

---

**TO:** CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER      **DATE:** 2022 Nov 14

**FROM:** GENERAL MANAGER CORPORATE SERVICES      **FILE:** 45000

**SUBJECT: LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTION LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENT - NOMINATION PERIOD**

**PURPOSE:** To seek Council authority to request the Provincial Government to amend the *Local Government Act* to implement an earlier commencement date for nominations and a longer nomination period for local government elections.

---

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

1. **THAT** Council, through the UBCM, request the Provincial Government to amend the *Local Government Act* to begin the nomination period for local government elections at least three weeks earlier than currently legislated and allow for a three week nomination period, as set out in this report.

#### **REPORT**

##### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The local government election nomination period has for decades occurred between the forty-sixth day and thirty-sixth days before general voting day, followed by a seven (7) day period for candidate withdrawals or challenges. As a result, when the first advance voting day is taken into account, there are only 10 working days between finalization of candidates and printing of the ballot. In 2022, the final day was September 16 and voting started on October 01.

Within this time frame ballots must be proofed, revised and proofed again before being finally printed. The vast majority of local governments across the province use the same printer as they have been certified to create ballots suitable for electronic vote tabulators. If any errors occur there must also be time for reprinting ballots.

Further, all printed and electronic documentation containing candidate information must be finalized, printed and mailed out within the same time frame so that voters have the information prior to voting.

To: CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER  
From: GENERAL MANAGER CORPORATE SERVICES  
Re: Local Government Election Legislative Amendment – Nomination Period  
2022 Dec 12.....Page 2

Finally, processing all nominations within a compressed period of nine (9) days can be challenging depending upon the number of candidates choosing to run for office. A further complication is the potential for an ongoing second September statutory holiday (National Day for Truth and Reconciliation) which reduces processing time down to eight (8) days. By providing an additional week to file nomination papers those local governments with large numbers of candidates would be better able to process them in a reasonable time frame.

## 2.0 DISCUSSION

Election processes have become increasingly more complex over time. They are now technology driven from the dissemination of information to the type of ballots printed, the creation of print documentation, recruitment, election worker management and candidate access to information. Despite this, there has been no change to the legislative time frame for these processes to take place.

One of the most time sensitive, deadline driven parts of the election is the time between finalization of the candidate list, processing of nomination documentation and ballot production, voter guide production and the first day of advance voting.

Processing of candidate nomination documents has also evolved. It now includes redacting information for uploading to the City's website, review of candidate profile information to ensure it complies with City requirements, and preparation for public access to the documentation. Information is also redacted, formatted, and collated for submission to Elections BC as part of adhering to the *Local Election Campaign Financing Act*.

All vote tabulators must be programmed with candidate names and logic and accuracy testing completed to ensure all tabulators are operational and ready for the first advance voting day. This takes approximately two (2) days to complete.

If the *Local Government Act* was amended to begin the nomination period at least three (3) weeks earlier and be open for a period of three (3) weeks, for example in 2026, the nomination period would run from August 11 to 28; the challenge/withdrawal period would end on September 04 thus providing a full four (4) week window for ballot proofing and printing, voter guide proofing and printing and documentation preparation and deployment.

If the voting time frame is the same in Burnaby in 2026, advance voting would be held on October 03, 07 and 10, with general voting day on October 17.

In comparison, the nomination period for Ontario local elections is conducted over a full three and a half month period.

To: CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER  
From: GENERAL MANAGER CORPORATE SERVICES  
Re: Local Government Election Legislative Amendment – Nomination Period  
2022 Dec 12 .....Page 3

In 2022 the Ontario local government nomination period began on Sunday, May 01 with the opening of the election office on Monday, May 02. It ended on Friday, August 19, 2022 at 2 p.m. The nominations were finalized on Monday, August 22 at 4 p.m. General Voting Day in Ontario was October 24, 2022. Advance voting began on October 7, 2022. The deadline for withdrawing as a candidate was August 19 at 2 p.m.

As you can see, the time frame for nominations is much longer and the time frame for preparing for the start of voting is a full six and a half weeks.

### 3.0 RECOMMENDATION

Over time technology and processes change and evolve. While the fundamentals of election legislation have been consistent for many years, the manner in which election work is undertaken has evolved and can vary based on the size of the local government. Ballot size also varies as the number of candidates increase or decrease depending upon current issues and voter concerns.

Having a three (3) week window for filing nomination documents and then a four (4) week window for all final processing would create a more efficient, effective process in the critical areas of candidate nominations, ballot production and tabulator programming.

A longer time frame could reduce the amount of overtime it often takes to make sure statutory deadlines are met and all documentation is correct. It would certainly reduce the amount of stress caused by the tight time lines and requirement for absolute perfection in the production of the documentation and equipment programming.

As a result staff are recommending Council, through the UBCM, request the Minister of Municipal Affairs to put forward amendments to the *Local Government Act* to facilitate an earlier, longer nomination period for local government general elections.



Juli Halliwell  
General Manager Corporate Services

DC:dc

Copy: Deputy Chief Administrative Officer/CFO  
City Solicitor  
Senior Manager Legislative Services