

Staff Report

Report To: Corporate Services Committee
Report From: Kristen Van Alphen, Manager of Legislative Services
Meeting Date: November 14, 2024
Report Code: CR-24-115
Subject: AMCTO resolution respecting an update to the Municipal Elections Act

Recommendations:

THAT in consideration of Staff Report CR-24-115 respecting AMCTO's resolution respecting an update to the *Municipal Elections Act*, the Corporate Services Committee recommends that City Council endorse the draft resolution in the form attached to the report.

Highlights:

- The next municipal election is on October 26, 2026.
- The Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario is advocating for an update to the *Municipal Elections Act* before the 2026 municipal and school board elections.
- Clerk's staff, who run municipal elections, are very supportive of AMCTO's request for support.

Strategic Plan Alignment:

This report supports the delivery of Core Service.

Climate and Environmental Implications:

There are no anticipated climate or environmental impacts.

Previous Report/Authority:

N/A

Background:

The next municipal election will be on October 26, 2026.

The *Municipal Elections Act* (the "MEA") governs municipal elections in Ontario. The clerk is responsible for running municipal and school board elections.

The Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario ("AMCTO") provides education, accreditation, leadership and management expertise for Ontario municipal professionals. Part of AMCTO's mandate is advocacy.

The MEA will be thirty years old by 2026. Earlier this year, AMCTO submitted its recommendations for updating the MEA ahead of the 2026 municipal and school board elections. AMCTO would like to see updates made by Spring 2025 at the latest, to provide clerks with enough time to learn and understand the changes and then translate those changes into policies, procedures, candidate guides, information for the public, etc.

Analysis:

As part of its advocacy regarding the MEA, AMCTO hopes that more voices will attract the provincial government's attention and drive them to action. To that end, AMCTO is seeking resolutions from municipalities supporting its call for an MEA update.

A number of municipalities around the province have already supported the draft resolution provided by AMCTO.

Attached to this report is the draft resolution. It has been modified slightly from the original provided by AMCTO; staff have removed the direction to forward our resolution to all municipalities in Ontario as that is not the City's practice. Otherwise, it is verbatim what has been provided by AMCTO.

The Clerk's staff are very supportive of this call to action. The MEA was written for a very different world and has not kept pace with social and technological changes - an update of the legislation is sorely needed. We believe it is important that voters, candidates, and third-party advertisers

can more easily participate in the local democratic process while election administrators have the proper tools and resources that we need to efficiently run our local elections.

Attached to this report is the AMCTO Issue at a Glance publication respecting the MEA update. This four-pager succinctly outlines the major recommendations. Also attached is the full AMCTO submission that discusses all of the recommendations in detail.

Financial Implications:

There are no financial implications related to supporting this resolution.

Communication Strategy:

If approved, the resolution will be sent to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Minister of Education, the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery, the Minister of Finance, the Premier of Ontario and AMCTO.

Consultation:

City Clerk

Attachments:

1. AMCTO Resolution – Updating the Municipal Elections Act
2. AMCTO Issue at a Glance
3. AMCTO Submission - Modernizing the *Municipal Elections Act* for the 21st Century

Recommended by:

Kristen Van Alphen, Manager of Legislative Services

Briana Bloomfield, City Clerk

Kate Allan, Director of Corporate Services

Submission approved by:

Tim Simmonds, City Manager

For more information on this report, please contact Kristen Van Alphen at kvanalphen@owensound.ca or 519-376-4440 ext. 1228.