

Subject: Bylaw No. 20/021 - Election Bylaw**APPROVALS:****Jamie Doyle**_____
Director_____
Chief Administrative Officer**Recommended Motion:**

THAT Bylaw No. 20/021, being the Election Bylaw be read a first time.

Summary:

All local jurisdiction elections, including municipal and school board elections, must be conducted in accordance with the *Local Authorities Election Act* ("Act"), which includes giving Council the authority to establish provisions relating to nominations, voting subdivisions, voting stations, special ballots, and the means for taking votes using an automated voting system with vote tabulators.

Background:

The scope of recent amendments to the Act required a complete rewrite of the Election Bylaw to ensure compliance with the legislation governing municipal elections in Alberta. The proposed bylaw updates the rules and procedures to follow in conducting any local jurisdiction election with regards to nominations, voting subdivisions and stations, automated voting, and institutional voting. The amendments included changes to the institutional and at home votes to be more inclusive. For example, institutional voting is now based on level of care, not age.

The proposed bylaw also provides for the use of special ballots. An elector who is unable to vote at an advance vote or on election day may apply for a special ballot, which allows the elector to vote by marking the appropriate forms, providing copies of authorized identification, and submitting to the Returning Officer during the specified time period. Eligible electors who would not be able to cast a ballot at a traditional voting station, would be able to apply for a special ballot as early as August in the year of a general election.

Voter identification requirements under the Act have been updated so that in addition to accepting identification authorized by the Chief Electoral Officer under the *Election Act*, the relevant Minister may establish other forms of acceptable identification. The updates to the Act also allow an eligible elector who has produced the authorized identification to

vouch for another elector to validate that person's identity and address. As a result of these amendments, this Bylaw does not propose to change the standard for identification set by provincial legislation establishing forms of authorized identification. This change from the previous Election Bylaw requires a 60-day advertisement period between first and second readings; therefore, the proposed Election Bylaw will come before Council for second reading at the November 24, 2020 meeting to allow for the legislated timelines and for residents to have ample opportunity to review the proposed Bylaw.

The Act has been updated to authorize the Returning Officer to designate more than one voting station for each voting subdivision, which has been included in the updated Bylaw, requiring the Modified Voting Bylaw to be repealed. The Municipality will continue offering rural electors with opportunities to vote outside their ward including having all ballot styles at a designated voting station in Fort McMurray.

Rationale for Recommendation:

Encouraging eligible electors to participate in the democratic process by exercising their right to vote is an inherent goal of every level of government. The provisions of this Bylaw will ensure the Municipality continues to avail of every opportunity to increase voting access for electors throughout the region.

Strategic Priorities:

Responsible Government

Attachments:

Bylaw No. 20.021 Election Bylaw