

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE JUNE 2, 2003

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS ACT

RECOMMENDATION

The City Clerk recommends that this report be received for information and that Council provide direction respecting the possible cancellation of the Committee of the Whole meeting scheduled for October 7th and the Council meeting scheduled for October 14th, 2003.

Purpose

To apprise Members of Council and prospective candidates for municipal office of substantive changes to municipal elections procedures.

Background - Analysis and Options

Bill 177 and Ontario Regulation 383/02 made changes to municipal election procedures and significant dates that will be in place for the upcoming Monday, November 10th municipal election. This report addresses the most significant changes.

Nomination Day – September 26, 2003

Nomination day has been moved ahead from October 10th to September 26, 2003. Primarily this is to accommodate municipalities that use a vote-by-mail system and to provide additional time to prepare ballots, which has been a problem for some large municipalities. This change was made after Council adopted the 2003 council meeting schedule. Vaughan has a long-standing practice of not having Council or Committee of the Whole meetings after nomination day. Council may wish to cancel the scheduled meetings. The City of Toronto has cancelled such meetings that had been previously scheduled. Brampton, Richmond Hill and Markham on the other hand have scheduled meetings after September 16th and to date have no plans to cancel them.

Direction is requested as to whether Council wishes to cancel the Council meeting of October 14th and the Committee of the Whole meeting of October 7th, 2003.

Campaign Finances

The amount of money per elector that a candidate can spend on a campaign has been increased from 50 cents to 70 cents per elector. In addition the base has been adjusted from \$5,000. to \$7,500. for heads of council and from \$3,500. to \$5,000. for others. This reflects the increase in the Consumer Price Index since 1988 when the current limit was established. Further, the filing fee for a head of council only has been increased to \$200., others remain at \$100.

A candidate must retain all election financial records for the full three-year term of council. Although it has been recommended in the past that this be done, historically there has been no statute requirement.

Campaigning at Polls

The Act has been clarified respecting the prohibition against campaigning at polls. The prohibited area includes any area designated by the Clerk. In the case of Vaughan, this includes the property where the polling place is located, not just the room in which the actual voting occurs.

Financial Statement Filing

If a candidate fails to file the financial statement by the filing date, March 31, 2004, he/she has an additional 90 days to file. During this time, any candidate who was elected is suspended from office without pay. If the candidate does not file within the 90 days, the candidate would be removed from office. Within the 90 days, a candidate may apply to the Court for an extension of time to file the financial statements.

Key Dates

Set out below are key election dates.

January 2, 2003 to September 26, 2003	Nomination Period
January 2, 2003 to December 31, 2003	Campaign Period
September 2, 2003	Voters' List Posted
September 2, 2003 to November 10, 2003	Voters' List Revision Period
September 26, 2003 9:00 am to 5:00 p.m.	Nomination Day
September 29, 2003	Certification of Nomination Papers
September 29, 2003	Withdrawal of Nominations
September 29, 2003	Acclamation
September 29, 2003	Election Signs
September 30, 2003 to November 10, 2003	Proxy Vote Certificates
October 6, 2003	Campaign Expense Limit Distributed
October 6, 2003	Interim Changes to Voters' List Distributed
November 1, 2003 November 2, 2003 November 5, 2003	Advance Voting
November 10, 2003	Election Day (Voting Day)
December 1, 2003	Term of Office Commences
December 31, 2003	End of Campaign Period
March 31, 2004	Deadline for Filing of Financial Statements

Conclusion

Council direction is required respecting the possible cancellation of the Committee of the Whole meeting scheduled for October 7th and the Council meeting scheduled for October 14th, 2003.

Attachments

None

Report prepared by:

John D. Leach

Respectfully submitted,

John D. Leach, City Clerk