



Subject: *Post-Municipal Election 2024 Report*
To: Corporate & Residential Services
Date Prepared: November 15, 2024
Related Motions:
Prepared by: Sheralee MacEwan, Assistant Municipal Clerk/Assistant Returning Officer
Approved by: Kim Ramsay, Chief Administrative Officer

Summary

The Municipality of East Hants conducted a fully electronic 2024 Municipal Election offering both telephone and online voting options, conducted by Intelivote Systems Inc. The voting period was held October 10-19, 2024. There were elections in 4 of 11 districts (Districts 3, 5, 10 and 11) resulting in 2 new members of the 11-member Council.

Seven (7) members of Council were acclaimed including one of the new Council members (District 6). The Conseil Scolaire Acadien Provincial (CSAP) representative was also acclaimed.

Financial Impact Statement

\$143,000	Original budget
\$ 49,707	Projected Actual Cost

There is \$130,257 remaining in the Election Reserve, post 2024 election spending.

Recommendation

That the Corporate & Residential Services Committee recommend to Council that Council receive this report and place it on file for future planning consideration for the 2028 Municipal Election.

Recommended Motion

Move that the Corporate & Residential Services Committee recommend to Council that Council receive this report "Post-Municipal Election 2024 Report" as attached to the December 10th, Executive Committee agenda and place it on file for future planning consideration for the 2028 Municipal Election.

Background

Candidates

There were nine (9) candidates in the four (4) districts that held elections in 2024.

Poll Locations

There were no physical poll locations, as the election was conducted fully electronically by telephone and online. A Mobile Poll was not required at the Magnolia Continuing Care facility in Enfield due to the acclamation in that district.

Staffing

In addition to Kim Ramsay, Returning Officer, there were two municipal staff who provided direct election planning support (Sheralee MacEwan, Assistant Municipal Clerk and Jessica van den Hof, Business & Legislative Administrator).


Support of other internal staff was also required as needed:

CAO Office & Corporate Services = Communications, Technology and Administrative
Planning & Development Department = Mapping and support of online look up tools
Finance Department = Financial transactions and budgeting

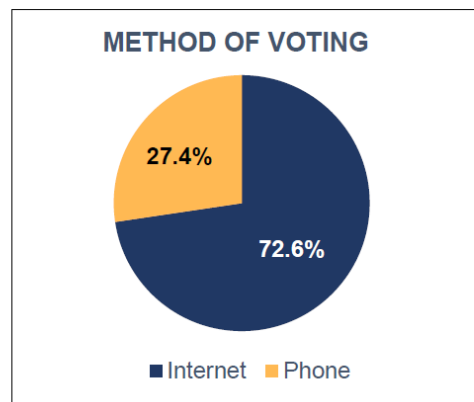
No external staff were required.

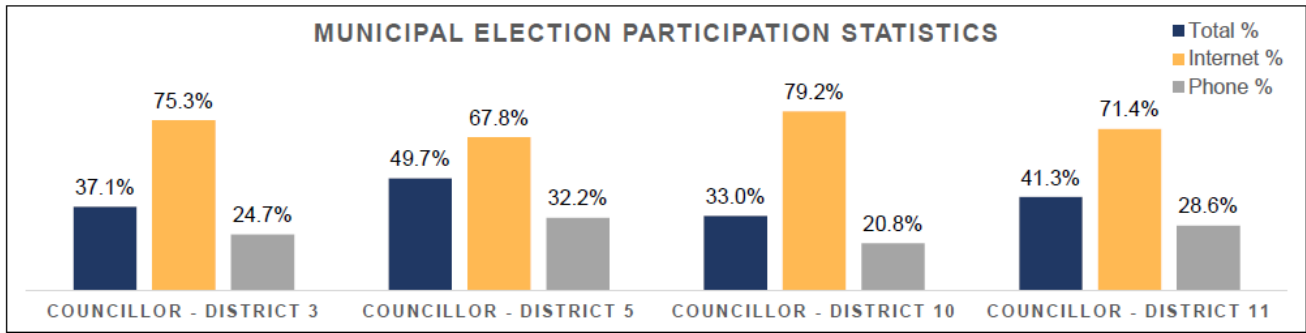
Statistical Data

The table below is a sample of statistical data that was provided to us post-election by our contractor, Intelivote Systems Inc. Please see Appendix A for more detailed statistical information. The overall voter participation was 40.5%.

 **inteli**vote systems inc **2024 East Hants Municipal and CSAP Elections**
Election Statistics

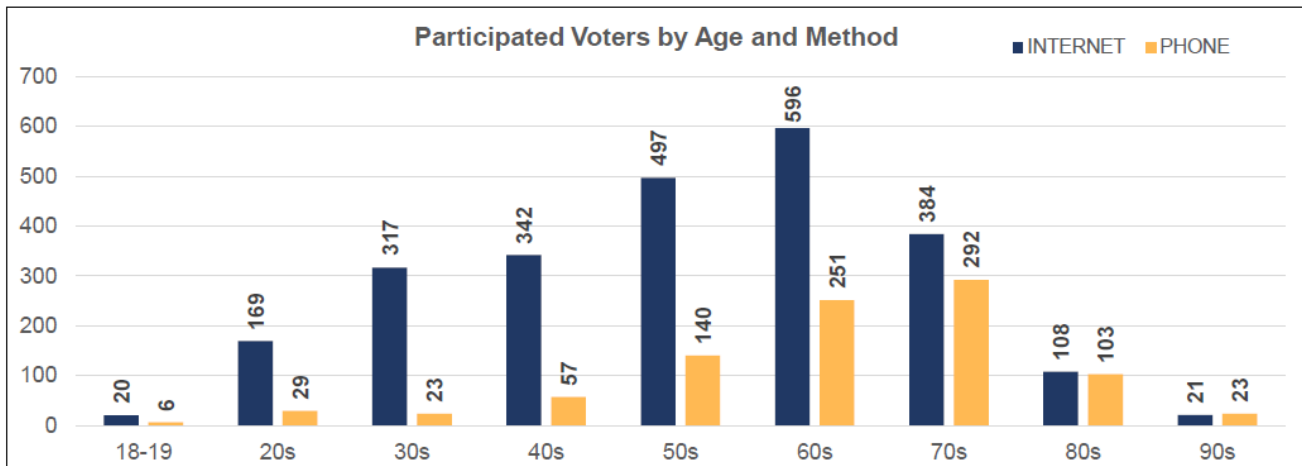
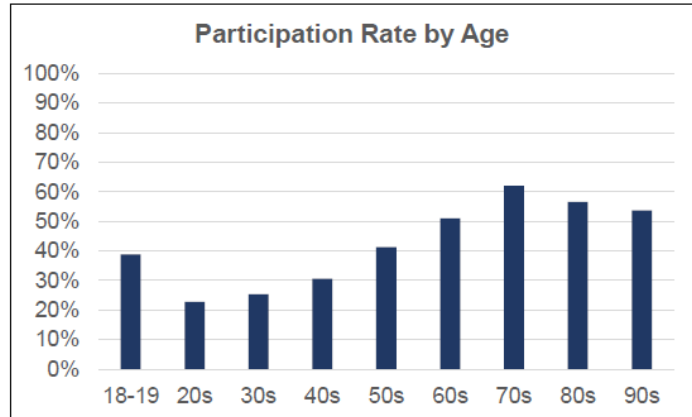
	Information Base	Number	%
1	Number of eligible electors in system.	8,343	
2	Number of electors who cast at least one ballot.	3,378	
3	Participation rate.	40.5%	
4	Voters who used the internet to vote.	2,454	72.6%
5	Voters who used the phone to vote.	924	27.4%
6	Average amount of time a voter spent voting using the internet.	32 sec	
7	Average amount of time a voter spent voting using the telephone.	50 sec	





2024 East Hants Municipal and School Board Elections Age Statistics

Age Breakdown of Who Voted					
Age	ELIG.	VOTED	INTERNET	PHONE	% Part.
18-19	67	26	20	6	38.8%
20s	868	198	169	29	22.8%
30s	1,345	340	317	23	25.3%
40s	1,308	399	342	57	30.5%
50s	1,543	637	497	140	41.3%
60s	1,662	847	596	251	51.0%
70s	1,090	676	384	292	62.0%
80s	373	211	108	103	56.6%
90s	82	44	21	23	53.7%
99+	5	0	0	0	0.0%
Total	8,343	3,378	2,454	924	40.5%
			72.6%	27.4%	



There was an increase in voter participation by seniors compared to 2020:

Age	2020	2024
70's	53%	62%
80's	48%	56.6%
90's	43%	53.7%

Voter Help:

Two (2) people monitored the voter help email and phone line. A third person was added on Election Day, October 19th, but calls did not spike on that day.

Between December 1, 2023 and election day, October 20, 2024, we received 325 emails and sent 249 election related emails.

The election phone line was activated on July 23, 2024 and received 187 calls over the three-month period.

We received a few calls for support with a suggestion being made that a voter support station would be helpful (although most people went on to vote seamlessly by internet or telephone). This could be a consideration for future elections, to have a place and a time where voters could go to use the internet to vote, take oaths, etc. throughout the Municipality.

Costs

The following table outlines the budget and actual amounts spent on the last three elections.

2024 Budget	Cost Elements	Projected Final 2024	Final 2020	Final 2016
	6009 OVERTIME WAGES FULLTIME	\$ 1,093		
27,500.00	6014 HONORARIUM ELECTION	\$ 10,742	\$ 26,833	\$ 62,690
27,500.00	* SALARIES/HONORARIUMS	\$ 11,835	\$ 26,833	\$ 62,690
1,000.00	6075 OFFICE SUPPLIES	\$ -	\$ 13,596	\$ 3,283
	6045 GENERAL MILEAGE		\$ 3,922	\$ 2,106
6,000.00	6100 ADVERTISING	\$ 5,042	\$ 4,415	\$ 8,164
4,000.00	6105 POSTAGE	\$ 3,879	\$ 2,739	\$ 1,637
300.00	6116 CELLULAR TELEPHONE	\$ -	\$ 187	
	6115 TELEPHONE		\$ 37	
200.00	6135 MEETING EXPENSE	\$ -		
	7070 BUILDING RENTAL		\$ 950	\$ 3,710
7,000.00	6165 PRINTING	\$ 4,060	\$ 5,055	\$ 5,974
18,500.00	* GENERAL OPERATIONS	\$ 12,981	\$ 30,902	\$ 24,873
17,000.00	6097 LEGAL SERVICES	\$ 3,201	\$ 8,445	
80,000.00	8100 PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	\$ 21,690	\$ 66,414	\$ 78
97,000.00	* SERVICES ACQUIRED	\$ 24,891	\$ 74,859	\$ 78
143,000.00	TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 49,707	\$ 132,594	\$ 87,641

Returning Officer:

2024 total cost = \$49,707 (Returning Officer = \$10,742 CAO with staff assistance)

2020 total cost = \$132,594.37 (Returning Officer = \$25,000 contracted RO with staff assistance)

2016 total cost = \$87,641.05 (Returning Officer = \$13,981 CAO with staff assistance)

Costs (Paper vs. Electronic/Telephone)

2024

Overhead for the election was \$23,957, which includes Returning Officer, Legal, Postage and Advertising. This equates to \$7.09/vote.

The cost to administer the electronic voting includes intelivote expense and printing, \$25,707 or \$7.62/vote.

The cost to do electronic/telephone voting was \$14.71/vote.

2020

Overhead for the election was \$40,823, which includes Returning Officer, Legal, Phone, Postage and Advertising. This equates to \$6.19/vote.

The cost to run polling stations (minus the additional costs with COVID measures) was \$43.89/vote plus the \$6.19 overhead = \$50/vote.

The cost to run polling stations (with the additional costs for COVID measures) was \$68.23/vote plus the \$6.19 overhead = \$74/vote.

The cost to do electronic/telephone voting was \$7.07/vote plus the \$6.19 overhead = \$13.26/vote.

2016

Overhead for the election was \$27,064.76, which includes Returning Officer, Office Supplies, Photocopying, Advertising and Postage.

This equates to \$9.44/vote.

The cost to run polling stations was \$21.12/vote plus the \$9.44/vote overhead = \$30.56/vote.

Discussion

Electronic Voting (telephone and online) provided by Intelivote Systems Inc. was considered to be very successful.

Due to the popularity of electronic voting across the province and other areas of weakness in the Municipal Elections Act, staff provided feedback in 2020 to the province for possible legislative changes that will better support electronic voting and clarifications for future elections, ie. administration of oaths, clarifications on when a candidate can be in a poll location, no need for “divisions” in electronic voting, be able to limit the need of poll workers, allow for a recount at the Returning Officer level rather than the requirement to go to court, requirement to show identification, etc. Legislative changes have not happened and we will continue to lobby for change.

The two biggest areas of concern in 2020 were with errors in birthdates in the voter database and returned mail from Canada Post. Staff followed up with both Canada Post and the Elections Nova Scotia in 2020. There were only a few date of birth errors in 2024, so this issue seems to have improved. Canada Post returned mail that was “undeliverable”, primarily because address was not known or the resident had moved. 119 Voter Information Letters were returned by Canada Post. There were no patterns to cause concern for any specific area. Any updates/corrections made to the database by our staff will be updated permanently in the database by Elections Nova Scotia, as time permits. They recently conducted a Provincial Election, which may cause delays.

Reserves

There is currently \$25,000 per year going into the Election Reserve. Council motion C20(335) directed staff to put \$35,000/year into reserves following the 2020 election, but it was later decided that it wasn't necessary to increase as the reserves balance was deemed sufficient.

Post 2024 election expenses, there remains \$130,257 in reserves.

Based on the variable cost of the 2024 election and an assumed \$25,000 overhead, the current cost to run a fully electronic 11 district election would be approximately \$190,000 (based on 21,585 voters).

In 2028, East Hants will have \$230,000 in reserves for the 2028 election.

Suggestions for 2028

A pre-election report will be in front of Council in early 2028 to establish the parameters of the next election. The following will form part of those recommendations:

- Conduct a fully electronic election
- Continue to offer the Voter Helpline (number of call takers may need to be adjusted depending on number of districts that hold elections)
- Establish 4 Voter Help Locations to provide in-person voting assistance (LEMC, Maitland, Kennetcook and Mount Uniacke)

Recommendation

It is recommended that this report be received and placed on file for planning consideration for the 2028 Municipal Election.