

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 19, 2013

Item 2, Report No. 8, of the Committee of the Whole (Working Session), which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on February 19, 2013.

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**POTENTIAL PROGRAMS AND TECHNOLOGIES
FOR THE 2014 MUNICIPAL AND SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS**

The Committee of the Whole (Working Session) recommends:

- 1) That Clauses 1, 2, 3 and 5 contained in the following report of the City Clerk, dated February 12, 2013, be approved;**
- 2) That In light of the fact that elections are a critical and central part of our democratic process;and**

Recognizing the importance of civics education as part of our educational system; and

Recognizing that engagement in the election process is an important component of our democratic system;

It is recommended that the Province of Ontario be requested to declare municipal voting day 2014 as a professional development day for all schools in the province, and that that day be focused on getting involved in our democratic process; and

Failing action by the Province, that the two school boards as well as the various private schools in York Region be formally approached by this Council asking them to implement a civics curriculum prior to the voting day and that a professional development day be scheduled on that day to allow involvement in the election process by all participants in our school system;

- 3) That the Contribution Rebate Program be continued in 2014 based on the principles set out in Section 5.5 , Attachment 1 of the City Clerk's report, dated February 12, 2013, as follows:**
 - 1. Participation is optional for all candidates;**
 - 2. Participating candidates are required to file audited financial statements;**
 - 3. Candidates, spouses and family members are ineligible to claim rebates for contributions to the family member candidate;**
 - 4. Rebates apply only to eligible electors residing in the City of Vaughan;**
 - 5. Corporations, trade unions and non-resident electors are ineligible;**
 - 6. Minimum contribution of \$50; and**
 - 7. The maximum rebate be \$150 per eligible contributor, regardless of the number of contributions made; and**
- 4) That staff consider and report back, before the Summer recess, on the possibility of improving advance polls, considering a 2-day advance poll (within the period of Friday, Saturday and Sunday) before election Monday, utilizing Community Centres and Malls.**

Recommendation

The City Clerk recommends:

- 1) That the report attached as Attachment '1', *Potential Programs And Technologies For The 2014 Municipal and School Board Elections (A Review Of Internet Voting, Vote Centres And Campaign Contribution Rebates)*, be received;**

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- 2) That the presentation by the City Clerk be received;
- 3) That internet voting not be introduced for the 2014 general municipal and school board elections;
- 4) That direction be provided regarding the continuation of the Contribution Rebate Program in 2014; and
- 5) That the City Clerk be authorized to license the 'This is Your Space' election media campaign to other election jurisdictions on terms which include the following:
 - a. \$5000 licensing fee;
 - b. \$100 annual administration fee, up to five years;
 - c. A requirement that the City of Vaughan be given public credit;
 - d. Restrictions against use of the campaign in such a way as to diminish the brand, or bring it into disrepute; and
 - e. Restrictions against sub-licensing without specific authorization.

Contribution to Sustainability

The administration of fair elections in an impartial manner is a fundamental statutory responsibility of Municipal Clerks in Ontario. The highest priority for Municipal Clerks is to carry out their duties in accordance with the provisions of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* ("the Act") and an established set of election principles as described in the attached report. It is also the responsibility of election administrators to manage expenditures and other resources in a manner which contributes to the financial and operational sustainability of the municipality.

Economic Impact

Based on research and information provided by municipalities already engaged in Internet Voting, were the City to employ internet voting for the advance voting, taking into consideration the hard and soft costs, the additional impact to the election budget for 2014 would amount to approximately \$400,000.00 in hard and soft costs.

Implementation of innovative models of election delivery such as the Vote Centre model being explored may reduce the extent of future increases in contributions to the election reserve account.

The Contribution Rebate Program distributed \$61,717.50 in rebates to eligible contributors for the 2010 elections. The program's economic impact will vary depending upon whether Council directs staff to discontinue or modify the program in 2014.

Licensing the City's 'This is Your Space' media campaign concept to other municipalities will result in \$5000 in revenue plus \$100 for each year of the license, per licensee.

Communications Plan

In addition to appearing on the public agenda for Committee of the Whole (Working Session), this report will be posted on the vaughanvotes.ca web site. A detailed communications plan will be required to inform citizens of the City of Vaughan prior to the 2014 elections, particularly in regard to the location of voting facilities, the availability of early voting, and the provision of other services and accommodations.

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Purpose

This report is provided in response to requests for information by City Council on the subjects of internet voting and the 2010 Contribution Rebate Program. It also introduces the concept of Vote Centres as a new potential option for the delivery of electoral services for the 2018 municipal and school board elections. In addition, the report seeks Council's authority to license the City's election media campaign to other election jurisdictions.

Background - Analysis and Options

On May 17, 2011 the City Clerk presented a report to Committee of the Whole (Working Session) titled *Learning from the Election: Preparations for the 2014 Municipal and School Board Elections*, describing outcomes and lessons learned from the 2010 municipal and school board elections [Item 2, Report No. 29 of Committee of the Whole (Working Session), adopted in Council on May 24, 2011]. The purpose of the report was to advise Council of the successes and challenges experienced during the election cycle and to propose several areas for improvement to pursue for the 2014 elections. In furtherance of the report the City Clerk was requested to report on:

- a. The potential for the use of internet voting in 2014;
- b. The results of the contribution rebate program;
- c. A proposed budget for the 2014 elections;
- d. Recommendations for election-related decisions to be made by Council, such as advance vote dates and times, the use of languages other than English and French, and voting hours in retirement/nursing homes; and
- e. Procedural modifications to be employed for the 2014 elections.

The attached report, *Potential Programs and Technologies For The 2014 Municipal And School Board Elections (A Review Of Internet Voting, Vote Centres And Campaign Contribution Rebates)* provides an assessment of internet voting technologies and the 2010 Contribution Rebate Program. The report also presents research conducted on the development of a Vote Centre model for the City of Vaughan. This model addresses some of the challenges identified during the 2010 elections through structural changes to the traditional subdivision model and the use of modern information technology to enable superior service and enhanced integrity at a potentially lower cost.

Election Media Campaign Licensing

The City has been approached by an Alberta municipality seeking to use the 'This is Your Space' election branding campaign developed for the 2010 elections in Vaughan. The campaign centres on the concept of voters marking the appropriate space on a ballot – and from that small act shaping the course of their municipality.

Licensing the campaign will have several benefits. In addition to a small financial return, the City will be able to make use of any innovations made to the concept for use in future Vaughan elections. In addition, the City will receive public credit for the concept, particularly if a resulting media campaign receives an award. Restrictions would be put in place to ensure that the brand concept is not diminished or brought into disrepute, sub-licensed without specific authority, or used in a way which might conflict with the City's own election media campaigns.

Future Reports

Recommendations on a proposed budget for the 2014 elections and on date/times/hours and other issues within Council's purview will follow at a later date, closer to the elections. This report and its attachment will facilitate discussion on the use of internet voting and on continuation or modification to the contribution rebate program. It will also inform Council on the potential future implementation of a new model for polling place distribution and election management.

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Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan

This report is consistent with the City's Vision, Mission and Values, and the Strategic Goals and Objectives set out by Council in the *Vaughan Vision 2020* Strategic Plan, specifically:

Service Excellence: Pursuing Excellence in Service Delivery

Management Excellence: Enhance Productivity, Cost Effectiveness & Innovation, and Ensure Financial Sustainability

Regional Implications

N/A

Conclusion

This report provides an update on three potential opportunities for the 2014 municipal and school board elections. Based on the findings of the research presented, internet voting is not being recommended at this time. Nor is implementation of a Vote Centre model and poll distribution. Both approaches will continue to be evaluated for contemplation in future elections. Direction is requested from Council regarding whether to continue the Contribution Rebate Program for the 2014 elections.

Attachments

1. Report titled: Potential Programs And Technologies For The 2014 Municipal and School Board Elections (A Review Of Internet Voting, Vote Centres And Campaign Contribution Rebates)

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(A copy of the attachments referred to in the foregoing have been forwarded to each Member of Council and a copy thereof is also on file in the office of the City Clerk.)