



MUNICIPALITY OF West Elgin

Staff Report

Report To: Council Meeting

From: Jana Nethercott, Clerk

Date: 2021-10-14

Subject: 2022 Municipal and School Board Election Voting Method

Recommendation:

That West Elgin Council hereby receives the report from J. Nethercott, Clerk re: 2022 Municipal and School Board Election Voting Method; and

That West Elgin Council direct staff to bring forward a By-law at the next Regular Council Meeting to approve the use of Alternate Voting Methods for the 2022 Municipal and School Board Election; and

That West Elgin Council adopt the staff recommendation that the 2022 Municipal and School Board Election Voting Methods be by Telephone and Internet voting with in-person polling stations or voter help centres.

Purpose:

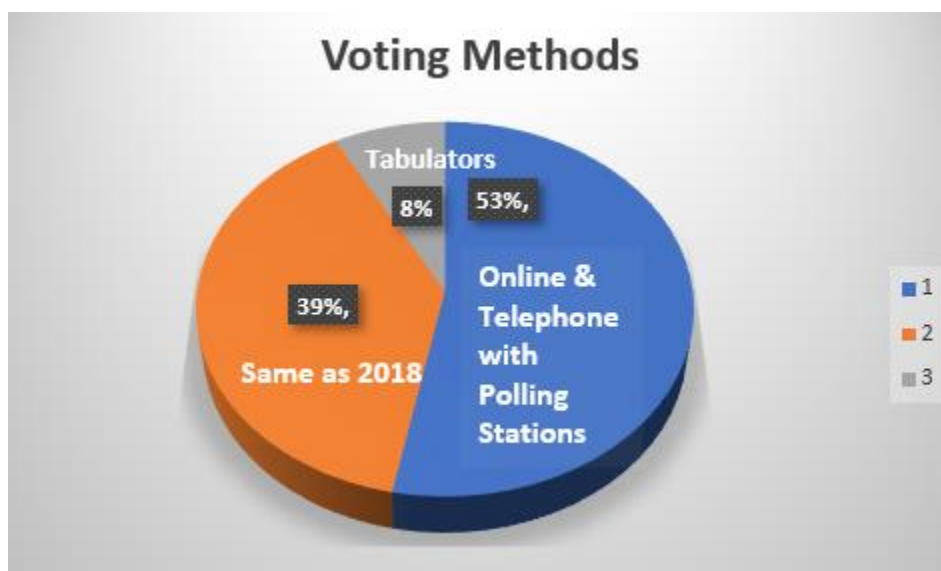
The purpose of this report is to provide Council with the outcome of the Voting Method Survey and to get direction on the voting method for the 2022 Municipal and School Board Election so that planning can begin.

Background:

Council directed staff to send out a survey to residents to gather feedback on their preferred method of voting in the upcoming Municipal and School Board Election. A total of 113 surveys were returned with the following outcome (note not all participants answered all questions):

Question	Online	Paper	Total	Percentages
Should Cost be a factor - Yes	50	23	73	65%
Should cost be a factor - no	22	14	36	32%
Are you comfortable attending a polling station - Yes	58	26	84	74%
Are you comfortable attending a polling station -No	16	10	26	23%
Voting Option Preferred				
Electronic	45	15	60	53%
Same as 2018	26	18	44	39%
Hybrid	6	3	9	8%

While not an overwhelming majority, it appears that online and telephone voting was the most popular option at 53% of the 113 respondents.



A total of 65% of respondents felt that cost should factor into the decision on voting methods. Online and Telephone voting with polling or help centres is estimated to be the most economical option at \$17,750.

A total of 74% of respondents were comfortable attending a polling station, which means that if Council chooses to move forward with the option of Telephone and Online voting with polling stations or voter help centres, voters would not be dissuaded to vote by lack of internet or lack of computer skills. Voters could come to a polling station/voter help centre and use a touch screen to enter their vote and there would be advanced polls/voter help centres as well as voting day polling stations/voter help centres to provide plenty of access for voters.

In the last election 55.2% of all voters voted by alternative voting (online and telephone), so the learning curve would be for those who chose to vote by paper in the last election and staff would be available to provide assistance to those that require it at a polling station/voter help centres. Polling stations/voter help centres also allow for new or unregistered voters to be added to the voting list and get to vote in one place. West Elgin has completed two (2) previous elections with the use of online and telephone ballots and the fact that the majority of votes cast has been through these methods in the last two elections and that polling stations are provided for those who prefer attending in person. Aylmer ran their election with Intelvote this same way (online and telephone voting with voter help centres) in 2018 and intends on doing so again in 2022, with the Township of Malahide also seriously considering this for 2022 and there is a possibility that more cost savings can be realized if other municipalities in Elgin County follow suit.

Financial Implications:

The estimated cost of \$17,750 was the least expensive option brought forward and with the current amount of \$30,000 in the reserve fund for the election we may even realize some cost savings which can be put towards future elections.

Policies/Legislation:

Municipal Elections Act, 1996