

Candidate's Guide to Municipal Elections

Produced for Council Elections

October 17, 2020



Region of Queens Municipality

FOREWORD

This guide has been prepared by the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Region of Queens Municipality, with the assistance of the Municipal Elections Officer, to assist those who are contemplating offering for municipal elected office in the upcoming elections. School board elections are no longer held. This version has been prepared for the regular elections in 2020. There are a few references to “special elections”, which may be required from time to time between regular elections. For more information on special elections you should also refer to Section 13 of the Municipal Elections Act (MEA).

The guide is intended to inform prospective candidates on:

- qualifications for nomination (including disqualifications for office)
- nomination procedures
- relevant election procedures
- duties, obligations and responsibilities of candidates
- duties, obligations and responsibilities of elected councillors and the Mayor

Presentation of the information in this guide is very general, and prospective candidates should refer directly to the *Municipal Elections Act* for specific authority. Copies of these Acts are available electronically on the government website at www.gov.ns.ca and may be available from the municipal returning officer.

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Key Dates for Quick Reference

March 7, 2020

- **Residency required to qualify as candidate in Municipality**

September 17, 2020

(nomination can be filed by appointment with the returning officer in the seven business days prior to nomination day)(Sept. 8-Sept. 17, 2020)

- **Nomination Day**

September 18, 2020

- **Last day for candidate to withdraw**

October 8 , 2020

- **First Advance Poll**

October 13, 2020

- **Second Advance Poll**

October 17, 2020

- **Election Day**

October 20, 2020

- **Official Addition**

October 24, 2020

- **Last day to file affidavit**
(re: removal of posters and return of voters list for return of full or part of deposit)

October 27, 2020

- **Last day to apply for a recount**

December 16, 2020

- **Last day to file campaign contribution disclosure form**

Candidates Check List for Council

1. Decide which office (mayor or councillor) you wish to be nominated for.
2. Check to establish that you hold the qualifications for such office (age, citizenship, etc.). Details are on page 9.
3. Ensure that you are not disqualified from holding such an office (occupation, residency, etc.). **The onus is on the person nominated for election to an office to file a *bona fide* nomination paper.** Council candidates must have paid taxes and charges that are liens on their property.
4. Appoint an official agent or file a declaration that you will be acting as your own official agent. The official agent must keep track of any campaign contributions and open a bank account for this purpose.
5. Note the Key Dates provided for quick reference on page five of this guide.
6. Note the name and office location of the returning officer for the election. Edward (Ted) Bulley is the Returning Officer and Shelley Connolly is the Assistant Returning Officer.
7. Obtain the correct nomination paper.
8. Complete the nomination section of the nomination paper and determine the qualifications required for the electors who are eligible to nominate you for election to council.
9. Obtain the required number of signatures of qualified electors as nominators on your nomination paper. A nomination paper must be signed by at least five qualified electors whose names appear on the list of electors.
10. Complete and sign the "Oath and Consent" portion of the nomination paper. If you are away from the municipality you may in writing authorize your agent to do so.
11. Obtain a certificate that your charges that are liens and your taxes are paid. File your nomination paper with the returning officer between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on nomination day, or by appointment during the seven business days preceding nomination day. Once your nomination paper has been accepted by the returning officer, who accepts the nomination by signing the receipt, it is open for inspection by the public. Once accepted, the returning officer will provide you or your official agent with a copy of the amended list of electors entitled to vote for the office for which you are a candidate. Note

that the list of electors is to be used for election purposes only and all of your copies must be returned after the election. The *Municipal Elections Act* does not allow the list to be open for inspection, disposed of or sold for other purposes.

12. You or your official agent may also appoint other agents or scrutineers to represent you at the polls on Election Day. Only one poll agent may represent you at a polling station at any one time. As a candidate, you may not act as this agent.
13. Election Day... **DON'T FORGET TO VOTE!**
14. Remove signs, posters, and other election advertising within seven days of ordinary polling day and return your copies of the voters list including any electronic copies, or confirmation of the destruction or deletion of any electronic copies. Failure to do so is an offence.
15. Campaign contribution disclosure forms must be filed within 60 days of the election. Failure to file or filing late is an offence.

Administration of Municipal Elections

Municipal Polling Districts

Each regional, county, or district municipality and some towns are divided into **polling districts**. A polling district is the geographic area that an elected councillor represents. A polling district can elect one member to council, or more than one, in the case of some towns with a ward system. Some towns are only one polling district, with the council members elected at large.

Returning Officers

The municipal official who is responsible for administering the election in the municipality is the returning officer.

The returning officer for the 2020 municipal election is Edward (Ted) Bulley.

The municipal returning officer is responsible for the administration of the election in all the polling districts in the municipality, and is the person who will be able to give candidates all necessary information about the election.

Region of Queens Municipality does not currently have a bylaw that allows alternate voting methods like via the Internet or telephone. Therefore, all voting takes place at local polling stations. Should that change, the returning officer will make that information available to candidates.

Polling Divisions

Municipal polling districts are divided into polling divisions. A polling division contains up to 1000 electors. A polling station is established for each polling division.

Poll Officials

The returning officer appoints a deputy returning officer and a poll clerk for each polling station in the municipality.

The deputy returning officer is responsible for the management of the polling station on voting days. The poll clerk is responsible for keeping the written records of the voting.

Becoming a Candidate for Council

What Are the Qualifications to Run for Council?

In order to run for council (mayor or councillor) you must:

- be 18 years of age at the time of nomination
- be a Canadian citizen
- be ordinarily resident in the municipality for 6 months preceding nomination day (by March 17th), and continue to so reside

You do not need to reside in the polling district of the municipality in which you wish to seek election, as long as you meet the residency requirement of six months in the municipality.

Disqualifications - Council

A number of situations or occupations disqualify the following from seeking municipal office (s.18 of the *Municipal Elections Act*):

- members of parliament or senators;
- members of the legislative assembly;
- members of a village commission;
- judges;
- a person who accepts or holds office or employment in the service of the municipality, or any utility, board, commission, committee or office thereof, to which any salary, fee, wages, allowance, emolument, profit or other remuneration of any kind is attached, for so long as he holds or is engaged in the office or employment unless the person is on a leave of absence pursuant to subsection 17C(2) of the *Municipal Elections Act*. (This disqualification does not apply to volunteer firefighters with a municipal firefighting organization, school board employees and employees of joint bodies of two or more municipalities to which the municipality appoints at least one representative and to which the municipality provides funding);
- councillors in another municipal unit (during a special election);
- persons who, within five years prior to nomination day, have been convicted of bribery or a corrupt practice contrary to the *Municipal Elections Act* or who have been disqualified from any office pursuant to the provisions of the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*.

Requirement to Pay Taxes and Liens - Council

To qualify for nomination to council, you must ensure that all municipal charges that are taxes and liens that are due have been fully paid, and, if a municipality has provided for payment of taxes by installment or interim payments, all installments or interim payments due as of nomination day must be paid. You will need to get a certificate from the municipality to this effect, which must be filed with your nomination paper. This applies even if you do not own property or owe taxes.

What If I or My Family Member(s) Do Business With the Municipality?

Municipal public officials are expected to place the public interest before their own private advantage.

Rules for determining and declaring a conflict of interest are set out in the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*.

The Act requires any member of council who has a financial interest in any matter coming before the council to declare that interest and to withdraw from any discussion of it. If the meeting is closed, the member must leave the room where the meeting is being held. If the meeting is open, the member must withdraw and leave the room or sit in the public gallery.

The member is thus disqualified from dealing with the particular matter in which he or she has an interest but not from sitting on council when other matters are discussed.

In general, any qualified person with a potential conflicting interest is free to seek municipal office. The only requirement is that, once elected, the incumbent must comply with the principle of disclosure and withdrawal whenever his or her financial interest may be affected by an action of the council or local board.

It should be noted that the interest of a member is broadly defined to include the pecuniary interest of relatives, a spouse, and a spouse's relatives. However, several situations that are common and of minor consequence are deemed not to constitute conflict of interest. Please refer to the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act* for additional detail.

How Do I Become a Nominated Candidate for Council?

1. Obtain a Nomination Paper and Other Nomination Information

Contact the returning officer for Region of Queens Municipality. Besides the nomination form, other information about running in the election will be available.

You can only be nominated for one office. You must use the correct nomination paper for that office.

2. Complete the Nomination Paper for Council

You will need:

- **At least five qualified electors who will sign the nomination paper and nominate you as a candidate.**

The names of the people who sign your nomination paper must appear on the list of electors and they must be qualified to vote for you. This means that they must be eligible to vote in the district in which you are running, and to vote for the office for which you are running.

You should get more than five persons to sign your nomination paper in the event one or more of your nominators is not qualified.

- **The name of your official agent.**

Your official agent is responsible for filing your campaign finance disclosure forms following the election, and can act on your behalf at certain times.

You can act as your own official agent but cannot act as such at the polls.

- **Complete the Consent and Oath or Affirmation of the Candidate.**

The Oath or Affirmation of the Candidate must be sworn. The returning officer or another person who is qualified to take oaths must take your Oath or Affirmation (Section 146).

The Oath or Affirmation states that you consent to the nomination that you are qualified to run, that you have paid your taxes and any charges that are liens on property, and that you will accept the office, if you are elected.

3. **Provide a Certificate Respecting Taxes from the Municipality**

The certificate must be signed by the municipal official who is qualified to do so.

The certificate indicates that all taxes and charges that are liens that you owe to the municipality have been paid as of nomination day and, if the municipality has provided for payment of taxes by installment or interim payment, all installments or interim payments due as of nomination day must be paid. This is required whether or not you owe taxes or own property.

Include the certificate with your nomination paper when it is filed.

4. **Pay the Required Deposit**

A nomination deposit of \$200 is required at the time of filing your nomination papers.

The deposit must be paid in:

- cash
- certified cheque or bank draft payable to Region of Queens Municipality

- postal money order payable to Region of Queens Municipality
- personal cheques are not accepted

Candidates are entitled to have their nomination deposit refunded after the election if certain criteria are met (see p. 24).

5. You are Officially Nominated

Once the returning officer is satisfied that you have met the requirements for nomination, the **returning officer will sign the receipt** on the nomination paper. You will be officially nominated as a candidate for council.

When Do I File My Nomination Paper for Council?

Nomination day is **Tuesday, September 8, 2020, between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.** You can file your nomination paper early, starting seven business days before nomination day, **by appointment with the returning officer.**

Candidates are encouraged to file early, so that any potential problems can be resolved prior to the deadline.

If you cannot personally file the nomination paper during these times, your official agent can complete and file it for you. You must authorize your official agent in writing to do this on your behalf. The written authorization must be filed in advance with the returning officer, or along with your nomination paper.

As soon as you file your nomination paper, the information about your candidacy becomes public information.

Can I Change My Mind About Running for Council?

You can withdraw as a candidate up to **4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, September 9, 2020**; however, you will forfeit your deposit. After that date, your name must appear on the ballot paper.

You can ask for a change in the particulars in how your name appears on the ballot paper up to **4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, September 9, 2020.**

The List of Electors

When Can I Get the List of Electors?

Once your nomination papers are filed, the returning officer will provide you with the list of electors.

If you are running for **council**, the returning officer will give you a copy of the amended list of electors for the polling district in which you are running.

If you are running for **mayor**, the returning officer will give you a copy of the amended lists of electors for the whole municipality.

What Are My Responsibilities for the List of Electors?

The list of electors can be used for electoral purposes only. This means that you can use the list for campaigning for election, persons working on your campaign, and your agents in the polling stations, can also use it.

Once the election is over, candidates must return **all** copies of the list of electors in your possession, including electronic copies, or confirmation of the destruction or deletion of the list of electors (this includes copies you may have given to persons working on your campaign).

While the list of electors is in your possession, it cannot be open for inspection (except for an electoral purpose), disposed of or sold.

What Happens If an Elector's Name Is Not on the List of Electors?

An elector whose name is not on the preliminary list of electors can be added to the list by contacting the returning officer any time up to three days before the first advance polling day to get their name added to the list.

An elector whose name is not on the revised list of electors can also be added at the polling station on both the advance poll days and on Election Day.

Election Campaigns

Are There Any Rules About Campaigning in an Election?

You can begin campaigning at any time.

You or your representatives are entitled to lawfully campaign in locked multiple unit buildings or condominium complexes, during reasonable hours. You must approach the superintendent or building management to gain access to the building. Obstruction is an offence.

You can campaign on Election Day, **but you cannot loiter or solicit votes around a polling station, or within 200 feet of a polling station.** A candidate who is loitering or soliciting votes can be ordered away by the deputy returning officer, and can be arrested for disobeying the order.

No one can wear partisan buttons or other materials within 200 feet of the wall of a building containing a polling station on Election Day.

What about Election Advertising?

All printed election material must be identified. Every advertisement having reference to an election that is printed, published, broadcast or distributed, either electronically, or in hard copy, must indicate the name of the person on whose behalf the advertisement is published, printed, broadcast or distributed.

All advertising published in a newspaper or other publication must state the name of the person on whose behalf it is published.

Candidates are responsible for all advertisements made on their behalf.

Failure to comply with these provisions is an offence.

A tenant or owner of a condominium unit may display election advertising on their own leased or owned premises, subject to any reasonable conditions relating to size or type of election posters that may be set by the landlord or condominium corporation. A landlord or condominium corporation may prohibit election advertising posters in common areas.

Region of Queens Municipality will provide information about where you can post your election campaign signs on public property. There are also rules concerning the posting of materials along provincial highways, municipal streets and roads, as well as prohibitions against posting signs on power or telephone poles.

You can advertise on Election Day, **with the exception that there can be no election advertising material placed, posted or distributed within 200 feet of a wall of a building in which a polling station is situated.** It is an offence to post or display such advertising. If such advertising is placed in violation of this provision, the returning officer can have it removed and deduct the cost of removal from your candidate's deposit.

If you or your representatives are transporting electors to the polls, remember that the prohibition against election signage within 200 feet of the polling place applies to advertising affixed to vehicles.

What About Financing My Election Campaign?

Many candidates will receive contributions toward the cost of mounting an election campaign. The law is that a candidate has a responsibility to disclose the names of the donors of more than \$50.00 to his/her campaign, and the amount of the contributions. Beginning in 2016 all candidates must file a financial disclosure form, even if they had no contributions to their campaigns. As noted above, any contributions of \$50.00 or more must be appropriately documented.

The practice is viewed as a method to increase public confidence in the electoral process by making it less likely that a candidate, once elected, will act secretly to further the interests of a particular person or corporation.

Disclosure of campaign contributions is done by candidates for provincial and federal elections as well.

Unlike federal or provincial election campaigns, no income tax credits or deductions are available to donors to municipal candidates.

Rules for Recording and Disclosing Campaign Contributions

The following rules and procedures are to be observed:

A Candidate Must Have an Official Agent

All candidates are required to have an official agent, who is responsible for taking contributions for the candidate's campaign, and recording the information about the donors.

A candidate can appoint someone or act as his/her own official agent by selecting the option on Form 17.

Whether you appoint an official agent or act as your own official agent is a decision that you will have to make, depending on the size of your campaign and your own personal inclinations.

There are no particular qualifications to be an official agent, but the candidate should select someone responsible, who will be able to keep track of the funds donated and make the necessary reports.

If an association is formed to promote the election of a candidate, it is subject to the disclosure

requirements. An association is any group of one or more people with the goal of the election of a particular candidate. This group usually takes the form of the Committee to elect [candidate A].

An association **must** appoint an official agent.

An individual acting on behalf of an association would file a letter naming the official agent, or the official agent could file the document indicating that he or she is acting as official agent of the association. The agent's name and address must be included. The association should also include its name and an address where communications can be directed.

When Do I Need to Appoint an Official Agent?

The legislation recognizes that you can be considered to be a candidate before you actually file your nomination papers.

Nomination papers cannot be filed until 4 - 5 weeks before Election Day, but you may begin organizing your campaign or actually campaigning before that time. **As soon as you begin to accept contributions, you must have an official agent appointed.**

The appointment of your official agent must be in writing. Form 17 can be used for this purpose. The official agent must take the oath in Form 17A.

The appointment of an official agent must take place no later than the close of nominations on nomination day. If you are acting as your own official agent, you must indicate this on your nomination paper.

At any time before ordinary polling day a candidate may dismiss an official agent and appoint another official agent by stating these facts in writing to the returning officer.

If you are acting as your own official agent, you can subsequently appoint an official agent before the close of nominations on nomination day.

How Are the Contributions Handled?

Whether you appoint an official agent or you act as your own official agent, it is necessary to place the contributions in a separate account. The contributions must be dealt with separately from a candidate's personal funds.

The official agent must record the full name and residential or business address of each contributor who contributes \$50.00 or more. A post office box is not to be used as an address, unless that is the only address available.

The reporting period is from election to election. Any contributions that were not reported in the Disclosure Statement filed after the 2016 election (or from a subsequent special election) must be reported in the 2020 Disclosure Statement.

Are There Restrictions on the Sources of Contributions?

A candidate can accept contributions from any donor, with the following exceptions:

- Anonymous contributions cannot be accepted. If an anonymous contribution cannot be returned to the contributor, it must be turned over to the municipality.
- **No person can contribute funds not beneficially belonging to that person or funds that have been given or furnished to that person by another person for the purpose of contributing those funds** unless the person to whom the funds beneficially belong is identified as the contributor or unless the person contributing the funds is the spouse of the person to whom the funds beneficially belong.

Where a **trust or fund is established to further the goals of a candidate or association and the trust or fund is not controlled by an association or candidate**, the names of the contributors to the trust or fund shall be disclosed when a transfer is made from the trust or fund to either an association or candidate.

What Is a Contribution That Needs to be Recorded by the Official Agent?

The legislation defines a contribution as services, money, or other property donated to an association or a person to support the political purposes of an association or candidate, but does not include personal services or the use of a vehicle volunteered by a person and not provided as part of that person's work in the service of an employer.

Contributions can therefore be of three types:

1. **Services** donated to a campaign are valued at the normal charge that they would attract in the marketplace.

Note that there are two exceptions. A person can donate, as long as the donation is not given as part of the person's employment:

- **his or her personal services, or**
- **the use of a personal vehicle**

Some examples might be useful. A service that might be donated during an election campaign is the design of a brochure by a graphic designer. The designer might be donating his/her services as part of his/her work as an employee of a printer, in which case the service is a contribution, and the normal cost of the service would show as the amount of the contribution. If, on the other hand, the designer did the brochure on his/her own, without regard to his/her employment, then the contribution would be a personal service, and would not have to be disclosed.

Another type of service typically used is time and effort of campaign workers. Individuals may answer the telephone in a headquarters, or canvass for the candidate, as examples. This type of work is also personal service, and does not need to be disclosed.

The exception for the donation of the use of a personal vehicle as a contribution means that

the official agent does not have to disclose the contribution of individuals who undertake to drive persons to the polls on Election Day.

2. Money donated to a candidate clearly has to be recorded, in the event the cumulative amount of the donations from the donor exceed \$50.00.

3. Other property donated to a candidate would be valued at its current market value. An example might be the use of a photocopier, or the donation of space for a campaign headquarters. If there was a social event to meet the candidate, and if volunteers made sandwiches for it, then the cost of the food would show as a donation, but not the time spent by the volunteers in preparing the sandwiches.

The value of donated goods and services that is recorded is the value that would have to be paid for them if the candidate would have had to contract for them.

There is a special rule for the valuing of goods and services donated for sale or auction. Section 49A(10) of the *Municipal Elections Act* states that the value to be recorded is the dollar value that was actually paid at the sale or auction, regardless of what the commercial value might be. For example, a local artisan might donate a piece of artwork which would normally sell at retail for \$100.00. If the candidate held a fund-raising auction, and someone paid \$200.00 for it, then the contribution would be recorded as \$200.00, and the artisan would be recorded as the donor.

What Contributions need to be disclosed?

Even though the official agent must record the amount and source of all contributions, **only contributions which exceed \$50.00 that have been received since the previous election (either in 2016 or since the last special election in the polling district) need to be disclosed.**

Even though contributions in excess of \$50.00 need to be disclosed, remember that the contributions can be cumulative. For example, a contributor might give \$25.00 at one time, and then another amount later on. If the contributor gives a second amount which exceeds \$25.00, then the contributions become reportable, even if individual contributions do not exceed \$50.00.

Filing the Disclosure Statement

The Disclosure Statement is in Form 40 for candidates and in Form 41 for associations.

If a candidate does not file a nomination paper, he/she is not required to file a Disclosure Statement.

The Disclosure Statement must be filed within 60 days after Election Day **(no later than December 16, 2020)** with the Deputy Clerk, Shelley Connolly.

The Disclosure Statement must identify the contributions in excess of \$50.00 that have been received during the campaign or since the 2016 Disclosure Statement (or a Disclosure Statement that was filed after a special election), and include all contributions in excess of

\$50.00 received up to the time that the Disclosure Statement was filed.

Beginning in 2016 all Candidates, even those who received no contributions at all must file the Financial Disclosure statement. As noted above those contributions of \$50.00 and more must be individually recorded, listing the name and address of the person making the donation.

Voting Procedures

Who can be at the polls?

Only election officers conducting the election, candidates (some limitations), agents of candidates, a peace officer (if appointed), and a voter actually voting are entitled to be present in the polling station at any one time.

Everyone in attendance is to maintain the secrecy of the voting.

What Are the Voting Days and Times?

Note there are three voting days:

- **First advance poll day:** Thursday, October 8, 2020 from 12:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
- **Second advance poll day:** Tuesday, October 13, 2020 from 12:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
- **Election Day:** Saturday, October 17, 2020 from 8:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Electors who expect they may be unable to vote on Election Day are able to vote at either of the advance polls.

What If an Elector Cannot Vote on Any of the Polling Days?

An elector who is going to be absent from the municipality on the advance poll days and ordinary polling day or is unable to attend at the polling station because of illness or physical disability can vote by **proxy**.

In order to vote by proxy, the elector's name must appear on the list of electors:

If a person wishes to vote by proxy, that person must complete and sign the application form (Form 21). If the elector completing the application form is not sure of his or her number on the list of electors, or his or her polling division number, those spaces can be left blank and can be completed by the returning officer, as long as there is no doubt about which elector has signed the application. For example, students who complete the application form while away from home will not have the list of electors available and therefore will not have that information.

When the application form has been completed, it must be returned to the municipal returning officer at any time between the day after official nomination day (September 8, 2020) and 5:00 p.m. on Friday, the eighth day before ordinary polling day. **The returning officer cannot issue a proxy paper (Form 22) after 5:00 p.m. on Friday, October 9, 2020 the eighth day before ordinary polling day.**

The application form must be delivered to the returning officer either by the elector who wishes to appoint another person to vote on his or her behalf by proxy, or by the proxy voter who will act for the elector. **No other person may bring this application form to the returning officer.**

If the proxy voter and the elector are unrelated, they must each be on the list of electors for the municipality and the proxy voter must not have been appointed as proxy voter for any other unrelated voters.

If the proxy voter and the elector are related as child, grandchild, brother, sister, parent, grandparent, husband or wife, they must both be on the list of electors for the municipality.

If the elector is a resident in a home for special care, the elector can appoint a proxy voter who is related as a child, grandchild, brother, sister, parent, grandparent, husband or wife who is of voting age. There is no requirement for the proxy voter to be on any list of electors.

A proxy voter can vote for any number of related persons (as described in this part), and **one** unrelated person.

Can I Be Present or Have Representatives in the Polling Stations?

Rules for Candidates

As a candidate, you can be present in the polling station during voting hours, and during the counting of the ballots.

If you do choose to go to the polling station, remember that **you cannot loiter or solicit votes within 200 feet of the polling station.**

In the past few elections, voters have complained about candidates standing by the doorways and in the parking lots of polling places to greet the voters. While candidates may be in a polling station to vote, to check with their agents, or to walk through, Section 105 of the *Municipal Elections Act* authorizes the returning officer or deputy returning officer to order from the polling station and the area within 200 feet of the polling station anyone who is loitering or soliciting votes. This includes candidates. The returning officer or deputy returning officer may have arrested any person who disobeys an order.

You cannot act as a poll agent, even if you are acting as your own official agent.

You cannot act as a friend of an elector (assist an elector to mark a ballot) unless the elector is your child, grandchild, brother, sister, grandparent, parent or spouse.

You can be present to witness the counting of the ballots after the polling station closes, but you cannot witness the count at more than one polling station. This means that if you are in a central polling place with more than one polling station, you cannot move from polling station to polling station to observe the count.

Candidate's Agents

Your **official agent** can be present in the polling stations, and can act as a poll agent. **(Remember that if you are your own official agent, you still cannot act as a poll agent).** Your official agent must have an appointment in Form 17 before he/she can enter the polling stations.

You may appoint any number of **poll agents**. An agent may be appointed to more than one polling station. All agents must have an appointment in Form 15 to each polling station where they are to be. They cannot enter the polling station without Form 15.

Form 15 must be delivered to the deputy returning officer at the polling station, and the agent must also take an oath in Form 16 in the poll book before being permitted to be at the polling station.

You may only have **one poll agent present at a polling station** at any one time.

If you appoint an agent to a mobile poll, that agent must provide his/her own transportation.

Agent's Responsibilities

An agent **can**:

- leave the polling station and return
- observe the opening and closing of the polling station
- observe the voting procedure
- challenge an elector, by asking for the Oath of Qualification (Note: the challenge must be made **before** the elector is given the ballot papers)
- view the poll book, at times when there is a lull in the voting
- object to the counting or rejecting of a ballot.

An agent **cannot**:

- interfere with an elector
- prohibit an elector from voting
- question electors as they are entering the polling station
- prevent a ballot from being counted
- disrupt the operation of a polling station

Remember: The deputy returning officer is in charge of the polling station.

Counting the Ballots

An agent can be present at the close of the polling station, but may only witness the count at one polling station. Agents cannot move from polling station to polling station to observe the count.

Neither candidates nor agents can handle the ballots.

Candidates or their agents can object to the counting or the rejecting of a ballot, but the final decision on whether the ballot is counted is that of the deputy returning officer. The objection is recorded in case there is later a recount or challenge to the election.

Candidates or their agents are entitled to a copy of the statement of poll, which records the results of the voting at the polling station.

When Will I Know the Official Results of the Election?

The election results that are obtained on election night are the **unofficial results**. The official addition of the votes is conducted by the returning officer, who records the results entered on the written statements of poll from each polling station.

The municipal returning officer conducts the official addition for all of the elections in the municipality.

You or your agents are entitled to be present for the official addition of the votes, which takes place starting at **10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, October 20, 2020**.

Post-Election Responsibilities

Within 7 days of Election Day (October 24, 2020) a candidate must:

- remove all election advertising material,
- complete and file with the Deputy Clerk an affidavit in Form 12, and
- return all copies of the lists of electors in the candidate's possession, including any electronic copies, or confirmation of the destruction or deletion of any electronic copies, to the clerk or returning officer, as the case may be.

Within 60 days of Election Day (December 16, 2020), the Disclosure Statement must be filed. The legislation places the responsibility on the candidate to file the Disclosure Statement, even if the Statement is prepared by your official agent.

Am I Entitled to a Return of My Deposit?

Once the Affidavit in Form 12 is filed, you are entitled to a refund of all or of a portion of your deposit.

The full deposit is refundable if the candidate:

- has been elected or acclaimed, or
- has received at least half the votes of the successful candidate, or
- dies before the election.

Half of the deposit is refundable to candidates polling less than half the votes of the successful candidate.

What if I want to Challenge the Result of an Election?

Judicial Recount

Where the official addition of the votes by the returning officer results in a tie, there will automatically be a judicial recount.

An application for a judicial recount may also be made within 10 days after the election **October 27, 2020** if the clerk authorized by council, any candidate, or any elector submits an application to the provincial court or Supreme Court of Nova Scotia accompanied by a deposit of \$200.00. The judge may refuse to conduct a recount if the judge determines that the application is frivolous or vexatious, or it would not be in the interest of justice.

If after the judicial recount there is still a tie, the winning candidate is chosen by lot by the Deputy Clerk. All that is necessary in a choice by lot is for the Deputy Clerk or a designate to draw a name out of a box.

Review sections 130-138 of the *Municipal Elections Act* if you are considering a recount application.

Application to Declare the Election Void

An elector, a candidate, or a clerk authorized by council who believes that there were irregularities during the election that could have affected the outcome, may bring an action in the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia.

Because the application must be made to the Supreme Court, legal advice should be obtained before an action is commenced.

The application must be commenced within 21 days after ordinary polling day **November 7, 2020**.

The person bringing such an action must deposit \$500.00 as security for court costs and any additional costs that may be awarded if the action is unsuccessful.

After hearing the evidence, the judge will determine whether there was an irregularity that could have affected the result. An order will be issued to conduct the election again if the judge finds an irregularity.

Review sections 158-160 of the *Municipal Elections Act* if you are considering an application to have the election declared void.

When do Newly Elected Members of Council Assume Office?

Council Members

The successful candidates, including candidates who were elected by acclamation, are declared elected by the Deputy Clerk at the first meeting of the council after the time for applying for a recount has expired. The meeting must be held within four weeks after ordinary polling day.

If there is a recount, the candidate(s) cannot be declared elected until the recount is complete.

Oath of Office

The oath of office **for Council members** is administered by a judge, a justice of the peace, the Mayor or Warden, or the Deputy Clerk.

Basic Duties and Responsibilities – Council

What Is My Oath of Office?

... I will truly, faithfully and impartially execute the duties of the office to which I have been elected to the best of my knowledge and ability.

... I have not received and will not receive any payment or reward or promise thereof for the exercise of any partiality or other undue execution of the duties of my office...

The above words from the "Oath or Affirmation of Allegiance and of Office" are taken by each councillor at the first meeting of the council after the election. The words place a heavy burden on the elected official to accept and discharge, in a conscientious and forthright manner, the duties, obligations, and responsibilities of office.

What Are My Personal Responsibilities?

Once elected, it is important to remember that you have requested and received the trust of the electorate to be their representative. It will be your duty to keep the electors informed as to how you are discharging the trust and confidence they have placed in you.

It will also be your duty as an elected official to act for the whole municipality, not just the polling district from which you were elected. You will have a duty to strive to improve the finances, health, security, and quality of life in your municipality as a whole.

You will have a personal responsibility to fulfil the obligations of the office with impartiality and integrity to the best of your ability. To do this:

- Become informed about the problems that face your municipality today.
- Become informed about your council's legal powers and limitations to solve these problems.
- Make decisions without fear, favour, or evasion - and always in the best interest of the whole municipality.
- Resist the pressures of groups of your electors organized for selfish purposes.
- Be prepared to serve on committees of council and accept other duties as assigned by council.
- Share information that you may receive from outside agencies, conferences, training sessions, or meetings with other members of council.
- Be prepared to accept responsibility for majority decisions of council - even though it may mean supporting a decision that you did not vote for.
- Try to create an intelligent interest in community and public affairs within your municipality.

What Is the Structure of Council?

The council is composed of elected officials - both the mayor and councillors.

The **mayor** is elected in Region of Queens Municipality by voters.

The mayor is the head of council and chief officer of the municipality. He or she presides at all council meetings and maintains order, proper conduct, and decorum at these meetings. He or she will usually act as spokesperson for the municipality at special municipal or community functions and with the media.

In the decision-making process all councillors, including the mayor, are equal - they each have one vote. By virtue of his or her position, the mayor may be able to persuade other councillors to follow his or her lead but in the final result, the mayor has no more power in council than any other member.

If elected, you may be asked to serve on a number of the various standing and special **committees of council**. It is at the committee level that many matters are given detailed scrutiny before formal consideration is given by council.

Standing committees of Region of Queens Municipality generally relate to such matters as fire protection, Queens Place Emera Centre, Audit Committee, Planning Advisory, Heritage Advisory, et cetera. Special committees are also appointed in relation to special tasks or projects.

What Are My Responsibilities At Council Meetings?

It is the duty, obligation, and responsibility of every council member to attend all meetings of council and take part in debates, discussions, and decisions on municipal business.

In these meetings it is important to listen to other members of council, and to collectively reach decisions that are in the best interest of the whole municipality.

If you have a personal monetary interest in a matter under consideration by council, then you must not take part in the discussion or vote on such a matter. Under the terms of the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act* for a closed meeting, you must leave the room until the question has been dealt with. If the meeting is open, you may simply leave the table and sit in the public gallery.

How Does Council Make Decisions?

Council decisions are expressed in the form of either a **bylaw, policy or resolution**.

Bylaws are the formal enactment, under the seal of the municipality, of rules and regulations **adopted by council to regulate conduct** in the municipality. Bylaws may be viewed as the municipal equivalent of provincial or federal legislation.

Policies are decisions of Council that are recorded in the bylaw book of the municipality; generally they concern the administrative affairs of the municipality. Policies often concern fees or other matters to which the public may want to have regular access.

Resolutions are less formal. A resolution expresses the decision of council on a particular matter submitted to it in the form of a motion, as moved and seconded, and adopted by a majority vote. Although not as formal as a bylaw, a resolution, once adopted by council, will normally be as binding as a bylaw until it is reversed or amended.

Council decisions are made by following **rules of procedure**. The procedure, agenda, and general rules governing the council and its meetings may be laid down in a municipal procedure policy or by-law. Rules are designed to assist council in conducting its business in an efficient and orderly manner. Region of Queens Municipality uses Bourinot's Rules of Order and its own approved rules of order.

Copies of all our bylaws and policies are on our website at www.regionofqueens.com.

What Is the Relationship Between the Council and the Administration of the Municipality?

Ideally, council formulates policy and makes decisions, while staff implements these policies and decisions.

You should avoid the temptation to become a quasi-administrator. You should leave day-to-day administrative matters to the staff and concentrate on your role in providing them with clear and concise policy direction. Council-administration relations should be based on

respect and mutual trust.

You will find it helpful to familiarize yourself with the various services provided by your municipality. This can be done by consulting the municipal administrator or the appropriate department head. In addition, you should familiarize yourself with the organizational chart of the municipal unit so that you have a clear picture of the personnel responsible for specific services and any staffing requirements.

Help for Newly Elected Councillors

Help is available from many sources. Council members who have had previous experience can put you on the right track.

Your Chief Administrative Officer or Deputy Clerk is experienced with the inner workings of your municipality and will be able to answer many of your questions.

Outside of your municipality, you may want to contact the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM), Association of Municipal Administrators (AMA), Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing (DMAH) and other departments of government (please see addresses below). These organizations and agencies have a wealth of information and, in many cases, professional expertise in numerous areas of municipal involvement.

Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing will host an orientation session in November in Halifax or Truro for all new council members. There will be speakers on a variety of topics of interest. More details will be available later.

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14th Floor (Maritime Center)
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