

# Election Bylaw

November 24, 2020 Council Meeting

# Bill 29: The Local Authorities Election Amendment Act

- The amendment act came into force on September 1, 2020
- Amendments were made to:
  - Campaign Finance
  - Third-Party Advertising
  - General Clarifying & Technical
- The campaign finance and third-party advertising amendments have no impact on our bylaw and are posted on the County's election webpage
- The general clarifying & technical amendments necessitated changes to our current bylaw

# Significant Bylaw Changes

The three most significant changes to our bylaw that have resulted from Bill 29 include:

- addition of a nomination period
- requirement to appoint a substitute returning officer
- mandatory requirement to hold an advance vote

# Nomination Period

- Previously Nomination Day was four weeks prior to election day
- Adding a nomination period eliminates multiple time periods such as:
  - the notice of intent to run
  - a four-year "campaign period"
  - a single nomination day
- The nomination period now aligns with the beginning of the campaign period starting January 1 of an election year
- Candidates who file nomination papers will have the ability to accept contributions and incur expenses and will no longer have to file a notice of intent to run

# Nomination Period (continued)

- The nomination period starts on January 1, 2021 and ends at 12 noon on September 20, 2021
- Section 13 of the proposed bylaw sets out the location and times that nomination papers may be filed

# Substitute Returning Officer

- Previously the Act allowed the chief elected official to appoint a substitute returning officer in the event the returning officer was unable to fulfill their duties
- The Act now requires that a substitute returning officer be appointed by the municipal council at the time the returning officer is appointed
- Section 6 of the proposed bylaw appoints the returning officer
- Section 7 of the proposed bylaw appoints the substitute returning officer

# Mandatory Advance Vote

- Previously the holding of an advance vote was discretionary
- If a municipality wanted to hold an advance vote, they were required to pass a bylaw
- Section 7.1 of Bylaw 28-2013 (current bylaw) met the requirement
- The Act now requires any municipality with a population greater than 5000 to provide an advance vote
- The proposed bylaw no longer requires authorization of an advance vote

# Additional Bylaw Changes

- The proposed bylaw has been drafted using plain language to ensure that the reader understands as quickly, easily, and completely as possible
- The proposed bylaw has removed all sections relating to at-home voting, as the County has been using special ballots instead of at-home voting for the past 10 years
- The proposed bylaw has removed sections that were taken directly from the act relating to administration of special ballots
  - Administration of special ballots will align with the requirements in the act and there is no need to include those sections in the proposed bylaw



# Blind Elector Template

- The Act requires that, if requested by June 30 of an election year, a blind elector template must be provided. A municipality may provide for a blind elector template without a request, if allowed by bylaw
- The County has never received a request by June 30
- We have received inquiries regarding a blind elector voting process
- To enhance accessibility, section 21 of the proposed bylaw provides for an audio ballot and specifies when availability of the template will be advertised
- The blind elector template will be used in conjunction with the current automated voting system during the advance vote

# Removed from Current Bylaw

- The following sections from the current bylaw have been removed from the proposed bylaw, namely:
  - Part VII section 7.1 holding of an advance vote
  - Part VII sections 7.9 – 7.13 at-home voting
  - Part VIII: sections 8.4 – 8.17 special ballots
- NOTE: Part VII sections 43 – 47 of the proposed bylaw address specific areas that are unique to Strathcona County in administering special ballots and therefore need to remain a part of the proposed bylaw.

# Questions

