

DECISION/DIRECTION NOTE

Title: Election Reform - Recommendations

Date Prepared: February 20, 2020

Report To: Committee of the Whole

Councillor and Role: Mayor Danny Breen – Governance & Strategic Directions

Ward: All Wards

Decision/Direction Required:

Seeking approval of the recommendations put forward in the attached Ad Hoc Election Committee Report.

Discussion – Background and Current Status:

In or about July 2018, the City was provided with a copy of a report on behalf of the Citizen's Assembly for Stronger Elections (CASE). A review of the same determined that the concerns warranted further analysis and an internal committee was established to do so.

The committee felt that a broader, more objective perspective was necessary and at its Regular Meeting of July 22, 2019, Council approved engaging with a four-person panel. The panel comprised of people in the community with expertise in this area. Its findings were presented to the City on September 30, 2019.

The attached report contains the recommendations of the internal committee based on the study by CASE, the experts panel report and analysis of the identified issues.

The issue of Campaign Finances and the proposed recommendations is based on the historical data of the last three elections (2009, 2013 and 2017). Below are the average campaign donations claimed by the successful candidates for the named positions.

Position	Total \$ Permitted – Current Legislation	Average	Proposed Total \$ - Amended Legislation
Mayor	\$80,000.00	\$53,158.33	\$60,000.00
Deputy Mayor	\$80,000.00	\$36,576.84	\$40,000.00
Councillor at Large	\$80,000.00	\$15,947.00	\$20,000.00
Ward Councillor	\$24,000.00	\$10,298.60	\$15,000.00

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Key Considerations/Implications:

1. Budget/Financial Implications:
 - Will not cost the City any money but will impact future candidates
2. Partners or Other Stakeholders:
 - Future Candidates
3. Alignment with Strategic Directions/Adopted Plans: N/A
4. Legal or Policy Implications:
 - Election Finance By-Law
5. Privacy Implications: N/A
6. Engagement and Communications Considerations:
 - Any changes would need to be communicated prior to next election
7. Human Resource Implications: N/A
8. Procurement Implications: N/A
9. Information Technology Implications: N/A
10. Other Implications: N/A

Recommendation:**Recommendation #1**

THAT Council amend the Election Finance By-Law as follows:

- Reduce the limit for a financial contribution considered a “donation” from \$250 to \$100
- Reduce the expenditure caps for each candidate from \$10,000 plus \$1.00 for each voter on the voters list, as follows:
 - Mayor \$10,000 plus .71 per voter on the voters list
 - Deputy Mayor \$10,000 plus .43 per voter on the voters list
 - Councillor at Large \$10,000 plus .14 per voter on the voters list
 - Ward Councillor \$10,000 plus .07 for each voter on the voters list
- Reduce the timeline for disclosure of campaign contributions from the current ninety (90) days to thirty (30) days post-election
- Impose a cap on corporate and union donations to 50 percent of the total allowable contributions in the 2021 election and prohibit any/all corporate and union donations beginning in the 2025 election
- Reduce corporate and trade union donations from \$2,000 to \$1,000 as is currently permitted from an individual

- Contributions can only be made to a candidate within the calendar year of the election
- Require the disclosure of expenditures in addition to the contributions

Recommendation #2

THAT Council approve maintaining the current structure which includes the position of mayor, deputy mayor, five ward councillors and four councillors at large.

Recommendation #3

THAT Council engage with Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador (MNL) to determine whether there is a willingness to lobby the Province to change legislation to provide further voting options.

Recommendation #4

THAT Council continue to engage both the public and staff on ways to improve accessibility, diversity and increase voter turnout.

Recommendation #5

THAT Council engage with Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador (MNL) to determine whether there is a willingness to lobby the Province to change legislation to permit permanent residents to vote.

Recommendation #6

THAT Council lobby the Provincial Government to amend the Municipal Elections Act to reduce the residency requirements from 30 days to 21 days prior to election day.

Recommendation #7

THAT Council approve the continued use of signage in election due to its continued necessity in campaigning.

Prepared and Approved by: Elaine Henley, City Clerk