

# Staff Report

Presented By: Kaitlin Bos, Manager, Legislative Services/Clerk

Meeting Date: April 27, 2026

Subject: 2026 Municipal and School Board Election Policies and Procedures

Attachment(s): 2026 Election Accessibility Plan  
Use of Corporate Resources for Election Purposes Policy  
By-law 66-2022 Delegation of Authority to CAO during Restricted Acts Period  
By-Law 72-2015 Election Sign By-law

---

## **Recommendation**

That Council receive the 2026 Municipal and School Board Election Policies and Procedures report for information.

---

## **Report Summary**

The next regular municipal election will take place on Monday, October 26, 2026. This report provides Council with an update on preparations for the election, including key dates, voting method, procedures and communications.

## **Background/Analysis**

The [Municipal Elections Act, 1996 \(MEA\)](#) outlines the Duties and Powers of Clerk in s.11, and 12.

The Clerk is responsible for conducting the election, including responsibility for:

- a) preparing for the election;
- b) preparing for and conducting a recount in the election;
- c) maintaining peace and order in connection with the election; and
- d) in a regular election, preparing and submitting the accessibility report.

The Clerk may provide for any matter or procedure that:

- a) is not otherwise provided for in an Act or regulation; and
- b) in the Clerk's opinion, is necessary or desirable for conducting the election.

## Key Dates

The following key dates, in accordance with the MEA apply to the 2026 Municipal Election:

May 1, 2026	Nominations Open
May 14, 2026	Bruce County Joint Candidates Information Session
August 21, 2026	Nomination Day – last day to file nominations from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Nominations or withdrawal cannot be accepted after 2 p.m.
August 24, 2026	Nominations to be certified or rejected by the Clerk by 4 p.m. Acclamations after 4 p.m.
September 1, 2026	Voters' List available to certified candidates Revision period begins for electors
October 19-26, 2026	Voting Period – begins at 10 a.m. October 19th and ends at 8 p.m. October 26th
October 26, 2026	Voting Day
November 15, 2026	New Term of Council begins
November 16, 2026	Inaugural Meeting
December 31, 2026	Campaign period ends; last day to notify Clerk in writing to extend campaign period if in a deficit
March 30, 2027	Last day to file initial financial statements and auditor's report
June 28, 2027	Last day for an elector to apply for a compliance audit of a candidate's or registered third-party advertiser's initial financial statement
June 30, 2027	End of extended campaign period
September 24, 2027	Last day to file supplementary financial statements and auditor's report, until 2 p.m. (for those who extended their campaign period)
December 23, 2027	Last day for an elector to apply for a compliance audit of a candidate's or registered third party advertiser's supplementary financial statement

## **Voting Methods**

At the January 26, 2026 Regular Council Meeting, Council adopted [By-law 11-2026](#), being a by-law to authorize the use of internet and telephone voting for the 2026 Municipal and School Board Election.

In alignment with Bruce County area municipalities, election services have been procured from Simply Voting Inc., a Canadian-based eDemocracy provider located in Montreal. Simply Voting Inc. also supplied voting services for the previous municipal election; therefore, Saugeen Shores electors will experience a familiar and user-friendly voting process.

Voting will open on Monday, October 19, 2026 at 10:00 a.m. and continue until Monday, October 26, 2026 at 8:00 p.m.

A Voting Help Centre, equipped with voting technology, will be available at the Municipal Office during regular business hours throughout the voting period, and until 8:00 p.m. on Election Day. In addition, the Voting Help Centre will be open on Saturday, October 24 and Sunday, October 25 to provide additional support for electors requiring assistance.

Voting assistance will also be provided for residents at the following facilities (dates and times to be confirmed before the Voting Period), provided public health guidelines and the facilities permit access:

- Elgin Lodge Retirement Living
- Hampton Court Retirement Lodge
- Southampton Care Centre

## **Policies, Plans and Procedures**

All election policies, plans, and procedures referenced below will be available on the municipal website at [www.saugeenshores.ca/elections](http://www.saugeenshores.ca/elections). Any updates or revisions will be posted promptly, with changes clearly communicated to the public.

### 2026 Municipal Election Procedures and Forms

In accordance with Section 42(3) of the MEA the Clerk shall establish procedures and forms and provide a copy of them to each candidate when their nomination is filed. The 2026 Municipal Election Procedures and Forms are available on the [Elections page](#) and will be provided to all potential candidates in the Candidate Information Package.

The Municipal Election Procedures and Forms includes information on the following nominations, voters' list, campaigning, help centers, internet/telephone voting procedures, scrutineers, count procedure, note of results, recount, candidates financial disclosure, third party advertising, compliance audit committee, election records, accessibility, emergencies, corrupt practices, timelines, discretionary powers of the clerk, prescribed forms and approved forms.

### 2026 Election Accessibility Plan

The 2026 Election Accessibility Plan (attached) outlines initiatives to improve accessibility for voters and candidates with disabilities throughout the election cycle.

The Plan is a living document developed in consultation with persons with disabilities and builds upon recommendations identified in the 2022 Post-Election Accessibility Report.

### Use of Corporate Resources for Election Purposes Policy

In accordance with Section 88.18 before May 1 in the year of a regular election, municipalities and local boards shall establish rules and procedures with respect to the use of municipal or board resources, as the case may be, during the election campaign period.

Clerks have reviewed the Use of Corporate Resources for Election Purposes Policy (attached) passed on February 26, 2018 by Resolution Number 44-2018 for continued compliance with current legislation and best practices. There are no recommended amendments or additions at this time.

### Delegation of Authority to CAO during Restricted Acts Period

Section 275 of the Municipal Act, 2001 restricts Council from undertaking certain actions during specified periods in an election year under the following circumstances:

- If fewer than three-quarters of current Council members who filed their nominations by Nomination Day (August 21, 2026) can be elected, Council is restricted from August 21, 2026 until November 15, 2026; or
- If fewer than three-quarters of current Council members are re-elected on Election Day (October 26, 2026), Council is restricted from October 27, 2026 until November 15, 2026.

During a restricted acts period, Council is prohibited from:

- a) Appointing or removing any officer of the municipality;
- b) Hiring or dismissing any employee;
- c) Disposing of property exceeding \$50,000 in value; and
- d) Incurring expenditures or liabilities exceeding \$50,000.

To ensure continuity of operations, Council adopted By-law 66-2022 on July 25, 2022, delegating authority to the Chief Administrative Officer during any restricted acts period (attached).

The Clerk will determine if a restricted acts period is in effect August 24, 2026 or October 27, 2026 and will notify administration / Council accordingly.

### Election Signs

On August 24, 2015 Council adopted By-law 72-2015 Election Sign By-law (attached) being a by-law to regulate elections signs for the Town of Saugeen Shores. Staff have reviewed for continued

compliance with current legislation and best practices. There are no recommended amendments or additions at this time.

Election signs on County Roads are regulated by By-law 3809 Section 7 g) an exert which can be found below:

*g) Election Signs:*

*Election signs may be erected on the right-of-way or adjacent to a County Road providing:*

- i) They are placed a minimum of 3 metres beyond the edge of (granular) shoulder and do not interfere with the official signs, traffic signals, or other safety devices.*
- ii) The location of election signs shall not interfere with the visibility of motorists. Any sign impeding visibility shall be removed.*
- iii) Election signs are not to be affixed to any permanent or official County sign or support, guiderail or other County Structure or facility.*
- iv) Election signs may be installed no sooner than 45 days prior to election day and shall be removed within 24 hours after the election date.*

## **Communications**

On January 26, 2026, Council requested a report on communications, outreach, and voting methods for the 2026 municipal election. The following outlines proposed strategies to support voter awareness, participation, and engagement.

The communications strategy is being developed in collaboration with the Strategic Initiatives Division and area Clerks. It incorporates a mix of traditional and digital platforms to ensure broad and inclusive community reach.

- Social media: Regular updates, key date reminders, candidate information, and voter education content
- Radio: Advertisements and public service announcements promoting key election information
- Newspaper: Print advertisements and media releases targeting residents who rely on traditional media
- Website: A dedicated election webpage providing comprehensive and accessible information

In addition to ongoing communications, staff are developing a voter engagement campaign to increase participation in the 2026 election. The campaign focuses on raising awareness of the importance of voting, encouraging candidate participation, and promoting democratic engagement within the community. The first campaign deliverable was distributed with the April water bills and provided residents with key election information and important dates. The first digital media video, [How Local Government Works](#), is now available and helps voters better understand municipal governance. It is the first in a series of videos designed to support civic

awareness and participation leading up to the 2026 election. Outreach efforts will also include Elections Staff attendance at local events. The overall goal is to foster an informed and engaged electorate, while reducing barriers to participation and strengthening public confidence in the municipal election process

### **Linkages**

- Strategic Plan Alignment: Pillar 1: Meeting the Needs of a Growing Community
- Business Plan Alignment: Corporate Services Major Initiative

### **Financial Impacts/Source of Funding**

Costs associated with this program are contained within the existing budget.

---

Prepared By: Kaitlin Bos, Manager, Legislative Services/Clerk

Reviewed By: Jim Bundschuh, Director, Corporate Services

Approved By: Kara Van Myall, Chief Administrative Officer