



# Municipality of the County of Kings

## Request for Decision

**TO** Municipal Council

**PREPARED BY** Vicki Brooke, MPA, Policy Analyst

**MEETING DATE** September 3, 2019

**SUBJECT** Voting Method for 2020 Municipal Election

### ORIGIN

- June 18, 2018 Committee of the Whole RFD: 2020 Municipal Election Options.
- Report: *2016 Municipal Election Summary and Recommendations*.
- Necessity to hire Returning Officer to conduct election.

### RECOMMENDATION

That Municipal Council resolve to conduct the 2020 election by paper ballot.

### INTENT

For Council to determine a voting method for the 2020 election through consideration of factors that influence voter turnout.

### DISCUSSION

The next municipal election is Saturday, October 17, 2020. Prior to engaging a Returning Officer, a voting method should be determined. Paper ballots have been used for all previous elections in Kings County. A change to hybrid voting or e-voting would change the duties of the Returning Officer.

#### Voting Methods for Consideration

Three voting methods merit consideration: paper balloting, electronic voting, and a hybrid of both methods.

**Paper ballot voting** entails paper ballots provided at physical voting stations.

**Electronic voting** (e-voting) may include voting methods such as voting online, via telephone, or at e-voting stations (e.g., computers at a physical polling station). Remote and telephone e-voting allow individuals to vote from anywhere, provided they have voter credentials (typically through an assigned PIN), and access to internet or a phone.

**Hybrid voting** combines a mix of both e-voting and paper balloting. In cases of hybrid voting, it could be that voters e-vote in advance of election day and cast a paper ballot on the election day (e-voting can extend the two mandatory advance poll dates and electors can vote on any day between the two advance polling days), or that e-voting and paper ballots are both available on election day.

#### Historical Voter Turnout

Voter turnout in Kings County is lower in comparison to other municipal units, particularly in local elections, and to a lesser extent in provincial elections.

Election	Voter Turnout (Provincial Average)	Voter Turnout (Kings)	Variance
2008 Municipal	42.1%	26.0%	-16.1%
2012 Municipal	42.7%	33.1%	-13.2%
2016 Municipal	38.2%	29.5%	-5.1%
2017 Provincial	53.3%	52.2%*	-1.1%

\* 2017 Provincial Election turnout for Kings County determined by averaging turnout of Kings North, Kings South, and Kings West electoral districts

Compared to similar municipal units, MOK does have lower voter turnout, irrespective of voting method.



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Municipal Unit	2008	2012	2016	Average Turnout Over Three Elections
Municipality of the County of Kings	26.0%	33.1%	29.5%	29.6%
Municipality of the County of Colchester	34.0%	34.5%	20.3%	29.6%
Municipality of the County of Cumberland	49.8%	47.0%	45.9%	47.5%
Municipality of the District of East Hants	45.5%	33.6%	24.7%	34.6%
Municipality of the District of Lunenburg	52.8%	41.7%	40.8%	45.1%

Each municipality in the above table used paper balloting, save the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg which used e-voting and paper balloting in the advance polls and paper ballots on Election Day in 2016.

### Impact of Voting Methods on Turnout

Council requested additional information on the impact of voting method on turnout at the June 18, 2019 Committee of the Whole meeting.

There is not clear or compelling evidence that hybrid or e-voting positively impacts voter turnout. While e-voting has been used by a number of municipal units for some years, those jurisdictions have not seen a sustained increased voter turnout; indeed, most have seen voter turnout decrease. Analysis of intelivote<sup>1</sup> statistics from 2016 (Appendix D) and municipal elections data from 2008-2016 (Appendices B and C) shows there are no conclusive trends in voter turnout. Some observations reveal:

- Municipalities exclusively using e-voting in 2012 and 2016 saw a decrease in voter turnout.
- Municipalities that used hybrid voting in 2012 typically had a higher percent of electors voting electronically in 2016. However, overall voter turnout also decreased.
- Average voter turnout in 2012, with 14 out of 23 municipalities in the sample having some form of e-voting, was 52.1%. Average voter turnout in 2016, with 23 out of 23 municipalities in the sample having some form of e-voting, was 47.9%.

Contrasted with like-municipalities using hybrid or e-voting, MOK had a lower than average turnout, and most of the comparator municipalities also saw decreased turnout despite using e-voting. What can be drawn from this is that hybrid or e-voting does not correlate with greater turnout, nor does it cause it.

Municipal Unit	2008	2012	2016
Municipality of the County of Kings	26.0%	33.1%	29.5%
Cape Breton Regional Municipality	50.4%	55.9%*	52.9%*
Halifax Regional Municipality	36.2%*	46.7%*	31.8%*
Municipality of the District of Argyle	72.7%	79.7%*	72.2%*
Municipality of the District of Chester	45.6%	60.1%*	54.2%*
Municipality of the District of Clare	65.4%	66.3%*	64.7%*
Municipality of the District of Digby	44.8%	47.2%*	37.8%*
Municipality of the District of Lunenburg	52.8%	41.7%	40.8%*
Municipality of the County of Pictou	58.8%	43.3%	49.3%*
Average of like-municipalities using hybrid or e-voting*		59.3%	50.5%

\*Asterisks denote municipalities where staff confirmed hybrid or e-voting was used in the election.

### Other Considerations Impacting Voter Behaviour

Voter participation is studied following each federal and provincial election. Statistics Canada points to

<sup>1</sup> intelivote provided e-voting services for 23 Nova Scotia municipalities in the 2016 election.



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education, age, and income positively affecting voter participation.<sup>2</sup> Research also demonstrates that while a range of social, economic, and physical factors affect participation, there is no universal theory of voter behaviour that can be employed to ensure greater participation.<sup>3</sup>

The 2016 Municipal Returning Officer submitted a report to Council following the election (Appendix E). The report suggests low voter turnout in the election was likely associated with lack of knowledge, or difficulty in accessing information on the municipal election. This has been further studied by the Columbia Institute, which points to seven reasons for low voter turnout in local elections:

- Amount of knowledge required to understand municipal elections;
- Increased alienation and disconnection (absence of strong voting networks);
- Absence of sense of duty or voting habits;
- Low internal political efficacy (believing their vote will not make a difference);
- Low external political efficacy (believing result of election will not reflect their choices);
- Sparse media coverage of municipal elections; and,
- Absence of structural incentives for candidates to expend resources on those less likely to vote.<sup>4</sup>

Wolfville Town Council has recently decided to conduct the 2020 election exclusively through e-voting. It is anticipated that the Towns of Berwick and Kentville will also be conducting the election through e-voting or hybrid voting. Despite all selecting e-voting in some form, there will not be uniformity in the method of e-voting used by the Towns.

### Conclusions

Given the number of factors that influence voter behaviour, it is problematic to claim that e-voting will always have a positive impact on turnout or that it is a leading cause of higher or lower voting rates. As demonstrated by municipal units that have introduced e-voting, there is no sustained or incidental increase in voter turnout. When voter turnout is studied, failure to vote is generally caused by sociological and psychological factors, rather than the method of casting a ballot.

Given this, staff recommend Council endorse a paper ballot election and dedicate resources to voter engagement and education. As studied by the City of Vancouver, whose Election Task Force is working to increase voter turnout to at least 60% by 2025, voter engagement and voter turnout may be increased by providing positive voting cues, targeting voter registration, and employing best practices from other jurisdictions.<sup>5</sup> In the 2018 City of Vancouver election, voter engagement efforts were put in place, election education campaigns were created, and anonymized voting data was made available after the election to aid in understanding and research into municipal voting.<sup>6</sup>

In his study of successful local elections, Gludovatz proposes measures to increase voter turnout:<sup>7</sup>

- Creating lifelong habits and a sense of duty to vote through early voter registration;
- Asking voters to wear stickers to provide a visual clue that it's voting day;
- Provide new reasons for citizens to focus on and vote in elections (incentives);
- Increase the ease of voting (consider secure electronic voting and more advance voting days);
- Increase the number of positive cues for voters to pay attention to the election; and
- Conduct research to identify which groups are voting less, and discover how to best eliminate barriers and motivate those citizens.

<sup>2</sup> Uppal, S., LaRochelle-Cote, S., *Factors associated with voting (component of catalogue no. 75-001-X)*. Statistics Canada (2012). [www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/75-001-x/2012001/article/11629-eng.pdf?st=7iGy-fop](http://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/75-001-x/2012001/article/11629-eng.pdf?st=7iGy-fop)

<sup>3</sup> Hendren, P. *Getting Out The Vote: Outreach Strategies to Increase Engagement and Participation In the 2018 City of Vancouver Election*. University of Victoria (2018). [https://www.uvic.ca/research/assets/docs/rpkm/Hendren\\_Paul\\_MPA\\_2018.pdf](https://www.uvic.ca/research/assets/docs/rpkm/Hendren_Paul_MPA_2018.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Gludovatz, N. *Getting the Majority to Vote: Practical solutions to re-engage citizens in local elections*. Columbia Institute (2014). <https://www.civicgovernance.ca/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Get-Engaged-for-web.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> City of Vancouver. *Independent Election Task Force: Final Report*. (2017). [council.vancouver.ca/20170124/documents/rr3AppendixA.pdf](http://council.vancouver.ca/20170124/documents/rr3AppendixA.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> City of Vancouver. *Independent Election Task Force: A Review of Campaign Financing by Third Parties and Independent Candidates in Municipal Elections*. (2019). <https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/independent-election-task-force-report-on-campaign-financing-june-2019.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Gludovatz, N. *Getting the Majority to Vote: Practical solutions to re-engage citizens in local elections*. Columbia Institute (2014).



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### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2016 election cost: \$156,424.
- 2020 election budget preliminary estimate: \$176,600 (for a paper ballot election similar to 2016).
  - Current reserve balance: \$135,000
  - Approximately \$43,000 is budgeted each year for the next election. The final amount allocated for 2020/21 will take into account the voting method selected by Council. A detailed budget will then be developed and approved as part of the 2020/21 budget process.
- Staff have conducted further analysis of Pictou County expenses from the 2016 election. Pictou County used hybrid voting in the 2016 election. Staff have used their financial statements to determine a preliminary estimate of financial implications of providing for any form of e-voting.
  - E-voting (software alone) cost Pictou County ~\$76,600 in 2016. Indexed for inflation and adjusted to the number of Kings County electors, staff project an incremental cost of at least \$90,000 for the introduction of any form of e-voting. This additional cost would have to be budgeted for in 2020/21.
- Hybrid voting will result in the Municipality incurring costs of both paper balloting and e-voting.

### STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

Check Applicable	Strategic Priority	If Checked, Provide Brief Explanation
✓	Good Governance	Reviewing and evaluating election voting to conduct an election with greater turnout
	Environmental Stewardship	
	Economic Development	
	Strong Communities	
	Financial Sustainability	
	Supports a Strategic Project	
	Supports a Core Program Enhancement	

### ALTERNATIVES

- Council may opt to conduct an election with only hybrid or e-voting.

### IMPLEMENTATION

- Voting method will inform the job description of the Returning Officer.
- If e-voting or hybrid voting is selected, a By-law to authorize e-voting (per s.146A [Municipal Elections Act](#)) must be passed, a third party service provider contracted, and connectivity requirements met.
- An engagement and education campaign will be developed and used to support greater voter turnout.

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- No specific Community Engagement initiatives were undertaken as part of this recommendation.
- A robust and comprehensive voter engagement and education campaigns will be undertaken prior to the election period. Additional information on this will follow at a future time.

### APPENDICES

- Appendix A: RFD – 2020 Municipal Election Options (June 18, 2019 COTW)
- Appendix B: Voter Turnout in Municipal Elections, Nova Scotia (2008, 2012, 2016)
- Appendix C: Voter Turnout in Municipal Elections, Nova Scotia: Graphs
- Appendix D: intelivote Client Statistics, 2016 Municipal Elections
- Appendix E: 2016 Municipality of the County of Kings Election Summary Report

### APPROVALS

Scott Conrod, Chief Administrative Officer

Date: August 29, 2019



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<b>TO</b>	Committee of the Whole
<b>PREPARED BY</b>	Katarina Sebastian, Policy Analyst
<b>MEETING DATE</b>	June 18, 2019
<b>SUBJECT</b>	2020 Municipal Election Options

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### **ORIGIN**

- Municipal Election Summary and Recommendations Report, 2016

### **RECOMMENDATION**

That Committee of the Whole recommend Municipal Council resolve to conduct a regular paper ballot election and that a Returning Officer be engaged to conduct the election and manage a public education program.

### **INTENT**

For Committee of the Whole to review the options outlined in the June 18, 2019 Request for Decision Report and make a recommendation on the type of election that Council should authorize for the 2020 Municipal Election.

### **DISCUSSION**

Staff understands that the overarching objective is to increase voter turnout. The type of election selected by Council may influence this objective. Additionally, research has shown that appropriate public education programs can also influence voter turnout.

#### **Election Format**

The formats under consideration include:

- a) Electronic election (e-voting); or
- b) Hybrid election (combination of e-voting and paper ballot); or
- c) a traditional paper ballot election.

The type of election selected by Council will in-turn influence the skill set requirements of a Returning Officer.

#### **A. Electronic Election**

Electronic voting ("E-voting") may include several methods such as remote e-voting (internet), telephone, and e-voting stations. Remote and telephone e-voting allow individuals to vote from anywhere, provided they have their voter credentials (typically through an assigned pin), and access to internet or a phone. E-voting polling stations are similar to traditional stations but with electronic balloting.



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The connectivity requirements for e-voting are relatively basic. The system can be supported on any internet service, as well as any cellular service or landline. Additionally, electronic polling stations can be hosted on a basic pc or tablet.

There are several benefits associated with e-voting including:

- Increased accessibility;
- A lower individual cost of voting<sup>1</sup>;
- Reduced staffing costs (if election is 100% electronic); and
- Real-time election results (if election is 100% electronic).

There will be a learning curve for individuals to familiarize themselves with this new method of voting. This latter point could have the opposite effect and increase the perceived cost of voting. Other pitfalls that are associated with e-voting include:

- Potential lack of secrecy;
- Potential for voter fraud; and
- Potential for connectivity disruption throughout the election (local disruption or on the service providers network).

According to the Report (Poole, 2016), there were several requests from constituents for e-voting, including expressions of discontent when learning this election format was not being offered. The main consideration for this report; however, is the potential increase in voter turnout relative to the format of election selected by the Municipality.

Studies examining the impact of e-voting on voter turnout are inconclusive. Although the results vary from region-to-region, there is no evidence to conclusively say that e-voting will increase voter turnout. Analysis of intelivote<sup>2</sup> statistics from 2016 (see Appendix B) shows that there are no decisive trends. However some observations reveal that:

- Municipalities with 100% e-vote in the 2012 election, and 100% e-vote in the 2016 election saw a decrease in voter turnout.
- Municipalities that had some % of e-vote in 2012, typically had a higher % of electors voting electronically in 2016. However, voter turnout also decreased.
- Average voter turnout in 2012, with 14 out of 23 municipalities in the sample having some form of e-voting, was 52.1%. Average voter turnout in 2016, with 23 out of 23 municipalities in the sample having some form of e-voting, was 47.9%.

The sample size is too small to determine a trend.

Additional requirements of the Municipality to enable e-voting include:

- the development of a By-law to authorize e-voting per 146A of the *Municipal Elections Act, R.S., c.300*;
- ensuring connectivity requirements are met; and
- engaging a third party e-vote service provider.

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<sup>1</sup> In this context the cost of voting refers to the perceived cost-benefit of voting for individuals.

<sup>2</sup> Intelivote is the service provider for e-voting in 23 Municipal Elections (2016)



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### B. Traditional

A traditional election entails paper ballots, and physical polling stations. MOK has always operated a traditional, paper ballot election. The benefit of conducting a traditional election is that there will be no learning curve for electors, as there would be with an electronic election. However, primary pitfalls include convenience (relative to a paper ballot election) thus increasing the cost to an individual of voting.

Studies suggest that the presence of visual cues, social pressure, and sense of community are effective in motivating voter turnout. As such, traditional paper ballot elections maintain visual cues, and help foster a sense of community, whereas electronic voting does not.

### C. Hybrid

A Hybrid election combines both e-voting and traditional paper ballots. There are several different forms of hybrid elections such as;

- E-voting and paper ballots offered in advance polls and election day; or
- E-voting (advance polls)/paper ballots on Election Day.

A hybrid election offers the benefits of e-voting, while reducing the risks that are associated with 100% electronic elections such as connectivity issues, or alienating voters that want a traditional ballot. It also enables voters that are unable to physically go to a polling station to vote. However, hybrid elections are more costly than option A or B because the e-voting costs will need to be covered in addition to the costs associated with traditional polling stations.

### Public Education

The primary consideration in making this decision is what voting method will yield a higher voter turnout. The report prepared by the 2016 Returning Officer states that voter turnout was just over 29%. The Report (Poole, 2016) suggests that low voter turnout is likely associated with the lack of knowledge, or difficulty in accessing information on the municipal election.

Get Out the Vote Campaigns (GOTV) have been employed by municipalities to help increase voter turnout. Many of the campaigns attempt to reconcile the common barriers to voting. A literature review reveals that those barriers include:

- increase in cynicism towards politics;
- disconnection from community social networks (e.g., lack of social cues to vote);
- difficulty obtaining political knowledge;
- lack of visual cues that provide an incentive to vote; and
- A decrease in the sense of civic duty or duty to vote.

(Gludovatz, 2014)

GOTV initiatives that provide awareness and education to voters have been successful in increasing voter turnout. Initiatives in this regard vary greatly, but the typical attributes include providing positive visual cues, promoting social connections, and fostering a strong civic duty.



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### Municipal Election Advisory Committee Recommendation (MEAC)

As one can see, there are several pros and cons associated with each of the three election methods. However, it is clear that public engagement initiatives are effective in increasing voter turnout. Thus, it is imperative that public engagement initiatives are undertaken regardless of the type of election chosen.

MEAC recommends that Council choose option B, a Traditional election, and that Municipal Council direct the CAO to hire a Returning Officer to develop a rigorous Educational/GOTV initiative.

### Sources Cited:

City of Vancouver (2017). [Independent Election Task Force Final Report](#).

Poole, David - Returning Officer (2016). Municipal Election Summary and Recommendations: Post the 2016 County of Kings Municipal Election.

Elections Canada (n.d.). [A Comparative Assessment of Electronic Voting](#).

Kushner, Joseph. & Siegel, David. (2006). Why Do Municipal Electors Not Vote?. *Canadian Journal of Urban Research* vol. 15 (2). p. 264-277

Gludovatz, Norman (2014). Centre for Civic Governance. [Getting the Majority to Vote](#): Practical solutions to re-engage citizens in local elections.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- MOK's expenses for the 2016 Municipal Election were \$156,424 and the anticipated Municipal Election Budget for 2020 is \$176,600. The anticipated budget is based on the 2016 actual expenses adjusted for inflation.

	Type of election (2016)	Cost per elector
<b>MOK</b>	Traditional election	\$4.09
<b>Pictou County</b>	Hybrid (e-vote & paper ballot)	\$5.28 <sup>3</sup>

- If MOK conducts a hybrid election, the revised Municipal Election Budget for 2020 will be approximately \$228,079. This is based on the difference between MOK and Pictou County's cost per elector (\$1.20) multiplied by MOK's # of electors for 2016, and indexed by 2% for inflation. The cost for MOK to conduct a hybrid election would be approximately \$51,479 more than a regular election.

### **STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT**

Check Applicable	Strategic Priority	If Checked, Provide Brief Explanation
✓	Good Governance	
	Environmental Stewardship	
	Economic Development	
✓	Strong Communities	

<sup>3</sup> See appendix A for breakdown of MOK and Pictou County election expenses.





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	Financial Sustainability	
	Supports a Strategic Project	
	Supports a Core Program Enhancement	
	Not Applicable - explain why project should still be considered	

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

- No specific community engagement initiatives have been undertaken to develop this report, and the recommendations herein.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

- Council may resolve to conduct a hybrid election (Option C) and engage a Returning Officer to conduct the election and manage a public education program.
- Council may resolve to conduct an electronic election (Option A) and engage a returning Officer to conduct the election and manage a public education program.

### **IMPLEMENTATION**

- Recommendation will be submitted to Council; and
- Upon approval, a Returning Officer will be engaged.

### **APPENDICES**

- Appendix A: MOK and Pictou County election cost
- Appendix B: Intelivote Clients NS 2016 Stats

### **APPROVALS**

Scott Conrod, Chief Administrative Officer

Date: June 13, 2019

# Voting Method for 2020 Municipal Election

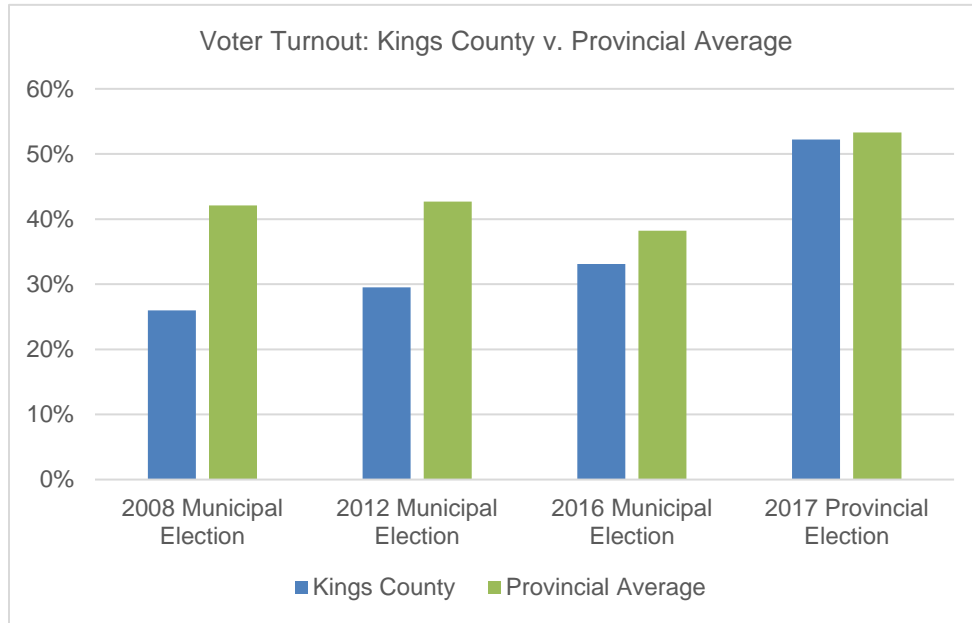
## Appendix B

Voter Turnout in Municipal Elections, Nova Scotia (2008, 2012, 2016)							
	2008		2012		2016		
Municipal Unit	Turnout (%)	Voting Method	Turnout (%)	Voting Method*	Turnout (%)	Voting Method	
<b>Regional Municipalities</b>							
Cape Breton Regional Municipality	50.4%		55.9%	E-vote	52.9%	Hybrid	
Halifax Regional Municipality	36.2%		46.7%	E-vote	31.8%	Hybrid	
Region of Queens Municipality	37.4%		36.9%		37.8%	Paper	
<b>Towns</b>							
Town of Amherst	47.6%		38.4%		52.0%	Paper	
Town of Annapolis Royal	78.0%		64.0%		51.9%	Paper	
Town of Antigonish	62.2%		44.9%		49.2%	Hybrid	
Town of Berwick	53.2%	E-Vote	54.7%	Paper	56.5%	E-vote	
Town of Bridgetown			49.5%				
Town of Bridgewater	23.7%		42.0%	E-vote	37.2%	Hybrid	
Town of Canso	84.1%						
Town of Clark's Harbour	75.7%		73.4%		70.4%	Paper	
Town of Digby	64.7%		53.6%	E-vote	40.9%	Hybrid	
Town of Hantsport	41.3%		53.0%				
Town of Kentville	46.2%	Paper	35.2%	E-vote	54.3%	Hybrid	
Town of Lockeport	40.8%		70.6%		38.3%	Paper	
Town of Lunenburg	54.8%		58.8%		45.6%	Paper	
Town of Mahone Bay	72.7%		47.8%		54.4%	Paper	
Town of Middleton	34.7%				51.5%	E-vote	
Town of Mulgrave	76.9%		36.8%		51.5%	Paper	
Town of New Glasgow	46.8%		39.5%		49.7%	Hybrid	
Town of Oxford	51.9%		59.7%		53.2%	Paper	
Town of Parrsboro	71.3%		52.1%				
Town of Pictou	55.4%		50.5%		52.8%	Hybrid	
Town of Port Hawkesbury	63.3%		70.2%		54.3%	Paper	
Town of Shelburne	69.7%		67.0%	E-vote	66.0%	Hybrid	
Town of Springhill	59.1%		49.7%				
Town of Stellarton	40.3%		75.1%		42.4%	Hybrid	
Town of Stewiacke	70.8%		58.5%	E-vote	64.4%	Hybrid	
Town of Trenton	52.3%		34.4%		23.2%	Paper	
Town of Truro	19.4%		46.6%	E-vote	45.6%	E-vote	
Town of Westville	47.8%		39.3%		37.4%	Paper	
Town of Windsor	37.1%		30.2%	E-vote	50.7%	Hybrid	
Town of Wolfville	42.0%	Paper	37.3%	Paper	31.7%	Paper	
Town of Yarmouth	52.4%		67.5%	E-vote	61.4%	E-vote	
<b>Counties &amp; Districts</b>							
	2008		2012		2016		
Municipality of the County of Annapolis	37.8%		39.6%		37.9%	Paper	
Municipality of the County of Antigonish	53.8%		48.1%		37.5%	Paper	
Municipality of the District of Argyle	72.7%		79.7%	E-vote	72.2%	Hybrid	
Municipality of the District of Barrington	52.8%		48.5%		40.3%	Paper	
Municipality of the District of Chester	45.6%		60.1%	E-vote	54.2%	Hybrid	
Municipality of the District of Clare	65.4%		66.3%	E-vote	64.7%	Hybrid	
Municipality of the County of Colchester	34.0%		34.5%		20.3%	Paper	
Municipality of the County of Cumberland	49.8%		47.0%		45.9%	Paper	
Municipality of the District of Digby	44.8%		47.2%	E-vote	37.8%	E-vote	
Municipality of the District of Guysborough	78.9%		83.0%		48.6%	Paper	
Municipality of the District of East Hants	45.5%		33.6%		24.7%	Paper	
Municipality of the District of West Hants	31.9%		27.2%		38.9%	Paper	
Municipality of the County of Inverness	51.9%		46.6%		47.7%	Paper	
Municipality of the County of Kings	26.0%	Paper	33.1%	Paper	29.5%	Paper	
Municipality of the District of Lunenburg	52.8%	Paper	41.7%	Paper	40.8%	Hybrid	
Municipality of the County of Pictou	58.8%		43.3%		49.3%	Hybrid	
Municipality of the County of Richmond	76.6%		76.8%		63.4%	Paper	
Municipality of the District of Shelburne	54.2%		46.3%				
Municipality of the District of St. Mary's	76.2%		68.7%		55.2%	Paper	
Municipality of Victoria County	60.6%		74.9%	E-vote	65.4%	Hybrid	
Municipality of the District of Yarmouth	41.6%		42.1%		39.6%	Paper	
	42.1%		42.7%		38.2%		
<b>2019</b>							
Town of Middleton used E-voting for the March 2019 Special Election. Voter participation was 28.4%							
<b>2012</b>							
* Given available data, it is difficult to determine if municipal units used e-voting or hybrid voting. As such, all have been classified as e-voting.							



# Municipality of the County of Kings

## Voting Method for 2020 Municipal Election Appendix C



Election	Voter Turnout (Provincial Average)	Voter Turnout (Kings)	Variance
2008 Municipal	42.1%	26.0%	-16.1%
2012 Municipal	42.7%	33.1%	-13.2%
2016 Municipal	38.2%	29.5%	-5.1%
2017 Provincial	53.3%	52.2%*	-1.1%

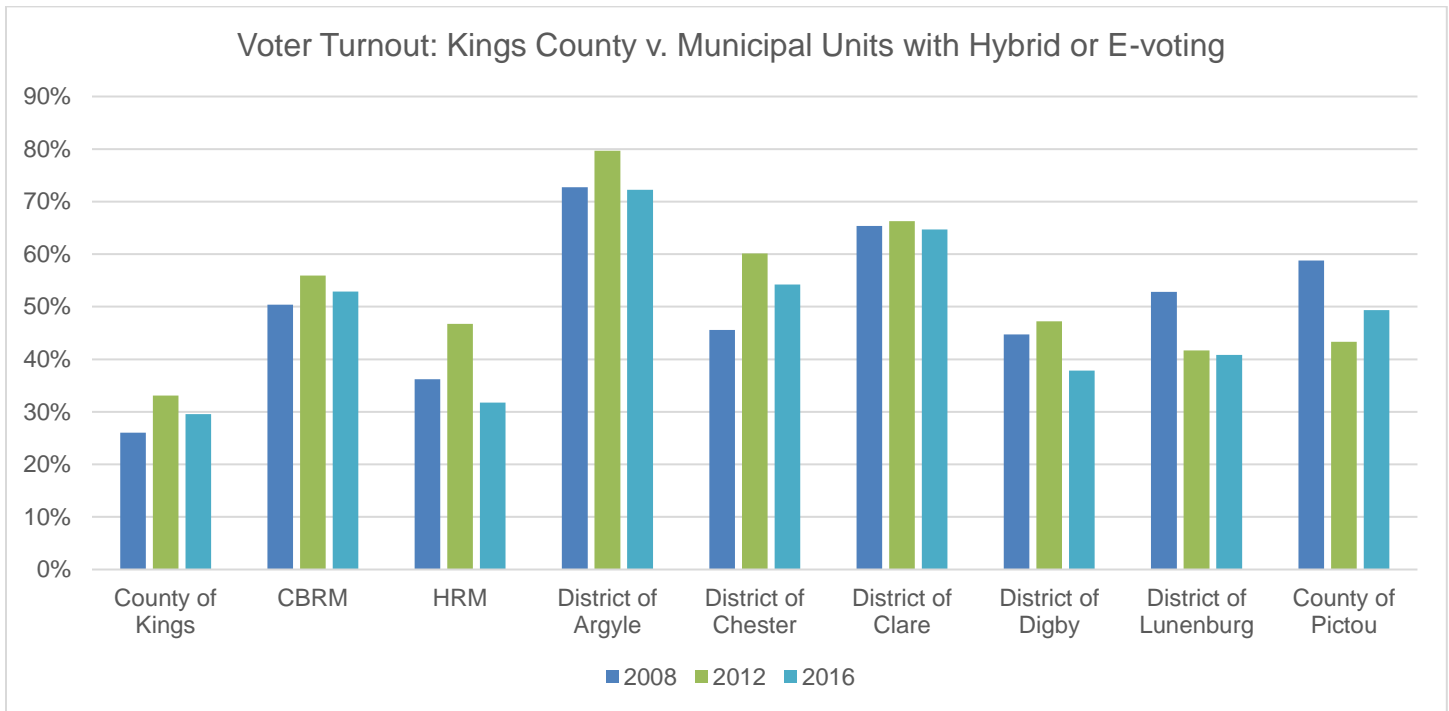
\* 2017 Provincial Election participation for Kings County determined by averaging turnout of Kings North, Kings South, and Kings West electoral districts.



# Municipality of the County of Kings

## Voting Method for 2020 Municipal Election

### Appendix C



Municipal Unit	2008	2012	2016
Municipality of the County of Kings	26.0%	33.1%	29.5%
Cape Breton Regional Municipality	50.4%	55.9%*	52.9%*
Halifax Regional Municipality	36.2%*	46.7%*	31.8%*
Municipality of the District of Argyle	72.7%	79.7%*	72.2%*
Municipality of the District of Chester	45.6%	60.1%*	54.2%*
Municipality of the District of Clare	65.4%	66.3%*	64.7%*
Municipality of the District of Digby	44.8%	47.2%*	37.8%*
Municipality of the District of Lunenburg	52.8%	41.7%	40.8%*
Municipality of the County of Pictou	58.8%	43.3%	49.3%*
Average of like-municipalities using hybrid or e-voting		59.3%	50.5%

\*Asterisks denote municipalities where staff confirmed hybrid or e-voting was used in the election.

2012 Nova Scotia Municipal Elections  
October 9 - 20, 2012

Type	Municipalities	2008		2012						2016						Net (+/-)	Percent Change (+/-)	eVote/Man Ratio	IVR/WEB Vote %	eVote Time In Days				
		Voters	PR%	Voters	eVote	eVote %	Man	Total	Man %	% Total	Voters	eVote	eVote %	Man	Total						Man %	% Total		
<b>Method of voting - eVoting Only for entire election.</b>																								
1	Town	BERWICK	1,675	54.5%	1,685														1.8%	3.4%	100%	13 / 87	Oct 6 - 15 = 10	
2	Town	DIGBY	1,150	64.7%	1,465	786	100.0%	0	786	-	53.7%	1,427	584	100.0%	0	584	-	40.9%	-12.7%	-23.7%	100%	22 / 78	Oct 6 - 15 = 10	
3	Town	MIDDLETON	1,347	34.7%	-						0.0%	1,233	644	100.0%	0	644	-	52.2%	17.5%	50.5%	100%	11 / 89	Oct 6 - 15 = 10	
4	Town	TRURO	9,679	19.4%	8,926	4,177	100.0%	0	4,177	-	46.8%	9,420	4,300	100.0%	0	4,300	-	45.6%	-1.1%	-2.5%	100%	16 / 84	Oct 6 - 15 = 10	
5	Town	YARMOUTH	5,441	52.4%	4,773	3,199	100.0%	0	3,199	-	67.0%	4,871	2,991	100.0%	0	2,991	-	61.4%	-5.6%	-8.4%	100%	13 / 87	Oct 7 - 15 = 9	
<b>Method of voting - eVoting and Paper for entire election.</b>																								
6	Town	ANTIGONISH	3,353	62.2%	3,909						44.9%	4,142	1,074	53.8%	921	1,995	46.2%	48.2%	3.3%	7.3%	53.8%	10 / 90	Oct 6 - 15 = 10	
7	Mun	ARGYLE	6,358	72.7%	6,272	4,190	100.0%	-	4,190	0.0%	66.8%	6,443	2,949	76.8%	890	3,839	23.2%	59.6%	-7.2%	-10.8%	76.8%	22 / 78	Oct 7 - 15 = 9	
8	Town	BRIDGEWATER	7,065	23.8%	6,211	2,073	72.8%	775	2,848	27.2%	45.9%	6,337	2,010	80.9%	476	2,486	19.1%	39.2%	-6.6%	-14.4%	80.9%	13 / 87	Oct 6 - 15 = 10	
9	Mun	CLARE	7,023	65.4%	3,556	1,682	68.2%	786	2,468	31.8%	69.4%	6,634	2,102	66.8%	1,047	3,149	33.2%	47.5%	-21.9%	-31.6%	66.8%	22 / 78	Oct 7 - 15 = 9	
10	Mun	DIGBY	5,958	44.8%	5,411	1,686	84.1%	318	2,004	15.9%	37.0%	5,700	1,329	76.1%	417	1,746	23.9%	30.6%	-6.4%	-17.3%	76.1%	24 / 76	Oct 6 - 15 = 10	
11	Town	KENTVILLE~	4,205	46.2%	4,082	1,003	69.7%	437	1,440	30.3%	35.3%	4,862	1,893	71.9%	740	2,633	28.1%	54.2%	18.9%	53.5%	71.9%	9 / 91	Oct 6 - 15 = 10	
12	Town	SHELBURNE~	1,464	69.7%	1,390						67.0%	1,425	561	58.9%	391	952	41.1%	66.8%	-0.2%	-0.3%	58.9%	11 / 89	Oct 3 - 15 = 13	
13	Town	STEWIACKE	921	70.8%	935	264	47.8%	288	552	52.2%	59.0%	966	461	72.9%	171	632	27.1%	65.4%	6.4%	10.8%	72.9%	7 / 93	Oct 8 - 15 = 8	
14	Town	WINDSOR~	2,678	37.1%	2,348	839	95.8%	37	876	-	37.3%	2,509	1,222	95.5%	57	1,279	4.5%	51.0%	13.7%	36.6%	95.5%	12 / 88	Oct 6 - 15 = 10	
<b>Method of voting - eVoting in Advance and Paper only on Election Day.</b>																								
15	Mun	CAPE BRETON	83,370	50.4%	82,220	26,949	56.9%	20,376	47,325	43.1%	57.6%	81,378	21,469	49.5%	21,902	43,371	50.5%	53.3%	-4.3%	-7.4%	49.5%	18 / 82	Oct 5 - 12 = 8	
16	Mun	CHESTER***	8,258	45.6%	4,535	1,665	73.3%	608	2,273	26.7%	50.1%	7,943	1,570	64.6%	860	2,430	35.4%	30.6%	-19.5%	-39.0%	64.6%	27 / 73	Oct 6 - 11 = 6	
17	Mun	HALIFAX REGIONAL	279,398	36.2%	298,209	67,007	60.9%	43,107	110,114	39.1%	36.9%	282,347	55,788	63.2%	32,475	88,263	36.8%	31.3%	-5.7%	-15.3%	63.2%	8 / 92	Oct 4 - 13 = 10	
18	Mun	LUNENBURG*	14,909	52.8%	17,483						41.7%	20,277	4,096	49.0%	4,262	8,358	51.0%	41.2%	-0.5%	-1.1%	49.0%	21 / 79	Oct 6 - 13 = 8	
19	Town	NEW GLASGOW*	7,315	46.8%	7,380						39.5%	7,441	2,605	65.9%	1,349	3,954	34.1%	53.1%	13.7%	34.6%	65.9%	23 / 77	Oct 3 - 13 = 11	
20	Mun	PICTOU**	9,274	58.8%	5,765						43.3%	17,065	4,642	65.2%	2,481	7,123	34.8%	41.7%	-1.6%	-3.7%	65.2%	33 / 67	Oct 3 - 13 = 11	
21	Town	PICTOU*	2,888	55.4%	2,946						50.5%	2,725	927	59.6%	628	1,555	40.4%	57.1%	6.6%	13.0%	59.6%	25 / 75	Oct 3 - 13 = 11	
22	Town	STELLARTON*	3,484	40.3%	1,545						75.2%	3,336	1,047	60.3%	688	1,735	39.7%	52.0%	-23.1%	-30.8%	60.3%	29 / 71	Oct 3 - 13 = 11	
23	Mun	VICTORIA**	5,665	60.6%	4,679	1,733	55.9%	1,365	3,098	44.1%	66.2%	5,146	950	67.2%	463	1,413	32.8%	27.5%	-38.8%	-58.5%	67.2%	18 / 82	Oct 6 - 12 = 7	
		<b>Totals</b>	<b>472,878</b>	<b>50.7%</b>	<b>475,725</b>	<b>117,253</b>	<b>63.3%</b>	<b>68,097</b>	<b>185,350</b>	<b>36.7%</b>	<b>39.0%</b>	<b>485,224</b>	<b>116,117</b>	<b>62.3%</b>	<b>70,218</b>	<b>186,335</b>	<b>33.4%</b>	<b>38.4%</b>	<b>-3.2%</b>	<b>-1.4%</b>	<b>62.3%</b>	<b>22/78</b>		
																	<b>Average</b>	<b>48.1%</b>			<b>Average</b>	<b>73.8%</b>		

~ Only had paper voting for senior facilities

\* Paper count is calculated based on the number of votes cast for mayor candidates minus total eVotes

\*\* Paper count is calculated based on the number of votes cast for councillor candidates minus total eVotes

\*\*\* Electronic voting only offered over the Thanksgiving weekend

**Note: The 2016 NS Municipal Election voting period included voting over the Thanksgiving weekend.**

		Voting Options		Election Voting - Race Options	
1	Town	BERWICK	eVote	Mayor acclaimed, Open ward pick 6 from 8 candidates, SBs acclaimed	
2	Town	DIGBY	eVote	Mayor acclaimed, Open ward pick 4 from 5 candidates, RSB, CSAP	
3	Town	MIDDLETON	eVote	Mayor acclaimed, Open ward pick 6 from 9 candidates, SBs acclaimed	
4	Town	TRURO	eVote	Mayor race, 3 wards multi-select (pick 2 from list in each ward), RSB (1 of 2 acclaimed), ANSRSB	
5	Town	YARMOUTH	eVote	Mayor race, Open ward pick 6 from 18 candidates, RSB (1 of 2 acclaimed)	
6	Town	ANTIGONISH	Paper, eVote	Mayor race, Open ward pick 6 from 10 candidates, RSB	
7	Mun	ARGYLE	Paper, eVote	Single select in 7 of 9 district races (2 acclaimed), RSB	
8	Town	BRIDGEWATER	Paper, eVote	Mayor race, Open ward pick 6 from 7 candidates, RSB	
9	Mun	CLARE	Paper, eVote	Single select in 4 of 8 district races (4 acclaimed), CSAP	
10	Mun	DIGBY	Paper, eVote	Single select in 3 of 5 district races (2 acclaimed), RSB (2 districts), CSAP	
11	Town	KENTVILLE~	Paper (Sr. Fac.) eVote	Mayor race, Open ward pick 6 from 13 candidates, SBs acclaimed	
12	Town	SHELBURNE~	Paper (Sr. Fac.) eVote	Mayor race, Open ward pick 4 from 9 candidates, SBs acclaimed	
13	Town	STEWIACKE	Paper, eVote	Mayor race, Open ward pick 6 from 11 candidates, ANSRSB	
14	Town	WINDSOR~	Paper (Sr. Fac.) eVote	Mayor race, Open ward pick 4 from 8 candidates, SBs acclaimed	
15	Mun	CAPE BRETON	eV+Pap. AD, P-Elect day	Mayor race, Single select - In 12 district races, RSB (5 of 12 acclaimed), CSAP	
16	Mun	CHESTER**	eVote AD, P-Elect day	Mayor acclaimed, Single select - In 4 of 7 district races (3 acclaimed), RSB	
17	Mun	HALIFAX REGIONAL	eVote AD, P-Elect day	Mayor race, Single select - In 12 of 16 district races (4 acclaimed), RSB (3 of 8 acclaimed), ANSRSB, CSAP	
18	Mun	LUNENBURG*	eVote AD, P-Elect day	Mayor race, Single select - In 9 of 10 district races (1 acclaimed), RSB (3 of 8 acclaimed), RSB	
19	Town	NEW GLASGOW*	eVote AD, P-Elect day	Mayor race, 3 wards multi-select (pick 2 from list in each ward), ANSRSB	
20	Mun	PICTOU**	eVote AD, P-Elect day	Single select in 10 of 12 district races (2 acclaimed), RSB (2 of 4 acclaimed), ANSRSB	
21	Town	PICTOU*	eVote AD, P-Elect day	Mayor race, Open ward pick 4 from 7 candidates, RSB (1 of 2 acclaimed), ANSRSB	
22	Town	STELLARTON*	eVote AD, P-Elect day	Mayor race, 2 wards multi-select (pick 2 from list in each ward), RSB, ANSRSB	
23	Mun	VICTORIA**	eVote AD, P-Elect day	Single select - In 2 of 8 district races (6 acclaimed), RSB (1 of 2 acclaimed), CSAP	



# Municipal Election Summary and Recommendations

Post the 2016 County of Kings Municipal Election

10/30/2016  
Returning Officer  
David Poole

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## **Election Budget**

The budget for the 2016 municipal election was \$135,000. This was based on the 2012 budget, with a slight increase for inflation. Returning Office staff are pleased to report that, while some final expenses are still to be reported, it appears that we were able to meet this budget. This is in spite of the fact that a number of factors were very different in comparison to 2012. While the number of electoral districts was reduced by one, the addition of the Mayoral election meant an entire new layer of complication and expense. This included everything from candidates packages, doubling of the number of ballots printed and increased advertising costs. Postage also increased significantly from 2012.

Several changes from 2012, including the hiring of an Assistant Returning Officer for a three month period were essential to the successful completion of the election. A small increase in the rate paid to poll workers was also instituted this election year. Without this increase it would have been even more difficult than it was to hire the necessary staff to work the polls. These rates should be reviewed prior to 2020. Even at the increased rate it was difficult to find enough people to fill all the required spots for poll clerks and deputy returning officers. Many people turned down the offer based on location and or the pay.

In setting out budgets for future elections, a number of things should be considered. E-voting, discussed later in this report, will have a significant impact on costs, as will staffing at poll stations and in the returning office. Postage for mail outs and advertising can both be expected to increase by 2020.

## **Enumeration**

Early in the process it must be determined whether a voter enumeration should be considered. The last enumeration was in 2004 at a cost of \$15,878.00 (this was based on \$50 + \$0.50 per name and no gas/mileage coverage). A new enumeration would cost substantially more. While the Provincial Voters List that was used in 2012 and 2016 had a host of problems, it is probably the cheapest and, if amended in a timely fashion, the least complicated way to proceed in the future. By hiring a staff member dedicated solely to updating this list, a much more accurate list can be made available to candidates and poll staff. An early mailing to all persons on the preliminary list, though a costly endeavor, would go a long way towards improving the quality of the voters' name and address information. Once corrections are made from the preliminary list the customary voters card could be mailed just prior to the election. This would mean an additional \$40,000 - \$50,000 but likely be cheaper than a full enumeration and would result in a much improved list of electors.



## Electoral Divisions

The divisions within each district need to be revisited. Some districts have far too many electors while others have many too few. They ranged from more than 2000 to just over 100. Ideally, each poll station should have approximately 700 voters.

The current configuration of Electoral Boundaries was not without its challenges. Notwithstanding candidates' issues with covering large and unwieldy geography, a common refrain from voters was that they did not understand them and were frustrated that they could not vote for the person who they thought was representing their area. A review of the boundaries is mandated every eight years so the next one will not be required until 2024. This process should begin at least two years prior and could be conducted in-house by staff, familiar with the communities of interest within Kings County. A Committee of Council, including members of the public, could review the new boundaries and submit them to the UARB. It would be my advice to consider using the 911 general service area boundaries in determining any adjustments to existing electoral districts and divisions.

## E-Voting

At least one year before the next election, preferably two, real consideration must be given to offering some form of electronic voting (e-voting). E-voting can be done through a computer or a telephone. The returning office for the 2016 election fielded many telephone calls and emails from citizens requesting some form of e-voting. They were surprised, and sometimes upset, with the inability to e-vote. At the very least, E-voting should replace advance polls.

It is also worth noting that with an option of E-voting the need for proxy forms, and the work they entail, will no longer be an issue. No one will need to vote by proxy unless they do not have access to a phone or computer during the election. With e-voting, students who are away can still vote, as can those on vacation or away from home for any other reason.

E-voting will also allow for candidates to see who has voted as the voting occurs and will lower their need for poll agents. It also allows for instant results, which for an advance poll can be very important. Advance polls are large so they take time to count and tend to be the slowest of all the polls to have their results returned.

Should the Municipality offer e-voting for the advance polls as a first step, and traditional paper ballots for the ordinary election day, there could be some savings realized by requiring fewer stations per district on ordinary day.

## Voter Turn Out

The 2016 election saw virtually no change in voter turnout from 2012, and at just over 29% participation, it was quite disappointing. Ads were placed on the radio, newspapers and voter cards were mailed as has been the case for the past several elections. We also tweeted and posted items to Facebook and our website. We had hoped that the Mayoral race would attract more voters but that seems to not have been the case. The returning office received many calls

## Municipal Election Summary and Recommendations

complaining that voters did not know anything about the candidates. This was a common refrain from workers at the polls and also from the candidates themselves. With boundary changes, this was compounded by the fact that many electors did not have the opportunity to vote for their incumbent Councillor. It did seem that traditional press did not cover the County election to the same degree that they did the Town races. They certainly did not cover the Councillor races in much detail at all. The two youth engagement forums were poorly attended by voters and candidates. Council should consider whether it may be worthwhile developing a committee or group to discuss ways to get the citizens of this Municipality engaged and interested in municipal politics. The Municipality and Council may need to, in 2020, reach out to people in ways that are new and innovative if there is a desire to increase voter turnout.

The following excerpt, from a report submitted by one of our Poll Clerks, does a good job of addressing the issue of voter turnout and frustration.

*...Major Issue, Voter frustration over lack of Campaign Information*

*This was the issue expressed by the largest number of voters at the Polling Station on voting day. In short, this issue was expressed in terms such as "I don't know anything about any of the candidates, or what they stand for." Also, "I don't know what any of the issues are" or "I tried to locate information about the candidates, but couldn't". Those expressing this issue seemed very interested in doing their civic duty, and in engaging in the process. However, they felt that the general lack of relevant information made it difficult, or indeed impossible, to make an informed decision at the Poll.*

*This general lack of knowledge, one might suspect, could be an important contributing factor to low voter turnout.*

*Possible Solution:*

*Establishment of a central source for information on all of the candidates, easily accessible to all voters, to include, at the least:*

- 1. Answers to a questionnaire put to all candidates, said questionnaire being a list of issues deemed of possible interest to voters for a pending election; candidates could be encouraged to contribute to the list.*
- 2. Biographical info on the candidate. Any additional information that might be deemed of use to voters.*

*The most obvious format for this information would be on a website. This content could also be used by other media, and indeed, the candidates themselves, to better inform and publicize to the electorate those issues, and platforms, which might reasonably be anticipated as being fundamental to making an informed voting decision.....*

*Source: Jerry Legge, Poll Clerk 2016*

## **Voter Cards**

Section 50(2) deals with the requirement of additional notices of poll. Specifically it states in addition to advertisement in the local papers, Notice of Polls need to also be given by either flyers distributed to households, by mailing cards to voters or in any manner approved by council.

2012 was the first year the Municipality used voter cards. In 2016, because of the late decision on boundaries and an even later delivery of the voters list from the Province, we were unable to consider doing anything differently than what was done in 2012. As mentioned in the Enumeration section of this report, an option of sending two voter cards to electors should be considered as a way to improve the accuracy of the voters list. As an alternative to this option, the 2012 Returning Officer, Heather Archibald, made a number of recommendations in her report to Council. These included a combination of voter card and generic mail out. I suggest that the Returning Officer for the 2020 election consider her recommendations.

## **Municipal Elections Act and Staff**

It was a struggle to find competent staff to work the polls at the election. We had a wonderful tool on our website that allowed people to apply for jobs but, in the end, we were still trying to fill positions the evening before election day. Fortunately, we did have a large contingent of County staff members who had agreed to work election day and, though most were assigned as overseers at the larger poll stations, we were able to reassign some of them to fill last minute gaps. In fact, having as many staff involved as we did was probably one of the best decisions made through this process. Not only did it engage them in the process, it gave us confidence that issues could be dealt with on the spot. The result was an election that ran much more smoothly than it might have, had staff not been involved.

All Councillors and Managers should become familiar with the Municipal Elections Act. Municipal elections are serious matters that should not be pushed aside or ignored. Election matters for a municipality the size of the County of Kings should be dealt with on an annual basis, at the very least, and not left to be handled every four years. A standing committee, created to keep the process on track, should be formed in 2017. It should meet on a semi regular basis with a focus on ensuring that the 2020 election is well organized, efficiently run and that it achieves a substantial increase in voter turnout.