18
9.10.	Alteration of Elector's Marks.....	19
9.11.	Rejected or Unreadable Ballots.....	19

9.12.	Suspected Contravention or Integrity Concern.....	19
9.13.	Ballot Accounting.....	19
Section 10 —	Closing Voting Location	19
10.1.	Close of Voting	19
10.2.	Completion of Voting	20
10.3.	Closing Verification.....	20
10.4.	Tabulator Memory Card.....	20
10.5.	Chain of Custody.....	20
10.6.	Closing Record	21
Section 11 —	Vote Counting and Results	21
11.1.	Commencement of Count.....	21
11.2.	Vote Counting Centre	21
11.3.	Persons Permitted to Attend.....	21
11.4.	Vote Counting Process.....	21
11.5.	Centralized Tabulation of Mobile Voting Location	22
11.6.	Manual Count or Determination.....	22
11.7.	Result Consolidation	22
11.8.	Unofficial Results.....	23
11.9.	Declaration of Results	23
Section 12 —	Advance Vote	23
12.1.	Application of General Procedures.....	23
12.2.	Dates, Locations and Hours	23
12.3.	Opening an Advance Vote.....	23
12.4.	Voting at an Advance Vote	23
12.5.	No Release or Counting of Results	24
12.6.	Closing an Advance Vote	24
12.7.	Advance Vote Chain of Custody.....	24
12.8.	Safekeeping Between Advance Votes	24
12.9.	Updating Voting Records.....	24
12.10.	Advance Vote Discrepancy	24
Section 13 —	Mobile Voting Locations.....	25
13.1.	Application.....	25
13.2.	Voting Hours and Attendance on Residents.....	25
13.3.	Voting Method	25

13.4.	Ballot Security and Transfer	25
13.5.	Reconciliation	25
13.6.	Centralized Tabulation	26
13.7.	Ballot Not Accepted by Tabulator	26
13.8.	Mobile Voting Results.....	26
Section 14 —	Assistance to Electors	26
14.1.	General Assistance	26
14.2.	Assistance by Deputy Returning Officer.....	26
14.3.	Friend of the Elector	27
14.4.	Assistive Ballot Technologies.....	27
14.5.	Attendance on Elector	27
Section 15 —	Accessibility and Electors with Disabilities.....	27
15.1.	Plan re Barriers	27
15.2.	Accessible Nomination Services	27
15.3.	Accessible Voting Locations.....	28
15.4.	Attendance on Elector with Disability	28
15.5.	Accessible Information	28
15.6.	Accommodation.....	28
Section 16 —	Scrutineers	28
16.1.	Rights	28
16.2.	Restrictions.....	28
16.3.	Objections	29
16.4.	Conduct.....	29
Section 17 —	Voting Proxies	29
17.1.	Appointment	29
17.2.	Filing by Proxy	29
17.3.	Hours for Certification.....	29
17.4.	Certification	30
17.5.	Restrictions.....	30
17.6.	Voting by Proxy	30
Section 18 —	Election Records and Retention	30
18.1.	Retention Period.....	30
18.2.	Security During Retention.....	30
18.3.	Destruction	30

18.4.	Campaign Finance Records	31
18.5.	Public Records and Restricted Records	31
Section 19 —	Emergencies and Disruptions	31
19.1.	Declaration of Emergency	31
19.2.	Examples of Disruption	31
Section 20 —	Secrecy	31
20.1.	Oath or Declaration	31
20.2.	General Duty of Secrecy	32
20.3.	Prohibited Conduct	32
20.4.	Electronic Communication Devices	32
20.5.	Examination of Marked Ballot	32
20.6.	Assistance	32
20.7.	Candidates and Scrutineers	32
20.8.	Ballot Handling and Counting	33
20.9.	Vote Counting Centre	33
20.10.	Continuing Obligation	33
Section 21 —	Miscellaneous	33
21.1.	Effective Date	33
21.2.	Severability and Statutory Conflict	33
21.3.	Official Election Time	33
21.4.	Electronic Records and Signatures	33
21.5.	Recount	34
Section 22 —	Forms and Administrative Instruments	34
22.1.	Forms	34
22.2.	Staff and Vendor Instructions	34
Section 23 —	Definitions	34
23.1.	2026 Municipal Election	34
23.2.	Accredited Media	34
23.3.	Act	34
23.4.	Advance Vote	34
23.5.	Assistive Ballot Technologies	34
23.6.	Candidate	35
23.7.	City of Orillia	35
23.8.	Clerk	35

23.9.	Clerk's Office	35
23.10.	Deputy Returning Officer	35
23.11.	Election Website.....	35
23.12.	Elector	35
23.13.	Friend of the Elector	35
23.14.	Manual.....	35
23.15.	Mobile Voting Location	35
23.16.	Nomination Day	35
23.17.	Nominee	36
23.18.	Principles of the Act.....	36
23.19.	Regular Business Hours.....	36
23.20.	Retention Period.....	36
23.21.	RTR Software.....	36
23.22.	Scrutineer	36
23.23.	Tabulator Memory Card.....	36
23.24.	Third-Party Advertiser	36
23.25.	Vote Counting Centre.....	36
23.26.	Vote-Tabulation Equipment.....	37
23.27.	Voters' List.....	37
23.28.	Voting Day	37
23.29.	Voting Location.....	37

Section 1 — General

1.1. Authority

This Manual establishes procedures governing the conduct of the 2026 Municipal Election. This Manual is established pursuant to the Act, including sections 11, 12 and 42, as applicable. Where a procedure or form is established pursuant to section 42 of the Act, it shall have the effect provided by subsection 42(4). Nothing in this Manual authorizes a departure from a mandatory requirement of the Act, except where expressly authorized by the Act.

1.2. Administration

The Clerk is responsible for conducting the 2026 Municipal Election and for exercising the powers and performing the duties assigned to the Clerk by the Act.

The Clerk may appoint Deputy Returning Officers, delegate functions where authorized, issue directions, establish administrative controls, and take such other steps as are necessary or desirable for the proper conduct of the election.

A Deputy Returning Officer shall comply with the Act, this Manual, and any lawful direction of the Clerk.

1.3. Amendments and Supplementary Directions

The Clerk may amend or supplement this Manual where required or considered appropriate for the proper conduct of the election.

The Clerk may also issue forms, notices, instructions, protocols, and directions dealing with matters of administration or implementation that do not require amendment of this Manual.

Where an amendment affects a procedure or form established pursuant to section 42 of the Act, the Clerk shall comply with any statutory requirements applicable to that amendment.

1.4. Language

The 2026 Municipal Election shall be conducted in English. Notices, forms, and other election information shall be provided in English, except for those relating to the election of members of a French-language district school board which shall be provided in English and French where required by the Act.

1.5. Clerk's Office

The Clerk's Office shall be open during Regular Business Hours and at such additional times as are required by the Act or established by the Clerk.

Where the Act requires the Clerk's Office or another place designated by the Clerk to be open for a specified purpose or period, that statutory requirement governs.

1.6. Directions

The Clerk may give reasonable directions to Candidates, Nominees, Scrutineers, Third-Party Advertisers, Electors, Deputy Returning Officers, Accredited Media, and other persons where necessary to carrying out the duties of the Clerk in accordance with section 11 of the Act. A direction under this section shall not restrict a right expressly conferred by the Act except to the extent authorized by law.

1.7. Form and Manner of Notice

Where the Act or this Manual permits the Clerk to determine the form or manner of notice, or is silent on the manner of notice, the Clerk may give notice by publication on the Election Website.

Notice published on the Election Website shall be considered given at the time it is first published unless a different time is specified.

Where the Act prescribes how a notice, form or document must be given, delivered or provided to a particular person, the prescribed method governs.

1.8. Additional Notice

The Clerk may provide notice by additional means considered appropriate, including mail, email, newspaper, social media, signage, public service announcement, or other electronic or print communication.

The provision or non-provision of additional notice does not affect the validity of notice properly given under the Act or section 1.7 (Form and Manner of Notice)

1.9. Interpretation

This Manual shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the Act and with the Principles of the Act. Where a matter is not otherwise provided for, the Clerk shall exercise discretion in a manner consistent with the Principles of the Act.

Section 2 — Nominations

2.1. Place and Time of Filing

A nomination for an office in the 2026 Municipal Election shall be filed in person with the Clerk or their designate at the Clerk's Office during the nomination period prescribed by the Act.

The Clerk may establish an appointment system for nomination filing. An appointment system shall not prevent a person who attends at the designated filing location within the statutory filing period from filing a nomination.

On Nomination Day, a person shall be considered to have attended for the purpose of the statutory filing deadline where the person is physically present at the designated filing location and has reported to the election reception point established by the Clerk before 2:00 PM.

A nomination shall not be accepted by mail, courier, fax, or electronic transmission unless the Clerk has expressly established an electronic filing method authorized by the Act.

2.2. Filing Requirements

A nomination shall be accompanied by the documents, declarations and fee required by the Act, including, as applicable:

- a) the prescribed Nomination Paper;
- b) proof of identity and qualifying address satisfactory to the Clerk;
- c) the prescribed Endorsement of Nomination where required; and,
- d) the prescribed nomination filing fee.

The Clerk may require reasonable proof necessary to establish identity or qualifications where authorized by the Act.

2.3. Satisfaction of Filing Requirements

For the purposes of section 2.2 (Filing Requirements):

- a) The proof of identity and qualifying address are satisfied by the means identified in O. Reg 304/13 (Voter Identification); and,
- b) Debit is specified by the Clerk as an authorized electronic payment method pursuant to O. Reg 101/97 (General).

2.4. Endorsements

Where section 33 of the Act requires a nomination to be endorsed, the nomination shall contain the prescribed number of endorsements.

In examining endorsements, the Clerk may rely on the information and declarations contained in the prescribed endorsement form unless there is information reasonably calling compliance into question.

2.5. Examination and Certification

The Clerk shall examine each nomination within the period prescribed by the Act and determine whether:

- a) the person is eligible to be nominated; and,
- b) the nomination complies with the requirements of the Act.

Where satisfied that both requirements are met, the Clerk shall certify the nomination.

Where a nomination is rejected, the Clerk shall give the notices required by the Act and shall record the decision in the election records.

2.6. Candidates

The Clerk may publish the list of Candidates on the Election Website following completion of the certification process.

Publication of the list is for public information and is not a replacement of or substitution for any notice expressly required by the Act.

2.7. Withdrawal

A Nominee may withdraw a nomination by filing the prescribed written withdrawal with the Clerk before 2:00 PM on Nomination Day. The Clerk may direct that a specified form be used for this purpose.

A withdrawal shall be accepted only where the Clerk is satisfied that it has been filed by the Nominee or by another person lawfully authorized to file it and may direct that a specified form be used for this purpose.

2.8. Acclamation and Additional Nominations

Where the number of Candidates for an office is equal to the number to be elected, the Clerk shall declare the Candidate or Candidates elected by acclamation in accordance with the Act.

Where the number of Candidates for an office is fewer than the number to be elected, the Clerk shall conduct the additional nomination process required by the Act.

Additional nominations shall be received, examined, certified, or rejected using the procedures in this Section 2 —Nominations, with times for filing, examination, and certification modified in accordance with the Act.

Section 3 — Campaign Finance

3.1. Preliminary Certificates

As soon as practicable after a nomination is filed, the Clerk shall calculate and provide a Nominee with:

- a) the certificate of the applicable maximum amount of Candidate expenses required by section 33.0.1 of the Act; and,
- b) the certificate of the applicable maximum amount of contributions to the Candidate's own campaign required by section 33.0.2 of the Act.

3.2. Final Certificates

Within the time required by the Act, the Clerk shall calculate and provide to each Candidate:

- a) the certificate of the applicable maximum amount of Candidate expenses required by section 88.20 of the Act; and,

- b) the certificate of the applicable maximum amount of contributions to the Candidate's own campaign required by section 88.9.1 of the Act.

3.3. Notice to Candidates

Before Voting Day, the Clerk shall provide each person nominated for office with the notices required by the Act respecting campaign finance penalties and nomination fee refund requirements.

3.4. Administrative Record

The Clerk shall maintain a record of campaign-finance certificates and notices issued to each Candidate.

Section 4 — Third-Party Advertising

4.1. Registration

A person or entity required by the Act to register as a Third-Party Advertiser shall file the prescribed notice of registration with the Clerk during the period permitted by the Act.

The registration shall be accompanied by the information, declarations, and signatures required by the Act.

The Clerk may require proof of identity or other information reasonably necessary to determine whether the registration complies with the Act.

4.2. Examination and Certification

The Clerk shall examine each registration within the period prescribed by the Act and determine whether the registration complies with the requirements of the Act.

Where satisfied that the registration complies with the Act, the Clerk shall certify the registration.

Where a registration is rejected, the Clerk shall give the notices required by the Act and shall record the decision in the election records.

4.3. Registered Third-Party Advertisers

The Clerk may publish a list of registered Third-Party Advertisers on the Election Website.

Publication of the list is for public information and is not a replacement for any notice required by the Act.

4.4. Preliminary and Final Certificates

The Clerk shall provide the certificates respecting maximum expenses required by the Act within the time prescribed by the Act.

4.5. Campaign Finance Filings

The Clerk shall maintain a record of campaign-finance certificates and notices issued to each Third-Party Advertiser.

Section 5 — Voters' List

5.1. Administration of Voters' List

The Clerk shall receive and administer the Voters' List in accordance with the Act. The Voters' List shall be used only for purposes permitted by the Act and shall not be posted in a public place.

5.2. Candidate Access

The Clerk shall provide, to any Candidate who requests a copy in writing, the portion of the Voters' List to which the Candidate is entitled.

Before receiving a copy, the Candidate shall provide the written acknowledgement required by the Act respecting electoral use, protection, sharing, return, and destruction of the Voters' List.

The Clerk may provide the Voters' List through a secure electronic method or another method determined by the Clerk.

5.3. Sharing by Candidate

A Candidate who provides Voters' List information to another person shall first obtain the written acknowledgement required by the Act.

The Candidate is responsible for maintaining the records required by the Act respecting persons with whom the Voters' List has been shared and for ensuring that copies are returned or destroyed as required.

5.4. Application to Amend the Voters' List

The Clerk shall approve an application to amend the Voters' List where satisfied that the applicant is entitled to the requested amendment and has furnished satisfactory proof thereof.

Where an application is refused, the refusal and the reason for it shall be recorded on the application.

5.5. Removal of Deceased Elector

The Clerk may remove a person's name from the Voters' List where satisfied, in accordance with the Act that the person has died.

Section 6 — Paper Ballot and Vote-Tabulation Equipment

6.1. Voting Method

The 2026 Municipal Election shall be conducted using in-person paper ballots with votes counted by Vote-Tabulation Equipment.

Vote-Tabulation Equipment shall be provided to each Voting Location except where this Manual provides for ballots to be transported for centralized tabulation, including Mobile Voting Locations.

6.2. Form of Ballot

The ballot shall be a composite ballot containing the offices and Candidates for which the Elector is entitled to vote.

Candidate names shall appear as required by section 41 of the Act and the ballot shall be designed for processing by the Vote-Tabulation Equipment.

The Clerk may determine layout, ballot stock, coding, rotation, instructional markings, and other technical characteristics necessary for accurate and secure tabulation, subject to the Act.

6.3. Manual Counting Where Required

Where the Clerk determines that Vote-Tabulation Equipment cannot adequately or reliably be used for determining the result of the 2026 Municipal Election, the Clerk may direct that affected ballots be counted manually in accordance with the Act and section 11.6 ("Manual Count or Determination").

6.4. Death or Ineligibility of Candidate

Where a Candidate dies, becomes ineligible, withdraws, or otherwise ceases to be a Candidate after the preparation of election materials, the Clerk shall take such steps as are required by the Act and may establish procedures respecting notices, ballots, voting materials, election information, and tabulation

Section 7 — Testing and Security of Vote-Tabulation Equipment

7.1. Pre-Election Testing

Before Vote-Tabulation Equipment is used for the conduct of the vote, the Clerk shall ensure that it is tested for accuracy and proper configuration.

Testing shall use a predetermined test deck or equivalent methodology capable of testing the range of voting outcomes the system is expected to process.

The test shall verify, as applicable:

- a) each office and contest;
- b) each Candidate;
- c) valid votes;
- d) blank selections;

- e) overvotes and other conditions capable of causing a warning or rejection;
- f) ballots requiring special treatment;
- g) vote totals;
- h) results storage, transmission and reporting; and,
- i) the relationship between tabulator results and the central results system.

7.2. Expected Results

Test results shall be compared with predetermined expected results.

A test is successful only where the equipment and system accurately interpret, record, tabulate, and report the expected results.

7.3. Discrepancy

Any discrepancy affecting interpretation, recording, tabulation, or reporting shall be investigated.

The affected equipment or system component shall not be used for the election unless the discrepancy has been corrected and the affected component successfully retested.

Where the discrepancy cannot be corrected and successfully retested, the affected equipment or component shall be removed from election use.

7.4. Zero-Results Condition

Before election use, test results shall be cleared from Vote-Tabulation Equipment and the RTR Software.

Before permitting election ballots to be run through Vote-Tabulation Equipment, and before or inserting any Tabulator Memory Card to the RTR Software, the Deputy Returning Officer shall verify that the applicable Vote-Tabulation Equipment or RTR Software displays a zero-results condition.

7.5. Post-Test Security

Following successful testing, Vote-Tabulation Equipment, Tabulator Memory Cards, configurations, and election systems shall be secured against unauthorized access or alteration.

The Clerk shall establish controls intended to ensure that the configuration tested is the configuration used for voting and counting.

7.6. Certification and Records

Before Vote-Tabulation Equipment is placed into election use, the Clerk shall certify that the required testing has been completed successfully.

Test decks, test results, certifications, exception records, and related documentation shall be retained for the Retention Period.

Section 8 — Opening of Voting Location

8.1. Responsibility for Opening

The Deputy Returning Officer responsible for a Voting Location shall ensure that the Voting Location is ready to receive Electors before voting begins.

No voting shall commence until the required opening verification has been completed or the Clerk has authorized an alternative procedure.

8.2. Readiness

Opening verification shall include confirmation that:

- a) required ballots, forms and election materials are present and accounted for;
- b) Vote-Tabulation Equipment required at the Voting Location is present, has been approved for use and is operational;
- c) ballot boxes and ballot-storage arrangements are secure;
- d) the Voting Location is arranged to preserve secrecy of voting;
- e) the Voting Location is accessible and any identified barriers have been addressed to the extent reasonably possible;
- f) required notices and voting instructions are available; and,
- g) Deputy Returning Officers are in place and have the materials necessary to perform their assigned functions.

8.3. Ballot Box Verification

Before voting begins, the Deputy Returning Officer shall verify that each ballot box:

- a) is empty;
- b) is capable of being secured against unauthorized insertion or removal of ballots; and,
- c) bears any required seal or identifier corresponding with the election record.

A Scrutineer who is lawfully present may observe the verification.

8.4. Tabulator Verification

Before voting begins, the Deputy Returning Officer shall verify that:

- a) the Vote-Tabulation Equipment is the equipment assigned to the Voting Location;
- b) required seals or identifiers correspond with the election record;
- c) the equipment displays or produces a zero-results condition; and,
- d) no condition exists that would reasonably call the integrity or reliability of the equipment into question.

8.5. Opening Discrepancy

A discrepancy identified during opening shall be documented and reported to the Clerk where it cannot be immediately resolved under an established procedure.

Where a discrepancy may affect ballot security or accurate tabulation, voting shall not begin using the affected process or equipment until the Clerk is satisfied that the issue has been resolved or an authorized alternative procedure has been implemented.

8.6. Opening Record

Completion of the opening verification shall be recorded on the form or record established by the Deputy Returning Officer responsible for the Voting Location.

Section 9 — Voting Procedures

9.1. Issuing Ballot

A Deputy Returning Officer shall issue a ballot only where satisfied that the person is entitled to vote at the Voting Location and has provided proof of identity and residence in accordance with O. Reg. 304/13 (Voter Identification).

The Deputy Returning Officer shall provide the Elector with the ballot appropriate to the Elector's voting entitlement.

9.2. Authentication of Ballot

After confirming the Elector's entitlement to vote and recording the elector as having voted, the Deputy Returning Officer shall authenticate it in the manner established by the Clerk to demonstrate compliance with section 9.1 (Issuing Ballot) and confirm that it was issued by the Deputy Returning Officer.

Authentication shall be sufficient to permit the ballot to be recognized as issued by a Deputy Returning Officer without revealing the identity of the Elector. A Deputy Returning Officer shall not mark the voting area of the ballot or otherwise make a mark capable of being interpreted as an Elector's vote.

9.3. Objections to Ballot Issuance

Where Scrutineer objects to the issuance of a ballot, the Deputy Returning Officer shall issue a ballot if the person takes the oath or affirmation required by the Act. No Scrutineer shall direct or interfere with the Deputy Returning Officer's issuance of a ballot.

9.4. Recording Ballot Issuance

Before or immediately upon issuing a ballot, the Deputy Returning Officer shall ensure that the Voters' List is updated to show that the Elector has been issued a ballot, in the manner established by the Clerk.

Controls shall be maintained to prevent an Elector from being issued a second ballot for the same entitlement except where a replacement ballot is lawfully issued.

9.5. Marking and Secrecy

An Elector shall be provided a reasonable opportunity to mark the ballot secretly and independently.

The Elector shall conceal the marked ballot using the secrecy folder, secrecy envelope, or other method established by the Clerk and shall keep the ballot concealed until it is presented for tabulation or deposit.

No Deputy Returning Officer shall attempt to influence an Elector's voting choice or obtain information concerning how the Elector intends to vote or has voted.

9.6. Spoiled or Damaged Ballot Before Deposit

Where an Elector spoils or damages a ballot before it is deposited in the ballot box and requests a replacement, the Deputy Returning Officer shall account for the original ballot and may issue a replacement ballot where authorized by the Act.

A spoiled or cancelled ballot shall be kept separate from cast ballots and shall not be counted.

9.7. Presentation to Vote-Tabulation Equipment

Where Vote-Tabulation Equipment is in use at the Voting Location, the marked ballot shall be presented for tabulation in the manner established by the Clerk.

The process shall be conducted so that the Deputy Returning Officer can operate or monitor the Vote-Tabulation Equipment without viewing the Elector's markings except where examination is required by an authorized procedure.

9.8. Ballot Accepted by Vote-Tabulation Equipment

Where the Vote-Tabulation Equipment accepts the ballot, the ballot shall be deposited into the secured ballot box. Once deposited, the ballot shall not be removed except under an authorized counting, recount, emergency, or other lawful election procedure.

9.9. Ballot Returned or Not Accepted by Vote-Tabulation Equipment

Where the Vote-Tabulation Equipment returns or does not accept a ballot, the Deputy Returning Officer shall determine, without compromising secrecy, the reason the ballot was not processed.

Where the condition can be addressed without adding to, erasing, completing, correcting or otherwise altering the Elector's voting marks, the ballot may be re-presented to the equipment.

Where the equipment identifies a condition that may be resolved by the Elector, the Elector shall be informed of the condition and of any options available under the authorized procedure. The Deputy Returning Officer shall not advise the Elector how to vote.

Where the ballot cannot be accepted and the Elector is present, the ballot shall be dealt with in accordance with the Act and the procedures established by the Clerk, including any procedure for cancellation and replacement where permitted.

A failure or refusal of the Vote-Tabulation Equipment to process a ballot shall not, by itself, determine whether a vote is valid or invalid.

9.10. Alteration of Elector's Marks

No person shall add to, erase, complete, correct or otherwise alter an Elector's voting marks. For greater certainty, no Deputy Returning Officer shall alter an Elector's voting marks for the purpose of causing Vote-Tabulation Equipment to accept it.

9.11. Rejected or Unreadable Ballots

Where a ballot requires a determination as to whether a vote is to be counted, O. Reg. 101/97 (General) and any procedure established under section 42 of the Act shall govern.

Where a ballot cannot be processed by Vote-Tabulation Equipment but may lawfully be counted manually, it shall be segregated and dealt with in accordance with section 11.6 (Manual Count or Determination).

9.12. Suspected Contravention or Integrity Concern

Where a Deputy Returning Officer reasonably believes that conduct occurring in connection with voting may contravene the Act, the Deputy Returning Officer shall document the circumstances and report the matter to the Clerk.

The Clerk shall determine what administrative response, if any, is required to protect the election process.

9.13. Ballot Accounting

Every ballot received at a Voting Location shall be accounted for as:

- a) voting has been closed or suspended on Vote-Tabulation Equipment in the authorized manner;
- b) issued and cast;
- c) issued and spoiled or cancelled;
- d) rejected from the count;
- e) unused; or,
- f) otherwise accounted for under an authorized procedure.

Before election materials from a Voting Location are finally secured, the total number of ballots in all categories shall be reconciled against the number of ballots received.

Any unresolved discrepancy shall be documented and reported to the Clerk.

Section 10 — Closing Voting Location

10.1. Close of Voting

Voting shall close at the time prescribed by the Act.

After the time of vote closing, no person shall be admitted to the voting process except an Elector who is entitled to vote, or a Scrutineer, and who is within the Voting Location at that time. For the purpose of this section 10.1 (Close of Voting) the Voting Location shall be the building in which the vote is being conducted.

10.2. Completion of Voting

After the final entitled Elector has completed voting, the Deputy Returning Officer shall close the Voting Location to further voting and begin the closing procedure.

Scrutineers lawfully entitled to remain may observe the closing procedure subject to the Act and this Manual.

10.3. Closing Verification

The Deputy Returning Officer responsible for the Voting Location shall ensure that:

- a) voting has been closed or suspended on Vote-Tabulation Equipment in the authorized manner;
- b) any results record produced by the equipment is secured;
- c) ballots are reconciled in accordance with section 9.14 (Ballot Accounting);
- d) cast, spoiled, cancelled, rejected and unused ballots are secured in the manner established by the Clerk;
- e) the ballot box, Tabulator Memory Card and associated election records are secured; and,
- f) any unresolved discrepancy is documented and reported to the Clerk.

10.4. Tabulator Memory Card

The Tabulator Memory Card shall be identified to the Voting Location and secured against unauthorized access or alteration.

The device shall be transferred under custody of a Deputy Returning Officer and shall remain under documented chain of custody until received at the Vote Counting Centre or other secured location designated by the Clerk.

10.5. Chain of Custody

The transfer record shall identify, at a minimum:

- a) the Voting Location and date;
- b) the materials or devices transferred;
- c) the person releasing the materials;
- d) the person receiving the materials;
- e) the date and time of transfer; and,
- f) any apparent seal irregularity, damage, discrepancy, or other condition requiring attention.

10.6. Closing Record

The Deputy Returning Officer shall complete the closing record established by the Clerk before the election materials are released from the Voting Location.

Section 11 — Vote Counting and Results

11.1. Commencement of Count

Votes shall not be counted before the time permitted by the Act.

Following the close of voting on Voting Day, the Clerk shall commence or authorize the counting, consolidation and verification of election results.

11.2. Vote Counting Centre

The Clerk shall establish a Vote Counting Centre for centralized election-result functions, including:

- a) receipt and verification of Tabulator Memory Cards and results records from Voting Locations;
- b) upload and consolidation of tabulator results into the RTR Software;
- c) tabulation of Mobile Voting Location ballots;
- d) processing of ballots requiring centralized review or manual counting; and,
- e) other activities authorized by the Clerk that are necessary to verify, report, and certify election results.

Ballots, results devices and election records at the Vote Counting Centre shall remain under the control of the Clerk.

11.3. Persons Permitted to Attend

Only persons authorized by the Act or the Clerk may be present in the Vote Counting Centre.

Each Candidate may appoint one (1) Scrutineer to be present at the Vote Counting Centre, provided that if the Candidate attends the Scrutineer shall leave.

11.4. Vote Counting Process

The vote-counting process shall maintain:

- a) ballot and results security;
- b) accurate accounting of ballots and results devices;
- c) separation of counted and uncounted ballots;
- d) protection of ballot secrecy;
- e) reliable recording of results;
- f) reconciliation of results to ballots or electronic result records processed;
- g) documentation sufficient to permit verification of the count;
- h) a control preventing a ballot or results record from being included more than once;

- i) physical or electronic segregation of materials awaiting processing from materials already processed;
- j) segregation and documented review of any ballot or result whose status cannot be determined during ordinary processing; and,
- k) reconciliation of the number of ballots tabulated with the number delivered for tabulation where ballots are processed centrally.

11.5. Centralized Tabulation of Mobile Voting Location

Before centralized ballot tabulation of Mobile Voting Locations begins, the Deputy Returning Officer responsible for the equipment shall verify that the equipment is approved for use and is in the required zero-results condition for the batch or process being undertaken.

Ballots awaiting tabulation shall remain secured and segregated from processed ballots.

After each batch or source of ballots is processed, the number of ballots processed shall be reconciled to the number delivered for tabulation, subject to rejected, unreadable or otherwise separately accounted-for ballots.

11.6. Manual Count or Determination

Where a manual count or manual determination is required:

- a) the count shall be conducted by Deputy Returning Officers authorized by the Clerk;
- b) ballots shall be examined individually;
- c) votes shall be accepted or rejected according to the Act and any lawful procedure established by the Clerk;
- d) no Deputy Returning Officer shall alter an Elector's voting marks;
- e) Candidates and Scrutineers may observe in accordance with the Act and this Manual but shall not handle ballots or interfere with the count;
- f) an objection made by a Candidate or Scrutineer shall be recorded where required by the Act;
- g) the Deputy Returning Officer responsible for the determination shall make the decision required by the Act;
- h) ballots counted for each contest shall be reconciled with the ballots delivered for counting, taking into account rejected and otherwise accounted-for ballots;
- i) any discrepancy shall be documented and reported to the Clerk;
- j) the results shall be recorded on the form or record established by the Clerk; and,
- k) the records of the manual count shall be retained in accordance with the Act and this Manual.

11.7. Result Consolidation

Tabulator results shall be uploaded or entered into the RTR Software in a manner that identifies the source Voting Location or voting process.

The Clerk shall establish controls to confirm that:

- a) each required result source has been received;
- b) no result source has been entered more than once;
- c) the result recorded in the RTR Software corresponds with the source result record; and,
- d) unresolved discrepancies are identified before final results are declared.

11.8. Unofficial Results

The Clerk may publish a running tally of results processed by the RTR Software or, after sufficient verification has occurred to support public reporting, such other form of unofficial results as the Clerk considers appropriate. Unofficial results shall be identified as unofficial and are subject to final reconciliation, correction, and declaration by the Clerk.

11.9. Declaration of Results

After all required results have been received, reconciled and verified to the Clerk's satisfaction, the Clerk shall compile the results for each office.

The Clerk shall not make the official declaration until satisfied that all results necessary to determine the election have been included and any discrepancy capable of affecting the result has been addressed.

The Clerk shall then declare the Candidate or Candidates elected in accordance with the Act, subject to any recount or other statutory requirement.

Section 12 — Advance Vote

12.1. Application of General Procedures

Section 8 —Opening of Voting Location, Section 9 —Voting Procedures, and Section 10 —Closing Voting Location apply to an Advance Vote with necessary modifications except where this Section establishes a different procedure.

The same standards of eligibility verification, ballot security, accessibility, secrecy, tabulation, and reconciliation apply to an Advance Vote.

12.2. Dates, Locations and Hours

The Clerk shall establish the dates, locations and hours of Advance Voting in accordance with section 43 of the Act and shall publish that information on the Election Website.

12.3. Opening an Advance Vote

Before voting begins on each Advance Vote date, the opening procedures in Section 8 —Opening of Voting Location shall be completed.

12.4. Voting at an Advance Vote

Voting shall be conducted in accordance with Section 9 —Voting Procedures

12.5. No Release or Counting of Results

No Advance Vote result shall be released before the close of voting on Voting Day.

Election results stored on Vote-Tabulation Equipment, Tabulator Memory Cards or other electronic media shall be secured against unauthorized access, alteration, or disclosure.

12.6. Closing an Advance Vote

At the conclusion of each Advance Vote:

- a) voting on the Vote-Tabulation Equipment shall be suspended in the authorized manner to prevent further voting;
- b) no election results shall be released;
- c) ballots shall be reconciled in accordance with section 9.14 (Ballot Accounting);
- d) the ballot box, Tabulator Memory Card, and associated election records shall be secured;
- e) the list or election record identifying persons who voted shall be completed as required by the Act;
- f) the closing record shall be completed; and
- g) the secured materials shall be transferred to the Clerk or another secured location designated by the Clerk.

12.7. Advance Vote Chain of Custody

Advance Vote ballots, equipment, Tabulator Memory Cards and designated records shall remain under documented chain of custody after the close of voting.

The chain-of-custody record shall identify the materials transferred, the persons releasing and receiving them, the date and time of transfer, and any irregularity identified.

12.8. Safekeeping Between Advance Votes

Materials retained for a subsequent Advance Vote or Voting Day shall remain secured against unauthorized access.

Where a seal or security control must be broken for an authorized purpose, the reason shall be documented and replacement security controls shall be recorded.

12.9. Updating Voting Records

The Clerk shall ensure that voting records are updated to reflect Electors who voted at an Advance Vote so that those Electors cannot receive another ballot for the same voting entitlement.

12.10. Advance Vote Discrepancy

A discrepancy identified during the opening, conduct, closing, reconciliation or transfer of an Advance Vote shall be documented and reported to the Clerk.

Section 13 — Mobile Voting Locations

13.1. Application

This Section applies to Voting Locations established at institutions and retirement homes under subsection 45(7) and subsection 46(3) of the Act. Section 8 —Opening of Voting Location, Section 9 —Voting Procedures, and Section 10 —Closing Voting Location apply with necessary modifications except where this Section establishes a different procedure.

13.2. Voting Hours and Attendance on Residents

The Clerk shall establish the locations of Mobile Voting Locations in accordance with subsection 45(7) of the Act and set voting hours in accordance with subsection 46(3) of the Act.

A Deputy Returning Officer may attend on a resident Elector within the institution or retirement home as authorized by the Act.

Persons identified by s.47(1) of the Act may accompany the Deputy Returning Officer subject to reasonable measures necessary to protect resident health and safety.

13.3. Voting Method

Vote-Tabulation Equipment shall only be provided to a Mobile Voting Location where the Clerk expressly directs that such equipment be used. Where Vote-Tabulation Equipment is not provided, an Elector shall mark the ballot in accordance with Section 9 —Voting Procedures and deposit the ballot into a secured ballot box.

13.4. Ballot Security and Transfer

Ballots cast at a Mobile Voting Location shall remain secured following the conclusion of voting.

The ballot box shall be sealed and transferred to the Vote Counting Centre or another location designated by the Clerk under documented chain of custody.

The seal shall remain intact until the ballot box is opened for authorized tabulation.

13.5. Reconciliation

Mobile Voting Location ballots shall be reconciled separately by facility or voting location.

The reconciliation shall account for all ballots received, issued and cast, spoiled or cancelled, unused, rejected, or otherwise accounted for.

Any discrepancy shall be documented and reported to the Clerk before the ballots are finally included in the count.

13.6. Centralized Tabulation

Mobile Voting Location ballots shall be processed through Vote-Tabulation Equipment at the Vote Counting Centre in the presence of persons authorized to attend the count.

The absence of the Elector does not affect the processing or tabulation of a ballot lawfully cast at a Mobile Voting Location.

13.7. Ballot Not Accepted by Tabulator

Where Vote-Tabulation Equipment does not accept a Mobile Voting Location ballot, the ballot shall be secured and examined in accordance with the Act and this Manual.

Where the ballot can be re-presented to the Vote-Tabulation Equipment without altering the Elector's voting marks, it may be re-presented.

Where the ballot cannot be processed by the equipment, the ballot shall be segregated and its disposition determined in accordance with the Act, and section 11.6 (Manual Count or Determination).

A ballot shall not be rejected solely because it is not accepted by Vote-Tabulation Equipment.

No person shall add to, erase, complete, correct or otherwise alter an Elector's voting marks for the purpose of causing the ballot to be accepted by Vote-Tabulation Equipment.

13.8. Mobile Voting Results

Mobile Voting results shall be included in the election results only after the ballots have been tabulated, reconciled, and verified.

No person shall attempt to identify how an individual resident Elector voted from the order, source, or handling of Mobile Voting Location ballots.

Section 14 — Assistance to Electors

14.1. General Assistance

A Deputy Returning Officer may permit an Elector who requires assistance to receive such assistance as is reasonably necessary to enable the Elector to vote.

Assistance shall be provided in a manner that best complies with the Principles of the Act.

14.2. Assistance by Deputy Returning Officer

A Deputy Returning Officer may assist an Elector in reading, understanding, or marking the ballot where requested and authorized.

The Deputy Returning Officer shall act only on the Elector's instructions and shall not suggest, recommend, or influence a voting choice.

14.3. Friend of the Elector

An Elector may request assistance from a Friend of the Elector.

Before assisting, the Friend of the Elector shall complete any oath, declaration, or form required by the Clerk.

A Friend of the Elector may assist by reading or explaining the ballot, translating or interpreting, physically marking the ballot in accordance with the Elector's instructions, or otherwise facilitating the voting process.

The Friend of the Elector shall act only on the Elector's instructions, shall not influence the Elector and shall maintain secrecy.

14.4. Assistive Ballot Technologies

An Elector may use Assistive Ballot Technologies made available by the Clerk.

The Clerk may request information from Candidates, including pronunciation of names, where required to configure assistive voting technology.

Where requested information is not provided within the period established by the Clerk, the Clerk may determine the information necessary to operate the technology.

14.5. Attendance on Elector

A Deputy Returning Officer may attend on an Elector anywhere within the area designated as the Voting Location where reasonably necessary to permit the Elector to vote. For the purposes of this section 14.5 (Attendance on Elector) the Voting Location shall include a parking area where the vote is being conducted.

Section 15 — Accessibility and Electors with Disabilities

15.1. Plan re Barriers

The Clerk shall prepare a plan regarding the identification, removal, and prevention of barriers that affect Electors and Candidates and shall make the plan available to the public before Voting Day

15.2. Accessible Nomination Services

The location designated for filing nominations shall be assessed for barriers and reasonable measures shall be taken to remove, mitigate, or otherwise address identified barriers. Where ordinary filing location cannot reasonably accommodate a person, the Clerk may make such accommodation as is reasonably necessary and permitted by the Act..

15.3. Accessible Voting Locations

In designating Voting Locations, the Clerk shall have regard to the needs of Electors and Candidates with disabilities. Voting Locations shall be assessed for barriers and reasonable measures shall be taken to remove, mitigate, or otherwise address identified barriers.

15.4. Attendance on Elector with Disability

To permit an Elector with a disability to vote, a Deputy Returning Officer shall attend on the Elector anywhere within the area designated as the Voting Location as required by subsection 45(9) of the Act. For the purposes of this section 15.4 (Attendance on Elector with Disability) the Voting Location shall include a parking area where the vote is being conducted.

For greater certainty, this obligation is additional to, and does not limit or replace, the discretion conferred on a Deputy Returning Officer in accordance with section 14.5 (Attendance on Elector)

15.5. Accessible Information

Election notices, forms, and information shall be made available in accessible formats or with communication supports upon request as required by the Act. Ballots may be marked using Assistive Ballot Technologies in accordance with section 41(3) of the Act.

15.6. Accommodation

Where an Elector with a disability requires accommodation to participate in the voting process, the procedures set out in this Manual may be adapted to the extent reasonably necessary and permitted by the Act. Any accommodation shall, to the greatest extent possible, be provided in a manner that preserves the Principles of the Act, including ballot secrecy and the integrity of the election.

Section 16 — Scrutineers

16.1. Rights

Subject to the Act and this Manual, a Scrutineer may:

- a) enter a Voting Location before it opens;
- b) inspect ballot boxes and election materials;
- c) remain in the Voting Location during voting;
- d) initial the seal of materials ballot boxes and other secured materials;
- e) observe the count; and,
- f) object to the issuance of a ballot, or object during the count.

16.2. Restrictions

A Scrutineer shall not:

- a) interfere with or attempt to influence an Elector;
- b) interfere with a Deputy Returning Officer performing election duties;

- c) compromise ballot secrecy;
- d) handle a ballot except where expressly authorized by the Act;
- e) obstruct voting, counting, or tabulation;
- f) photograph, record or reproduce a marked ballot;
- g) access Vote-Tabulation Equipment, Tabulator Memory Cards, passwords, or election systems except as expressly authorized; or,
- h) engage in conduct that compromises election security, order, or integrity.

16.3. Objections

Where a Scrutineer makes an objection, the Deputy Returning Officer shall record the objection as required by the Act. The Deputy Returning Officer shall decide all objections, except an objection to the issuance of a ballot. Where an objection is made to the issuance of a ballot, the Deputy Returning Officer shall issue a ballot if the person takes the oath or affirmation required by the Act. No Candidate or Scrutineer shall direct a Deputy Returning Officer in the determination of an objection.

16.4. Conduct

Where a Scrutineer contravenes this Manual or disrupts the election process, the Deputy Returning Officer shall direct the person to cease the conduct.

A continued or serious contravention shall be referred to the Clerk or designate, who may take any action authorized by law to maintain order and protect the election process.

Section 17 — Voting Proxies

17.1. Appointment

An Elector entitled to appoint a voting proxy may do so in accordance with section 44 of the Act using the prescribed form.

A proxy appointment shall not be accepted before the time at which proxy appointments are permitted by the Act and does not remain in effect after Voting Day.

17.2. Filing by Proxy

The person appointed as proxy shall complete the prescribed application and statutory declaration and shall present the application and appointing document to the Clerk in person at the Clerk's Office or another place designated by the Clerk.

The Clerk may require proof of identity and residence as authorized by the Act.

17.3. Hours for Certification

An application for certification of a proxy may be presented whenever the Clerk's Office or another place designated by the Clerk is open for that purpose.

On a day on which an Advance Vote is held, the Clerk's Office and any other place designated for proxy certification shall be open from noon until 5:00 PM as required by subsection 44(6) of the Act.

17.4. Certification

The Clerk shall certify the proxy appointment where satisfied that:

- a) the person appointing the proxy is entitled to make the appointment;
- b) the person appointed is entitled to act as proxy; and,
- c) the appointment complies with the Act.

The Clerk shall certify the appointing document and shall maintain such election records as are necessary to administer proxy voting.

17.5. Restrictions

A person shall not appoint more than one voting proxy.

A person shall not act as proxy for more persons than permitted by the Act, subject to the statutory exception for specified relationships.

17.6. Voting by Proxy

A person voting as proxy shall produce the certified appointing document to the Deputy Returning Officer and shall take the prescribed oath before receiving the proxy ballot.

Voting as a proxy does not prevent the person from voting in the person's own right.

The Deputy Returning Officer shall ensure that the proxy vote is recorded in a manner that prevents any further ballot from being issued on behalf of the appointing Elector.

Section 18 — Election Records and Retention

18.1. Retention Period

The Clerk shall retain ballots and all other documents and materials for the Retention Period.

18.2. Security During Retention

During the Retention Period, ballots, ballot boxes, Tabulator Memory Cards, and other secured election records shall remain protected against unauthorized access.

Access to a ballot box or to materials whose inspection is restricted by the Act shall be permitted only where otherwise authorized by law.

18.3. Destruction

After the Retention Period has expired, the Clerk shall destroy the ballots in the presence of two witnesses unless the ballots are required to be retained by law.

The Clerk may destroy other election documents and materials after the Retention Period subject to the Act, municipal records-retention requirements, and any applicable litigation hold or preservation obligation.

18.4. Campaign Finance Records

Documents filed under sections 88.25, 88.29, and 88.32 of the Act shall be retained for the period required by subsection 88(4) of the Act.

18.5. Public Records and Restricted Records

Election records that are public records under the Act shall be made available for inspection or electronic viewing as required by the Act.

The Voters' List, ballot boxes, ballots, and other records subject to statutory restrictions shall not be made publicly available except as authorized by the Act.

Section 19 — Emergencies and Disruptions

19.1. Declaration of Emergency

Where the Clerk is of the opinion that circumstances have arisen that are likely to prevent the election from being conducted in accordance with the Act, the Clerk may declare an emergency under section 53 of the Act. On declaring an emergency, the Clerk shall make such arrangements as they consider advisable for the conduct of the election. An emergency arrangement, if consistent with the Principles of the Act, prevails over the Act.

19.2. Examples of Disruption

Without limiting the Clerk's authority, an emergency or disruption procedure may address:

- a) failure or loss of a Voting Location;
- b) fire, flood, severe weather, or other unsafe condition;
- c) power, communications, or network failure;
- d) failure or suspected compromise of Vote-Tabulation Equipment or election systems;
- e) loss, damage, or compromise of ballots or election materials;
- f) public-health or security restrictions; or,
- g) another circumstance that materially interferes with voting or counting.

Section 20 — Secrecy

20.1. Oath or Declaration

The Clerk shall require Deputy Returning Officers and such other persons as the Clerk considers necessary to swear, affirm, or sign an oath or declaration of secrecy in the form established by the Clerk.

20.2. General Duty of Secrecy

Every Deputy Returning Officer, Candidate, Scrutineer, Friend of an Elector, and other person participating in or attending voting or counting shall maintain and aid in maintaining the secrecy of voting.

No person shall disclose or attempt to obtain information concerning how an Elector intends to vote or has voted except to the minimum extent necessarily involved in authorized assistance.

20.3. Prohibited Conduct

No person shall:

- a) interfere or attempt to interfere with an Elector who is marking a ballot;
- b) attempt to determine, record, or communicate how an Elector intends to vote or has voted;
- c) induce or require an Elector to display a marked ballot;
- d) make or retain a photograph, video, copy, or other reproduction of a marked ballot for the purpose of identifying or communicating an Elector's vote;
- e) disclose information obtained while assisting an Elector concerning the Elector's vote; or,
- f) disclose information concerning an individual Elector's vote obtained in performing election duties.

20.4. Electronic Communication Devices

No person shall use electronic communication and photographic devices at the Voting Location or Vote Counting Centre for the purposes of taking photographs or videos. Accredited Media must obtain the Clerk's authorization before any Advance Vote and Voting Day to film or photograph at a Voting Location. If authorization is granted, media may film or photograph from the doorway of the Voting Location but only with the permission of the occupants of the Voting Location.

20.5. Examination of Marked Ballot

A Deputy Returning Officer shall not permit a person to examine a marked ballot except where examination is necessary for an authorized election function, including assistance requested by the Elector, tabulation, manual determination, counting, or recount.

20.6. Assistance

A person assisting an Elector shall maintain secrecy and shall act only on the Elector's instructions. Any oath or declaration required in connection with assistance shall be completed in the form established by the Clerk.

20.7. Candidates and Scrutineers

A Scrutineer shall not position themselves or use any device in a manner that permits observation of an Elector's marked ballot or otherwise reveals how an Elector voted.

The right to observe election proceedings shall not be exercised in a manner that compromises secrecy.

20.8. Ballot Handling and Counting

Secrecy shall be maintained during receipt, handling, transfer, storage, counting, and tabulation of ballots.

Access to marked ballots and election materials containing voting information shall be restricted to persons authorized by the Act or by the Clerk for an election purpose.

20.9. Vote Counting Centre

Within the Vote Counting Centre, no person shall attempt to identify the vote of an individual Elector from ballots, equipment, result records, or the order in which ballots are processed.

20.10. Continuing Obligation

An obligation of secrecy arising under the Act or this Manual continues after a person ceases to act as a Deputy Returning Officer, Candidate, Scrutineer, Friend of the Elector, or other participant.

Section 21 — Miscellaneous

21.1. Effective Date

This Manual takes effect on the date specified by the Clerk.

If no effective date is specified it takes effect when published on the Election Website.

21.2. Severability and Statutory Conflict

Where a provision of this Manual is found to conflict with the Act, the provision shall be read down and interpreted so as to comply with the Act to the greatest extent possible. If any provision is found to be invalid, unenforceable, or otherwise of no force or effect, the remaining provisions of this Manual shall remain in force and shall continue to apply. Provided further that this section does not limit the authority of the Clerk to make determinations which prevail over the Act.

21.3. Official Election Time

The official time for election administration shall be the time maintained by the Clerk through the City's designated election time source. Voting Locations and election systems shall, to the extent practicable, be synchronized to that time.

21.4. Electronic Records and Signatures

Where the Act does not require an original paper record or a particular manner of signature, the Clerk may establish an electronic record, electronic signature, or secure electronic process for election administration.

21.5. Recount

Any recount shall be conducted in accordance with the Act and the procedures established by the Clerk. Election records, ballots, and other materials required for a recount shall be secured and preserved for that purpose.

Section 22 — Forms and Administrative Instruments

22.1. Forms

The Clerk may establish forms required to administer this Manual. Where the Act prescribes a provincial form, the prescribed form shall be used.

22.2. Staff and Vendor Instructions

The Clerk may issue staff manuals, checklists, equipment instructions and vendor protocols dealing with implementation details, including equipment operation, physical ballot handling, packaging, transport logistics, workstation configuration, and other operational matters.

Such instructions shall be consistent with the Act and this Manual.

Section 23 — Definitions

23.1. 2026 Municipal Election

“2026 Municipal Election” means the 2026 election for which the Clerk is responsible pursuant to s.11 of the Act.

23.2. Accredited Media

“Accredited Media” means a bona fide news organization engaged in the regular publication of original news content and recognized by an independent media accreditation, accountability, or professional organization, such as the National NewsMedia Council, News Media Canada, a parliamentary or legislative press gallery, or a similar body, or that otherwise demonstrates adherence to recognized journalistic standards, editorial oversight, and a publicly accountable corrections process.

23.3. Act

“Act” means the *Municipal Elections Act*, 1996 (Ontario), as amended and its regulations.

23.4. Advance Vote

“Advance Vote” means a vote conducted pursuant to section 43 of the Act.

23.5. Assistive Ballot Technologies

“Assistive Ballot Technologies” means equipment, software or other technology approved by the Clerk to assist an Elector facing barriers to mark or cast a ballot secretly and independently.

23.6. Candidate

“Candidate” means a candidate whose nomination has been certified under section 35 of the Act.

23.7. City of Orillia

“City of Orillia” means, as context requires, either the Corporation of the City of Orillia and the municipal boundaries for which it has authority.

23.8. Clerk

“Clerk” means the Clerk of the City of Orillia as appointed pursuant to s.228 of the *Municipal Act*, 2001 (Ontario), as amended, and includes a person lawfully exercising a function delegated or assigned by the Clerk, to the extent of that function.

23.9. Clerk’s Office

“Clerk’s Office” means the place designated by the Clerk for election filings and administration and includes another location expressly designated by the Clerk for a particular statutory purpose.

23.10. Deputy Returning Officer

“Deputy Returning Officer” means a person delegated by the Clerk pursuant to section 15 of the Act.

23.11. Election Website

“Election Website” means the election information website designated by the Clerk and hosted on or through the City of Orillia’s official website.

23.12. Elector

“Elector” means a person qualified to be an elector in the City of Orillia pursuant to section 17 of the Act.

23.13. Friend of the Elector

“Friend of the Elector” means a person appointed by an Elector requiring assistance to attend means an individual chosen by an elector to provide assistance in the voting process, including communication, interpretation, mobility, accessibility, or other support required to enable the elector to mark and cast their ballot.

23.14. Manual

“Manual” this document, as amended.

23.15. Mobile Voting Location

“Mobile Voting Location” means a Voting Location in an institution or retirement home established in accordance with subsection 45(7) of the Act.

23.16. Nomination Day

“Nomination Day” means the date identified at section 31 of the Act.

23.17. Nominee

“Nominee” means a person who has been nominated under section 31 of the Act.

23.18. Principles of the Act

“Principles of the Act” means the core principles that animate the Act, which have been found by the courts to include:

- a) The secrecy and confidentiality of the voting process is paramount;
- b) The election shall be fair and non-biased;
- c) The election shall be accessible to the voters;
- d) The integrity of the process shall be maintained throughout the election;
- e) There is to be certainty that the results of the election reflect the votes cast and that proper majority vote governs; and, Voters and candidates shall be treated fairly and consistently.

23.19. Regular Business Hours

“Regular Business Hours” means 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM Monday through Friday, excepting for days recognized by the City of Orillia as holidays.

23.20. Retention Period

“Retention Period” means the period starting at the declaration of results under section 55 of the Act and ending on the date that is 120 days after, except where varied pursuant to section 88 of the Act.

23.21. RTR Software

“RTR Software” means the centralized results, tallying, and reporting system approved by the Clerk to consolidate and report election results produced by Vote-Tabulation Equipment.

23.22. Scrutineer

“Scrutineer” means a person appointed by a Candidate pursuant to section 16 of the Act and includes a Candidate.

23.23. Tabulator Memory Card

“Tabulator Memory Card” means the results memory device or other electronic results medium used for the transfer of results from Vote-Tabulation Equipment to the RTR Software.

23.24. Third-Party Advertiser

“Third-Party Advertiser” has the same meaning as “registered third party” under the Act and includes, where context requires, an individual, corporation or trade union registering for this purpose.

23.25. Vote Counting Centre

“Vote Counting Centre” means the location designated by the Clerk for centralized receipt, tabulation, consolidation, verification and reporting of election results.

23.26. Vote-Tabulation Equipment

“Vote-Tabulation Equipment” means optical-scan voting equipment used to read paper ballots and electronically tabulate election results.

23.27. Voters’ List

“Voters’ List” means the list at section 23 of the Act, including, where context requires, the preliminary list at section 22 of the Act, as amended.

23.28. Voting Day

“Voting Day” has the meaning as defined in subsection 1(1) of the Act, meaning the day on which the final vote is to be taken in an election.

23.29. Voting Location

“Voting Location” means the locations for voting established under section 45 of the Act.