Municipality of Meaford

Municipal Election Procedures

October 6, 2026, 2026

Procedures and forms approved and authorized by the Returning Officer for use during the 2026 election.

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Margaret Wilton-Siegel
Clerk/Returning Officer

Version History

Version #	Date	Summary of Changes
1	April 28, 2026	Original
2	June 8, 2026	Availability of voters' list for candidates – date change
3	August 17, 2026	Filing a nomination – adding Form MEL28 (Appointment of an Agent to File a Nomination)
4	Sept 18, 2026	Adding Form MEL29 (Request for Electronic Voter Information Letter), Form MEL30 Declaration of Election Results), and Form MEL31 (Third Pary Advertiser – Consent to Release Personal Information)
5	Oct 6, 2026	Adding Form MEL15d (Affidavit to Voters List Registration – No Fixed Address)

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Section 1 Definitions

a) "Act" means the Municipal Elections Act 1996, SO 1996 c32 as amended.

b) "Ballot" means either an image on a computer screen of a ballot card for an election to be voted for, including all choices available to the electors and containing spaces in which the electors mark their votes; or when voting using a touchtone telephone, an audio set of instructions describing all choices available to the electors and how to mark their selection by pressing the numbered touchtone keypad.

c) "Candidate" means a person who has submitted their nomination form under s.33 of the Act.

d) "Certified Candidate" means a candidate whose nomination was certified by the Clerk under s.35 of the Act.

e) "Clerk" means the Clerk of the Municipality of Meaford who is responsible for conducting this election under the authority of the Act. All references to the Clerk for the purposes of this manual shall mean the Returning Officer (R.O.). All references to Clerk's designate shall mean the delegated duties of the R.O.

f) "Closing Location" means the location where the Voting System is deactivated which shall be Meaford Hall located at 12 Nelson Street East, Meaford, Ontario.

g) "Election" means the 2026 School Board and Municipal elections conducted by the Returning Officer (R.O).

h) "Elector" means an individual eligible to vote in an election for the Municipality.

i) "Election Official" means the Clerk or other person appointed in writing by the Clerk to carry out election duties under the Act. An Election Official can only carry out the tasks and duties as assigned in writing by the Clerk and must take the prescribed Oath under s.15 of the Act.

j) "Election Staff" means any individual that is assigned a role and/or responsibilities by the Clerk in respect to an election.

k) "Friend" means any person who is requested by an elector to assist him or her in the voting process.

l) "Help Centre" means a location designated by the Clerk where individuals may be added to the Voters' List and receive assistance and clarification

on the election process, including the access to a telephone and/or internet. The ability to vote at the Help Centre will be limited to hours designated by the Clerk.

m) "Interim List of Changes" means, for a regular election, the list of changes made to the Voters' List between the time that the Voters' List was originally published and September 20th in the year of the election.

n) "Municipality" means the Corporation of the Municipality of Meaford.

o) "Municipal Office" means the Municipality of Meaford administration building located at 21 Trowbridge Street West, Meaford, Ontario.

p) "Nomination Day" means the deadline to file a nomination for a regular election, which is the third Friday in August (August 21, 2026 for the 2026 election).

q) "Personal Identification Number" (PIN)" means an additional access control code assigned by Simply Voting Inc. to each authorized user to provide additional security for access to the voting system.

r) "Preliminary List of Electors" or "PLE" means a list of electors for the Municipality compiled by Elections Ontario and provided to the Municipality no later than August 14, 2026.

s) "Proof of Identification" means proof of identity and residence as prescribed in O. Reg. 304/13 of the Act.

t) "Opening Location" means the location where the Voting System is activated which shall be the Council Chambers located at 157859 7th Line Meaford, Ontario.

u) "Regular Office Hours" means Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and excludes statutory holidays.

v) "Scrutineer" means an individual, appointed in writing by a certified candidate, to represent him or her during the election.

w) "Time/Clock" means the time as indicated on the National Research Council Canada Web Clock showing official times for the Eastern Time Zone.

x) "Third-Party Advertiser" means an individual, corporation or trade union, who supports or opposes a candidate and distributes a message in any medium, such as, but not limited to, billboard, newspaper, radio, and

paid internet advertising, and who is required to be registered under section 88.6 of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*.

y) "Voter Credentials" means unique multiple digit number or numbers assigned to each voter to provide security for access to the voting system.

z) "Voter Information Letter" means a letter mailed individually to every elector containing voting instructions, including a Personal Identification Number (PIN) and other relevant information.

aa) "Voters' List" means the Preliminary List of Electors, as corrected by the Clerk, under the provisions of s.19 and s.22 of the Act.

bb) "Voting Day" means the final day on which the vote is to be taken in an election and shall be Monday, October 26, 2026 with the close of voting to be at 8:00 p.m.

cc) "Voting Period" means the period in which an eligible voter may cast their vote, either via internet or telephone and shall span from Friday, October 16 at 10:00 a.m. to Monday, October 26, 2026 at 8:00 p.m.

dd) "Website" means the designated municipal website for election information (www.meafordvotes.ca).

Section 2 Authority and Application

Section 42 (3) of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996,* states as follows:

> *(3) The clerk shall,*
> *(a) establish procedures and forms for the use of,*
> *(i) any voting and vote-counting equipment authorized by by-law, and*
> *(ii) any alternative voting method authorized by by-law; and*
> *(b) provide a copy of the procedures and forms to each candidate.*

Duties and Powers of Clerk (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.

Procedures and Forms

The power conferred by Section 12 (1) includes the power to establish forms, including forms of oaths and statutory declarations, and the power to require their use. It also includes the power to require a person, as a condition of doing anything or having an election official do anything under the Act, to furnish proof that is satisfactory to the election official of the person's identity or qualifications or of any other matter.

Section 42 of the Act states that the procedures and forms established by the Clerk, if they are consistent with the principles of the Act, prevail over anything in the Act and the regulations made under it.

Unforeseen Cases

Any unforeseen cases not dealt with in these procedures will be recorded, action taken, and reflected in an addendum signed by the Clerk, to these procedures and circulated to all candidates and posted on the website.

Application

This procedure applies to the 2026 Municipal and School Board Elections in The Municipality including any contests for which The Municipality collects a vote on behalf of another Returning Officer for which the election spans municipal boundaries (e.g. French School Board contest).

These procedures may be amended, as necessary and deemed appropriate, by the Clerk. Any amendment to these procedures shall be signed by the Clerk and a copy of the amendment(s) shall be provided forthwith to all candidates and registered third-party advertisers.

Section 3 Nominations

Nomination Papers (s.33)

A person may be nominated for an office by filing a nomination in the Clerk's Office, in person or by an agent (Nomination Paper – Form 1). The nomination must be endorsed by at least twenty-five (25) persons and a person may endorse more than one nomination. The person endorsing a nomination must be eligible to vote in an election for an office within the

municipality, if a regular election was held on the day that the person endorses the nomination (Endorsement of Nominations – Form 2).

"Nomination Paper" Form 1 for the following offices will be available at the Clerk's Office from Friday, May 1, 2026 to Thursday, August 20, 2026 during regular office hours (8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.), and between 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. on Friday, August 21, 2026 (Nomination Day) and on the website for the following offices:

(1) Mayor

(1) Deputy Mayor

(5) Councillor

Nomination papers for school boards must be obtained and filed at the appropriate Municipal Office for the following offices:

(1) School Board Trustee – English Public (Municipality of Meaford)

(1) School Board Trustee – English Separate (City of Owen Sound)

(1) School Board Trustee – French Public (City of Barrie)

(1) School Board Trustee – French Separate (City of Sarnia)

The following four documents are required at the time of filing:

- Nomination Paper (Form 1)
- Endorsement of Nominations (Form 2) (not required for School Board Trustee candidates)
- The Declaration of Qualification (Form MEL1/MEL2)
- Candidates Consent to Release Personal Information (Form MEL3)

If the filing is being completed by an agent, an authorization form (Form MEL28 – Appointment of an Agent to File a Nomination) is also required.

In addition, photo identification and a prescribed filing fee are required. The prescribed filing fee is $200 for Head of Council or $100 for all other positions, and can be paid in cash, debit, certified cheque, or money order made payable to the Municipality of Meaford.

The documents may be signed by the candidate in front of the Returning Officer or delegate at the time of filing, or the candidate may choose to have the Declaration signed elsewhere in front of a Commissioner of Oaths and filed by someone they have appointed in writing to be their agent. The agent will be responsible for providing proof of agency, all four documents listed above, the fee and the candidate's identification.

The Clerk or designate will administer the necessary oaths.

The deadline for filing nomination papers, as well as the deadline to withdraw, is Friday, August 21, 2026, at 2:00 p.m.

Municipal Freedom of Information & Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA)

The candidate may sign the consent to release personal information Form MEL3 authorizing the Clerk to publish their telephone number and/or email on the website, as well as anywhere the Unofficial List of Candidates and Official List of Certified Candidates are posted.

Estimated Maximum Campaign Expenses (s.33.0.1)

The Clerk shall calculate the estimated maximum campaign expenses for each office on the "Estimated Maximum Campaign Expenses" Form MEL4a or Form MEL5, as well as the "Estimated Self-Funding Limit – Council" Form MEL4b, and provide a copy to the candidate or his/her agent the day that the Nomination Paper is filed in accordance with s.33. The Clerk's calculation is final.

Final Calculation of Campaign Expenses (88.20(13))

The Clerk shall, after determining from the number of eligible electors from the Voters' List for each office, calculate the maximum amount of campaign expenses that each candidate may incur for that office and prepare a "Certificate of Maximum Campaign Expenses" Forms MEL6a, MEL6b or MEL7. The certificate shall be delivered to each candidate on or before September 30, 2026. The Clerk's calculation is final and shall be made in accordance with the prescribed formula in O. Reg. 101/97.

Notice of Penalties (s.33.1)

The Clerk shall, prior to voting day, provide a notice of penalties on the "Notice of Penalties and Corrupt Practices" to the candidate or their agent.

Unofficial List of Candidates

The Clerk shall provide notice of the unofficial list of candidates by preparing and posting in the Municipal Office and on the website an "Unofficial List of Candidates" Form MEL8 which is to be updated as each Nomination Paper is filed. The list should be clearly marked "Unofficial". The list is indicated as "unofficial" until the nominations have been certified.

Nomination Day – August 21, 2026 (s.31)

Nomination Papers will be received at the Municipal Office between 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. on Nomination Day.

Procedure for the handling of Nomination Papers on Nomination Day will be the same as above.

Certification of Nomination Papers (s.35 (1))

On or before Monday August 24, 2026, at 4:00 p.m., the Clerk will review each nomination received to determine qualification and if the nomination complies with the Act. Once satisfied the candidate is qualified, the Clerk shall certify the nomination.

Rejection of Nomination Paper (s.35 (3))

If the Candidate is not qualified to be nominated, or the nomination does not comply with the Act, the Clerk will reject the Nomination. A telephone call shall be made to the candidate informing him/her of the rejection, and a "Notice of Rejection of Nominations" Form MEL9 shall be sent, by Registered Mail, as soon as possible, to:

- the person who sought to be nominated; and
- all candidates for the office.

Withdrawal of Nominations (s.36)

Candidates may withdraw their Nomination by filing in person a written withdrawal on "Withdrawal of Nomination" Form MEL10 with the Clerk before 2:00 p.m. on Nomination Day, Friday, August 21, 2026 if the person was nominated on or before Nomination Day. Any withdrawals sent by email, mail or fax are not permitted as it must be filed in the Clerks Office.

The withdrawal shall be noted on the "Unofficial List of Candidates" Form MEL8.

Official List of Candidates

The final list of certified candidates will be posted at the Municipal Office and on the website on or before Thursday, August 27, 2026 using the "Official List of Certified Candidates" Form MEL11.

Declaration of Election (s.40)

If after 4:00 pm on Monday, August 24, 2026, the number of certified nominations filed for an office is more than the number of persons to be elected to the office, the Clerk shall declare an election to be conducted.

The Clerk shall give the electors notice of the following using a variety of methods:

a) The dates and times of the voting period;

b) The location and hours of operation of Help Centres; and

c) The manner in which electors may use the Internet/Telephone voting method.

Acclamations (s.37(1))

If after 4:00 p.m. on Monday, August 24, 2026, the number of certified candidates for an office is the same as or less than the number to be elected, the Clerk shall immediately declare the candidate(s) elected by acclamation. The Clerk shall post a "Declaration of Acclamation to Office" on Form MEL12.

Fewer Number of Nomination Papers than Offices (s.33(5))

If at 4:00 p.m. on Monday, August 24, 2026, the number of certified nominations filed for an office is fewer than the number of persons to be elected to the office, additional nominations may be filed between 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, August 26, 2026. The Clerk shall post a "Notice of Additional Nominations" advising that additional Nomination Papers may be filed for that office during the specified time.

If at 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, August 26, 2026, additional Nomination Papers have been filed, the procedure to certify or reject Nomination Papers shall be followed.

Withdrawal of Additional Nominations

Candidates may withdraw their Additional Nomination by filing in person a written withdrawal on "Withdrawal of Nomination" Form MEL10 with the Clerk before 2:00 pm on Wednesday, August 26, 2026. Any withdrawals sent by email, mail or fax are not permitted as it must be filed in the Clerks Office.

Certification of Additional Candidate Nominations (s.37(2))

By 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, August 26, 2026, the Clerk is to examine any additional candidate nomination(s) filed, and, if satisfied, certify the nomination(s).

Additional Nominations More than Number of Offices Remaining (s.33(5))

If at 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, August 26, 2026, there are more than a sufficient number of certified Nominations to fill the office(s), an election shall be conducted with the names of the persons who have filed certified Nomination Papers.

Additional Nominations Equivalent to Number of Offices (s.37(2))

If at 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, August 27, 2026, there is a sufficient number of certified Nomination Papers filed to fill the office(s), the Clerk shall cause to be posted a "Declaration of Acclamation to Office" on Form MEL12.

Insufficient Number of Nomination Papers Filed to Form a Quorum – Municipal Council (s.37(4)1)

If the number of Nomination Papers filed is insufficient to form a quorum of the Municipal Council, a by-election shall be held.

Sufficient Number of Nomination Papers Filed to Form a Quorum– Municipal Council (s.37(4))

If the number of Nomination Papers filed is less than the number of positions for an office of the Municipal Council, but does form a quorum, s.263(1)(a) of the Municipal Act, 2001, as amended, shall apply.

Death or Ineligibility of a Candidate (s.39)

If a certified candidate dies or becomes ineligible before the close of voting and

- the result would be an acclamation for an office, the election to such office is void and a by-election for such office shall be held; and
- the result would be one fewer candidate only and no acclamation, the candidate's name shall be omitted from the ballot. The Clerk shall cause notice of the candidate's death or ineligibility to be made available to the public.

No votes are to be counted for the candidate who has died or become ineligible.

Candidate Name Pronunciation

All certified candidates may be required to provide to the Clerk the proper pronunciation of their name prior to finalization of the voice prompts for the telephone component of the voting system.

Section 4 Voters' List

Voter Qualifications (s.17(2))

A person is entitled to be an elector if, on Voting Day (October 26, 2026) he/she:

a) is a Canadian citizen;

b) is at least 18 years old;

c) resides in the local municipality, or is the owner or tenant of land in the local municipality, or the spouse, of such a person; and

d) is not prohibited from voting under s.17(3) of the Act, or otherwise, by law.

Certification of Voters' List

The Preliminary List of Electors (PLE) supplied by Elections Ontario shall be delivered to the Clerk by August 14, 2026.

The PLE shall contain the name and address of each person who is entitled to be an elector and additional information the Clerk needs to determine for which offices each elector is entitled to vote, such as school support.

The Clerk may use any information that is in the Municipality's custody or control when correcting the PLE for obvious errors (s.22(2)).

The Clerk shall correct any obvious errors in the PLE and notify Elections Ontario by September 1, 2026. The corrected PLE becomes the Voters' List.

It is possible for an elector's name to appear on the Voters' List of more than one municipality and may be eligible to vote in both municipalities. For example, a person listed as a resident elector in one municipality and a non-resident elector in another municipality is entitled to vote in each, provided they are not voting for the same office more than once. An elector may only vote once for School Board Trustee in the jurisdiction of the Board.

The Voters' List shall be made available to candidates on or before Tuesday, September 15, 2026.

Electronic Access to and Proper Use of the Voters' List

All certified candidates shall receive usernames and passwords allowing access the Voters' List in the Voting System from September 1, 2026 until October 26, 2026.

Candidates can use this access to view which electors have voted during the Voting Period. It is expected that Candidates will use this access; the Municipality will not produce a physical or electronic excerpt of the Voters' List indicating Electors that have voted. This access does not provide information on how an elector has voted, only whether or not they have participated in the election. Candidates may access this information anytime from the start of the Voting Period, until October 26, 2026.

Each candidate will be required to sign the "Declaration of Proper Use of the Voters' List" Form MEL13. The use of the Voters' List shall be in accordance with Section 23 of the Municipal Elections Act.

Access to the Voters' List (s.88(10) and (11))

Legislation states that the Voters' List cannot be posted in a public place and can be used only for election purposes.

Amendments to the Voters' List

The Voters' List may be amended using the "Application to Amend Voters' List" Form MEL14 and providing proof of identity and residence as prescribed in O. Reg. 304/13, between September 1, 2026 to October 25, 2026 during regular business hours, during Help Centre operating hours, and on the October 26, 2026 until 8:00 p.m. If necessary, an elector may use the "Affidavit of Qualification" Forms MEL15a, MEL15b, MEL15c, or MEL15d in order to be added to the Voters' List.

Other names can be removed from the Voters' List by using "Application for Removal of Another's Name from the Voters List" (Form MEL16), between September 1, 2026 and 2:00 p.m. on September 14, 2026. The Clerk may, on his or her own initiative, remove a person's name from the voters' list until the close of voting on voting day if the Clerk is satisfied that the person has died. (s.25(1)).

On or before September 30, 2026, the Clerk will determine the total number of electors on the Voters' List. This number will be necessary to calculate the "Certificate of Maximum Campaign Expenses" (Forms MEL6a, MEL6b or MEL7) for the 2026 Municipal Election.

Interim List of Changes (s.27(1))

The Clerk shall prepare an "Interim List of Changes" on or before September 30, 2026, to the Voters' List and circulate as required.

Final List of Changes (s.27(2))

The Clerk shall prepare the "Final List of Changes" to the Voters' List by November 25, 2026, and send to Elections Ontario.

Section 5 Campaigning

Campaigning is permitted no earlier than the filing of Nomination Papers by the candidate. Information contained in/on all campaign material is the responsibility of the candidate and any questions or concerns should be directed to the candidate.

Questions pertaining to the Election

Questions pertaining to the election, including the voting method, shall be directed to the Returning Officer:

Margaret Wilton-Siegel, Clerk
21 Trowbridge Street
Meaford, ON
N4L 1A1
Tel: 519-538-1060 ext. 1100
Email: clerk@meaford.ca

Questions pertaining to the Municipality's Administration

Questions pertaining to the Municipality's administration, or requests for meetings with staff members should be directed to the Chief Administrative Officer, who will follow up with the necessary Director or appropriate staff.

Every effort will be made to provide information to all candidates to ensure fairness and transparency. Answers to questions posed by candidates, via e-mail or in-person, will be shared with all registered candidates without identifying the questioner and posted on the Municipal website generally within one week.

Shawn Everitt, Chief Administrative Office
21 Trowbridge Street West
Meaford, ON
N4L 1A1

Tel: 519-538-1060 ext. 1121
Email: CAO@meaford.ca

Appointment of Scrutineers

A candidate may appoint scrutineers, in writing, to represent him/her at the opening and testing of the voting system, at a Help Centre during the voting period, during the receipt of voting results at the closing location, and during a recount under Section 16 of the Act.

The appointment shall be made using the "Appointment of Scrutineer" Form MEL17. The forms to appoint scrutineers must be signed by the candidate in person at the Municipal Office. The candidate must provide proof of identity at the time of appointing a scrutineer. The candidate shall provide this signed form to their scrutineer.

Rights and Prohibitions of Scrutineers

Each scrutineer shall be responsible for his/her conduct, rights and prohibitions as set out on the applicable appointment form.

A person appointed as a scrutineer, before being admitted to the Help Centre, shall show his/her applicable appointment form and provide proof of identity and residence as prescribed in O. Reg. 304/13 to the Election official. The scrutineer/candidate must take an "Oral Oath of Secrecy" (Form MEL18) at each time they attend a Help Centre.

Not more than one (1) scrutineer representing each candidate may be permitted at one time during the activation and closing of the voting system, or at a recount (if such becomes necessary). Only one candidate or his/her appointed scrutineer may be in attendance at a Help Centre at one time.

Use of mobile communication devices and cameras shall **not be permitted** within any Help Centre, the Opening Location or the Closing Location by any candidate or scrutineer.

Scrutineers who do not follow the instructions of the Election Official(s) or who attempt to interfere, influence and to determine how an elector is voting will be requested to leave the Help Centre immediately, their appointment will be revoked and they will not be permitted to re-attend at a Help Centre or during the announcement of results. Scrutineers may also have their appointment revoked if they contravene the rules and guidelines established by the Clerk as provided to the Candidates.

Use of Municipal Logo or Other Insignia

The use of the municipal logo or other insignia for campaign purposes is strictly prohibited.

Municipally Owned/Leased Facilities

Election campaigning or the distribution/posting of election campaign material at municipally-owned or leased facilities is not permitted, with the exception of road allowances.

The Municipality of Meaford's Use of Corporate Resources for Election Purposes Policy states:

> Municipally owned or run facilities may only be used for election related purposes if rented in accordance with standard Municipality of Meaford rental procedures and the commercial fees and charges listed in the Municipality's Fees and Charges By-law. Election related activities are not permitted in any municipally owned facility that is not available for rental.
>
> Members and candidates may not campaign, distribute campaign literature, or engage in election related activities at any function hosted by the Municipality of Meaford.
>
> Election signs, or other election material, may not be displayed in, or on the property of, any Municipality-owned or run facilities.

Election Signs

The following provides a summary of election sign requirements and limitations. Candidates should refer to the Municipality's Election Sign By-law 2018-50 and Grey County Corporate Procedure MS-TS-005-001, Advertising Sign Permit for specific details.

A sign permit or a permit application is not required for election signs.

The Municipality of Meaford Election Sign By-law states that election signs can be displayed no sooner than Thursday, August 27, 2026, and must be removed by the candidate or the candidate's representative by Saturday, October 31, 2026. Candidates should also refer to the Grey County Corporate Procedure MS-TS-005-001 for specific details regarding election signs placed on a County right-of-way.

No person shall display a logo, trademark or official mark owned of licensed by the Municipality on any election sign. The name of the candidate

responsible for the sign must be clearly visible on the sign. Questions regarding election signs should be directed to the Returning Officer.

Do I need a permit to put up my election sign?

No, a sign permit or a permit application is not required for election signs.

What date can I start to display my election signs?

The Municipality's Election Sign By-law states that signs can be displayed no sooner than **Friday, August 27, 2026**.

How many days do I have after election to remove my election signs?

The Municipality's Election Sign By-law states that election signs must be removed by the candidate or the candidate's representative by **Saturday, October 31, 2026**.

Can I put a logo on the election sign next to my name?

No person shall display a logo, trademark or official mark owned or licensed by the Municipality on any election sign.

What information is required on my signs?

The name of the candidate or third-party advertiser responsible for the sign must be clearly visible on the sign.

Vandalism

The investigation or prosecution for any acts of vandalism to the posters or campaign material of the candidates should be referred to the local police force by the complainant. The Municipality or any of its municipal officers, employees or agents will not be responsible.

Section 6 Help Centres

For the purpose of this election, a voting place is not required. However, Help Centres will be held throughout the Municipality. Electors can be added to the Voters' List and receive assistance and clarification on the election process, including access to the internet. The ability to vote at the Help Centre will be limited to hours designated by the Clerk and advertised on the municipal website, in the voter information letter and through such other means as the Clerk determines necessary.

Prior to the Voting Period, electors should visit the **Municipal Administration Office located at 21 Trowbridge Street West, Meaford** during regular office hours, Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. or call 519-538-1060 for any questions or concerns.

A roving Help Centre will visit institutional and certain multi-residential buildings during the Voting Period, according to a schedule to be determined and advertised by the Clerk.

Section 7 Internet/Telephone Voting Procedure

Authority (s.42)

A by-law authorizing internet/telephone voting must be passed on or before May 1 in the year before the year of the election.

On April 28, 2025, By-law 2025-22 was passed authorizing the use of internet/telephone voting methods for municipal elections.

In keeping with s.42 (5), voting proxies will not be used or permitted with this method of voting. In addition, the Voting Period provides for voting in advance of Voting Day commencing Friday, October 16, 2026, at 10:00 am and concluding on Monday, October 26, 2026, at 8:00 pm.

Service Provider

The service provider for internet/telephone voting is Simply Voting Inc. The contract was signed under delegated authority in June 2025. A copy of the contract with Simply Voting Inc. is available from the Clerk upon request.

System Integrity

The integrity of the voting process shall be the responsibility of the Clerk and shall be preserved by:

- ensuring that every eligible elector on the Voters' List, as amended, is sent a sealed Voter Information Letter containing the voter's unique PIN by mail;
- ensuring that no one except authorized Simply Voting Inc. and Taylor Demers Mail Processing Inc. staff shall have access to a comprehensive list of PINs that matches each voter's name and address;
- establishing proper procedures to ensure that no person is added to the Voters' List unless an Election Official is completely satisfied of their identity and qualification as an elector in the Municipality;

- establishing proper procedures to ensure that no replacement PIN is issued unless an Election Official is completely satisfied of the eligible elector's identity;
- ensuring that no one except the Clerk, or designate, can access PINs maintained by Simply Voting Inc. that match each voter's name and address; and
- providing an opportunity for eligible electors to be added to the Voters' List or to make amendments to the list, up to and including Election Day, October 26, 2026, at 8:00 p.m.

System Checks

A logic and accuracy testing session of the voting system will occur prior to the election period on a date to be determined by the Clerk and will be open to candidates and media.

Candidates will be invited to attend the opening of the Voting Period beginning at 9:30 a.m. on October 16, 2026. Prior to the activation of the system by the Clerk, the Deputy Returning Officer and those candidates/scrutineers in attendance shall confirm that all candidates' names are listed and that no votes have been cast. The system will not be activated until confirmation that all the counts associated with each of the candidates' names indicate a "0" total. Candidates or their scrutineer in attendance shall be required to sign the "Activation of the Voting System" Form MEL19 to attest to this fact.

Candidates are invited to the closure of the voting system at the completion of voting on October 26, 2026. Should a candidate not be available they may appoint a scrutineer.

Secrecy

All election officials shall take an oath of secrecy and be appointed by the Clerk as per the "Appointment Oath of Election Officials" Form MEL20a.

No person shall interfere or attempt to interfere with an elector while in the process of accessing the Telephone/Internet Voting service or interfere or attempt to interfere in the voting process while using the Telephone/Internet Voting service unless expressly requested and authorized by an elector to provide assistance.

No person shall obtain or attempt to obtain information about how an elector intends to vote or has voted. Any individual requested by an elector to assist him or her in voting is required to maintain the secrecy of the vote(s) cast

by the elector and, if marking the ballot on behalf of the elector, shall vote according to the instructions and wishes of the elector.

No elector shall reveal how they intend to vote while in a Help Centre, except for the purposes of obtaining assistance in voting from either a Friend or an Election Official. Any other person present must withdraw until the voter finishes instructing the Friend or Election Official, as the case may be.

All complaints regarding any and/or all breaches of secrecy shall be documented by the election official as well as questions and answers of the complainant. All complaints regarding breaches of secrecy may be investigated by the proper authorities and may be prosecuted according to the provisions of "Offences, Penalties and Enforcement" under Sections 89 through 94 of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996.

Public Information Sessions

Public information sessions will be held for the purpose of explaining the method of voting and responding to questions from the electorate. The sessions will be advertised and noted on the website.

Preparation of Voter Information Letters

The Voter Information Letters will be prepared using the Voters' List as amended.

Voter Information Letters shall be delivered to Canada Post and distributed by first class mail to all eligible voters on September 30, 2026 to enable them to use the Telephone / Internet Voting service.

Each person on the Voters' list shall be mailed a sealed Voter Information Letter containing, at minimum:

- the elector's voter credentials as well as the telephone number to call to cast his or her vote and the designated internet address to access to cast his or her vote using the Internet;
- instructions on how to vote;
- dates and hours of voting;
- the location and operating hours of the Help Centres;
- voter eligibility criteria;
- office and candidate information; and
- information on illegal and corrupt practices under the Act.

A person cannot give his/her Voter Information Letter to another eligible elector for the purpose of voting. Acceptance of another person's Voter Information Letter including the actual voting thereof will be considered an illegal and corrupt practice and therefore subject to the penalty provision under the Act, specifically s.89 and s.90.

Sealed Voter Information Letters returned to the Municipal Office shall remain sealed, shall be marked "returned mail" and be maintained in a secure fashion and destroyed at the same time as all other Municipal Election material as provided for under Section 88 of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996.*

Should a Voter Information Letter be returned to the Municipal Office that has been opened but has not been used for voting purposes, the Election Official shall immediately disable the PIN so that the PIN cannot participate in the voting process. In this circumstance, the Voter Information Letter shall be marked "unused" and be secured and destroyed as all other Municipal Election material as provided for under Section 88 of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996.*

The Clerk in partnership with Simply Voting Inc. shall take appropriate measures to ensure that all Voter Information Letters and their associated PINs are accounted for throughout the election and after the conclusion of the Voting Period. After the conclusion of the election, Simply Voting Inc. shall supply the Clerk with a report detailing the status of all VILs/PINs during the election.

Voting

Voting will commence on October 16, 2026 at 10:00 a.m. and end on October 26, 2026 at 8:00 p.m.

Eligible electors will receive voter credentials distributed via Canada Post, or through alternate means as deemed necessary by the Clerk, in a sealed and personalized Voter Information Letter. If an elector will be out of the Municipality and unable to receive their Voter Information Letter (VIL) by mail, they may attend the Municipal Office at 21 Trowbridge Street West in person to complete a Request for Electronic Voter Information Letter (VIL) (Form MEL29). The completed form can be submitted to request that the VIL be sent by email. Prior to voting, electors will be required to confirm that they are an eligible voter, complete a security prompt and key in their voter credentials contained in the Voter Information Letter as well as their date of birth. Every eligible elector shall be limited to one ballot for all races and questions, for which they are entitled to vote.

Electors may vote using the internet or a telephone, and must complete their ballot using one of these two options. If voting by internet, eligible electors will be able to access a designated internet address and cast their vote. If voting by telephone, electors will be able to call a designated toll-free number to cast their vote by using a cellular or land line, touch-tone telephone but not a rotary dial telephone.

Following the voter's selection for all offices on a single composite ballot, the Voting System shall identify the voter's choices and provide the voter with the option of changing or confirming their vote selections prior to submission.

For the purposes of reporting declined ballots in accordance with Subsection 55(4.1) 2., a declined ballot shall be considered a deliberate choice by the Elector to decline the entire ballot by selecting a 'declined' option on the ballot. A declined ballot is separate and distinct from an under-voted ballot which may or may not include votes for all contests, one contest, or no contests on the ballot.

The Voting System shall not permit a voter to overvote, or to spoil a ballot.

If an elector is interrupted before casting their vote, they may re-commence voting later using the same method or the other method. Once a voter has cast the vote, that voter will not be granted access to Telephone/Internet Voting again. The names of electors who have voted during the voting period will be provided to the Clerk electronically through the Simply Voting system. **It is not possible to determine how an elector has voted.**

Voter Credential Issues

If an eligible elector is unsuccessful in accessing the voting system, or has not received their Voter Information Letter, they should visit a Help Centre or telephone the municipal office for assistance. Election Officials will investigate the problem and may issue replacement voter credentials in the circumstances described below.

New voter credentials shall not be given out over the telephone. The voter must attend the Help Centre with proof of identity and residence as prescribed in O. Reg. 304/13 and complete the appropriate form.

1. Unregistered Voter

Eligible voters who attend at a Help Centre and are not on the Voters' List will be able to be added to the list by filling out an "Application to Amend Voters' List" Form MEL14 and providing proof of identity and residence as prescribed in O. Reg. 304/13. Their names will be added to the Voters'

List and they will be assigned and delivered a Voter Information Letter containing voter credentials.

2. Replacement Voter Information Letter (PIN unused)

If a person on the Voters' List has lost or not received their Voter Information Letter and the PIN has not been used, they should attend a Help Centre. Upon providing proof of identity and residence as prescribed in O. Reg. 304/13 to an election official, an oath on "Application for Re-Issue of a Voter Information Letter (Lost and Unused)" Form MEL21 shall be taken by the elector and a new Voter Information Letter containing a new PIN shall be issued. The issuance of a new PIN will immediately disable any PIN previously assigned to that voter, ensuring voter would have a single set of valid voting credentials.

3. Replacement Voter Information Letter (PIN used)

Where a person on the Voters' List has attempted to vote and their PIN has already been used, they should attend a Help Centre. Upon providing proof of identity and residence as prescribed in O. Reg. 304/13 to an election official, an "Application for Re-Issue of a Voter Information Letter (Used by an Impostor)" Form MEL22 shall be completed by the elector and a new voter information letter containing a new PIN shall be issued. The election official shall advise the elector that once the new PIN has been assigned, the elector must vote immediately at the Help Centre they have attended. The issuance of a new PIN will automatically and immediately disable any previously assigned voter credentials.

4. Incorrect School Board Support on Ballot

Where an eligible voter has received an incorrect Voter PIN in terms of school support, and has not voted in that race, the voter can contact the Help Centre and have the proper category applied to the existing PIN. The elector will be required to provide appropriate confirmation of eligibility and to complete "Application to Amend Voters' List" Form MEL14.

5. Duplicate Voter Information Letters

Should an eligible voter receive more than one Voter Information Letter, the eligible voter may only vote **once** and must return the other Voter Information Letter to the Municipal Office and complete an "Application to Amend Voters' List" Form MEL14 to remove the duplicate name. All electors who vote more than once or who improperly use the Voter Information Letter shall be reported to the Police for further investigation as to possible corrupt practices under the Act.

Exceptional Circumstances – Voter Credential Issues

In exceptional circumstances, at the sole discretion of the Returning Officer, voter credentials may be issued through an alternative method. Eligible electors must satisfy the Returning Officer of their identity and their inability to attend a Help Centre to be issued with replacement voter credentials.

Such situations shall be documented by the Returning Officer with measures to ensure security and privacy of the elector, and integrity of the voting process.

Returned Voter Information Letters

Voter Information Letters returned to a Help Centre shall have the voter credentials immediately disabled in the system so that voter credentials cannot be used in the voting process. The opened Voter Information Letters will then be maintained in a secure fashion and destroyed in the same manner as all other municipal election material as provided for under s.88 of the Act.

Voter Credential Change Log

The Clerk and Election Officials shall ensure a complete audit trail is maintained of all Voter Information Letters:

- that were sent to eligible voters;
- that were returned from the Post Office;
- that were returned by an elector or other individual either opened or unopened but unused for voting purposes;
- that were set to a status that prevented them from being used to vote;
- that were re-issued to an eligible elector; and
- that were assigned by an Election Official to eligible electors that have completed "Application to Amend Voters' List" Form MEL14.

Electors Requiring Assistance (s.52(1)4)

The election official may permit an elector who needs assistance in voting to have such assistance as the election official considers necessary.

1. Oral Oath to Vote with Assistance

A voter who requires such assistance to vote at a Help Centre may ask the Election Official for assistance. The Election Official shall require the

voter making the request to take the Oral Oath to vote with assistance on the "Oral Oaths at Help Centre" Form MEL23.

2. Oral Oath of Friend of Elector

In lieu of the Election official providing assistance, the voter may request that a friend accompany the voter at a Help Centre and assist the voter. Any friend assisting shall be required to take the Oral Oath of Friend of Elector on the "Oral Oaths at Help Centre" Form MEL23. No person shall be allowed to act as a friend of more than one voter at a Help Centre. **Candidates and Scrutineers may not act in the capacity of a friend of elector**.

3. Oral Oath of Interpreter

Where a voter requires an interpreter, such person provided by the voter, shall take the Oral Oath of Interpreter on the "Oral Oath at Help Centre" Form MEL23, and shall translate the oaths as well as any lawful questions put to the voter.

Section 8 Count Procedure

At 8:00 p.m. on October 26, 2026, the Clerk will close and deactivate of the voting system. Any person remaining within a Help Centre after 8:00 p.m. will still be permitted to vote. Persons who have gained access to the Voting System remotely through their own device prior to 8:00 p.m. on Election Day will be permitted to complete the voting process, provided that they do so by 8:05 p.m.

At such a time as all eligible electors within a Help Centre have voted and after 8:05 p.m. to ensure no remote voters remain logged into the system, the Clerk shall order the close and deactivation of the Telephone/Internet Voting service and shall also order the generation of the results for each contest.

Section 9 Recount

Any required recount shall be conducted in the same manner as the original count as per s.60 (1) unless ordered otherwise by a judge under s.60 (3). A recount shall take place in the following circumstances:

1. **when there is a tie vote where both or all candidates cannot be declared elected (section 56);**

Where there is a tied vote for the election of a candidate to an office and both or all of the candidates cannot be declared elected, the Clerk must

hold a recount within 15 days after the declaration required by s.55(4)a)b) of the results of the election.

2. **if Council or a local/school board passes a resolution or the Minister makes an order requiring a recount (section 57);**

Within 30 days after the Clerk's declaration of the results under s.55(4), a Council, local/school board may pass a resolution or, the Minister may make an order requiring a recount.

The recount is to be held within 15 days after the resolution is passed or the order is made. The resolution for a recount must be passed no later than Wednesday November 25, 2026. An order of the Minister must be made within the same time frame. The incoming council or local board is no longer able to make a decision on a recount.

3. **when the Superior Court of Justice makes an order requiring a recount (section 58).**

A person who is entitled to vote in an election and who has reasonable grounds for believing the election results to be in doubt may apply to the Superior Court of Justice for an order directing the Clerk to hold a recount.

The application must be commenced within 30 days after the Clerk's official declaration of the results under s.55(4). The court, if satisfied there are sufficient grounds, shall make an order requiring the Clerk to hold a recount. The recount is to be held within 15 days after the Clerk receives a copy of the order.

Costs of Recount (s.7(3), 7(4))

The costs incurred by the Clerk to conduct a recount are to be paid by the Municipality. Any expenses incurred by a candidate, such as legal representation, shall be the responsibility of the candidate.

The Clerk shall submit a signed certificate verifying the costs to the appropriate local board, upper tier municipality or Minister who shall in turn be responsible for paying the costs as soon as possible.

Who Conducts Recount (s.56)

The Clerk shall conduct all recounts for elections for which they are responsible except recounts ordered by the Superior Court of Justice upon appeal.

Notification of Recount (s.56, 57, 58 and O. Reg. 101/97)

The Clerk shall give notice of the recount date, time and place to the following:

- all certified candidates for the office which is the subject of the recount;
- where a resolution is involved, the Council or local/school board which passed the resolution;
- the Minister when an order has been made;
- the applicant in the case of a court order;
- notice of recount will be given by registered mail or personal service.

Persons entitled to be Present at a Recount (s.61)

- the Clerk and any other election official appointed for the recount;
- every certified candidate for the office involved or an appointed scrutineer;
- the applicant, if any, who applied for the recount under s.58 or an appointed scrutineer;
- legal counsel for any of the above.

Process at Recount (s.61, 62)

Once the recount process has commenced, it must continue to completion. Upon completion of the recount, the Clerk will announce the results of the recount. Persons authorized to be in attendance at the recount may also be at the announcement of the results of the recount.

Unless an application has been made for a judicial recount, the Clerk, on the 16th day after the recount is completed, will declare the successful candidate or candidates elected or will declare the result of the vote.

Votes for Candidates to be included in a Recount (s.56, 59)

The votes to be included in the recount are as follows:

- In a recount for a tied vote, the votes cast for candidates who are tied;
- In a recount being conducted under the authority of a council or local board resolution, the votes cast for candidates named in the resolution (all or specified candidates);

- In a recount being conducted under the authority of a court order, the votes cast for candidates named in the order (all or specified candidates).

The Clerk may include the votes for any other candidate for the same office. The practical application of this provision would be for the Clerk to include any candidate whose vote total was, in the Clerk's opinion, close enough to possibly be affected by the recount.

Continuing Tie Vote – After Recount Procedures

Pursuant to s.62(3) in a case of a tied vote following the recount, the Clerk shall determine the result by conducting a lot.

The Clerk shall write the name of each candidate on equal-sized pieces of paper. They are then put in a container as determined by the Clerk. The Clerk shall announce prior to the draw that "the candidate to be elected shall be the candidate whose name is written on the first piece of paper I draw out of the container." The paper is pulled from the container and the candidate elected is announced.

Declaration by Clerk and Notice of Final Certified Results – s.62(4)

Unless an application has been made for a judicial recount, the Clerk on the 16th day after the recount is completed will declare the successful candidate or candidates elected by posting at the Municipal Office and on the website. Such Declaration shall be sent to everyone previously given notice of the recount.

Section 10 Notice of Results

As soon as possible after 8:00 p.m. on Election Day at the Closing Location, the Clerk shall download **Unofficial Results** for each contest from the Voting System. Only the Clerk, appointed Election Officials, certified candidates or their scrutineer may be present at the Closing Location.

The **Unofficial Results** of each contest shall be made available by the Clerk no earlier than 8:15 p.m. on Monday, October 26, 2026, Voting Day, at Meaford Hall Arts & Cultural Centre (12 Nelson Street East, Meaford), and the Clerk shall post the same **Unofficial Results** on the municipal website and/or the Voting System website, as the case may be**.**

As soon as possible after Voting Day, the Clerk shall declare the **Official Results** and post the results, using Declaration of Election Results (Form MEL30), at the Municipal Office and on the municipal website.

Notice shall be provided to the County of Grey with regard to the final number of electors and elected persons to the positions of Mayor and Deputy Mayor who will be serving as County Councillors.

Notice of election results for each school board race shall be provided to the responsible Municipal Office for each of the elections.

Section 11 Candidate Financial Disclosure

At least 30 days before the filing date, but no later than March 1, 2027, the Clerk shall give to every candidate whose nomination was filed, by registered mail, notice of all the filing requirements and penalties set out in s.88.23 (2) and 92 (1).

The Returning Officer shall post all Candidate Financial Disclosures received by the filing date by 4:30 p.m. on March 30, 2027, on the municipal website for public viewing.

Candidates may request an extension to the filing date by paying the Late Filing Fee of $500 to the Returning Officer.

A "Notice of Default" shall be given to the candidate by registered mail and to the relevant council or local board in the event that a candidate has not submitted the "Financial Statement" Form 4 by 2:00 p.m. on March 30, 2027.

Candidates should seek their own advice and counsel regarding campaign finances. A campaign period may be extended in keeping with the procedure and timeframes outlined in the Act.

Refund of Nomination Filing Fee (s.34)

A candidate is entitled to receive a refund of the nomination filing fee if the documents required under subsection 88.25(1) are filed on or before 2:00 p.m. on the filing date in accordance with that subsection.

Section 12 Third-Party Advertising

Third-Party Advertisers are individuals, corporations or trade unions that support or oppose a candidate and distribute a message in any medium, such as, but not limited to, billboard, newspaper, radio, and paid internet advertising.

Registration

Third-Party Advertisers must register with the Municipality before incurring any costs, or receiving any donations, related to the election campaign.

Third-Party Advertisers must submit Form 7 to the Returning Officer in order to register. Third-Party Advertisers must also complete the Declaration of Qualifications for Third-Party Advertisers (Form MEL24) and Third-Party Advertiser - Consent to Release Personal Information (Form MEL31). Proof of identity and additional supporting documents are also required to prove eligibility as an individual, corporation or trade union. Required documents for each type of registrant are listed below, however the Returning Officer may require additional documentation prior to certifying the registration.

- **Individuals**

  An individual registering as third-party advertiser must provide a piece of identification that proves their identity and that they live in Ontario.

- **Corporations**

  To register on behalf of a corporation, the registrant must provide:

  - Proof that the corporation operates in Ontario and that they are the director. This could include a corporate search or incorporating documents.
  - A piece of government-issued identification
  - If the corporation has more than one director, provide a resolution from the board authorizing the registrant to act as the corporation's representative.

- **Trade unions**

  To register on behalf of a trade union, the registrant must provide:

  - Proof the union exists
  - Proof they have been appointed to act on the trade union's behalf

All required documentation may be submitted at the Clerk's Office from Friday, May 1, 2026 to Friday, October 23, 2026.

Campaign Period (s. 88.28)

Contributions can only be made to a registered third party for third party advertisements, and can only be made during the campaign period under section 88.12. A third-party advertiser that is registered can only incur expenses during the campaign period. The campaign period is determined by the application of the following rules.

For the 2026 municipal election - the election campaign:

- begins on the day the third party registers for the election (registration must be certified by the Clerk); and
- ends on December 31, 2026.

If the third-party advertiser becomes involved in a compliance audit after the campaign ends on December 31, 2026, the campaign may be recommenced. Once the third-party advertiser notifies the Clerk in writing of the campaign period recommencement, the Clerk shall pay the third-party advertiser any surplus being held in trust for the candidate, together with interest. Where the campaign period has recommenced, the third-party advertiser may incur expenses and accept contributions until June 30, 2027 or where an alternate provision of the Municipal Elections Act has been met under section 88.28(4).

Filing Requirements (s. 88.29, s. 88.30)

All registered third parties are required to file a financial statement using the prescribed form (Form 8). Candidates, whose campaign contributions and total expenses are each equal to or less than $10,000, are not required to file an auditor's report with the financial statement. A registered third party whose campaign contributions in the municipality $10,000 or whose total campaign expenses exceed $10,000 are required to file an auditor's report with the financial statement.

The registered third party must file their financial statements and auditor's report in the prescribed forms by 2 pm on March 30, 2027 for the campaign period ending December 31, 2026.

If a candidate filed their financial statement prior to the filing date, and then noticed an error, they can withdraw the statement and refile the financial statement and auditor's report by March 30, 2027.

Third-party advertisers also have a maximum amount for parties and volunteer recognition after Voting Day. For the 2026 election, the prescribed formula will use the number of electors on Nomination Day from the 2022 election. The Clerk is to calculate the maximum amount no later than September 30, 2026. When a third party originally registers, the Clerk is to provide the Certificate of Maximum Amount of Expenses for Parties Etc. After Voting Day (Form MEL27).

Application by Third Party for Extension of Filing Date (s. 88.27(3))

The registered third party may before the last day for filing a financial statement under section 88.30, apply to the Ontario Court of Justice to extend the time for filing the document. The court may grant an extension of

up to 90 days. The third party shall notify the Clerk in writing before 2:00 p.m. on the last day for filing a financial statement under s.88.29 or 88.32 that an application has been made.

Clerk to Give Notice (s.88.29)

The Clerk shall give notice of all of the filing requirements and of the penalties under section 88.27(1) and section 92(4) to every third party at least 30 days before the filing date. Before Voting Day, the Clerk is also required under section 33.1 to give notice of the penalties related to election campaign finances.

Campaign Period (s.88.28)

If the third-party advertiser has a deficit at the time the election campaign period would otherwise end and the third-party advertiser has notified the Clerk in writing on or before December 31, 2026, the campaign period is extended until the earliest of:

- June 30, 2027.
- The day the third party notifies the Clerk in writing that he, she or it will not accept further contributions.
- The day A equals the total of B and C, where
    - A = any further contributions.
    - B = the expenses incurred during the extension of the campaign period.
    - C = the amount of the registered third party's deficit at the start of the election campaign period.

Supplementary Reporting Periods/Filing Dates (s. 88.30)

Supplementary filing dates apply where the election campaign period has been extended. The supplementary reporting period is the 6 month period following the year of the election or in the case of a by-election, the supplementary reporting period is the 6 month period following the 45th day after Voting Day.

Where a third-party advertiser campaign period continues, he, she or it shall file a supplementary financial statement (including auditor's report if required) for the supplementary reporting period on or before 2:00 p.m. on the last Friday in September (September 24, 2027). It should be noted that even if a campaign has been extended, a third-party advertiser is required to file the initial financial statement for the reporting period ending December 31, 2026.

Campaign Surplus (s. 88.31)

Where a third-party advertiser's financial statement (or supplementary financial statement) indicates an election campaign surplus at the end of the campaign period, the entire surplus amount shall be paid to the Clerk at the time of filing and the Clerk shall hold the monies in trust. If the registered third party subsequently incurs expenses related to a compliance audit, the Clerk shall pay the amount held in trust, with interest, to the third party (s.88.32).

The surplus becomes the property of the municipality/local board when all of the following conditions are satisfied:

- The campaign period has ended under s.88.28;
- It is no longer possible to recommence the campaign period (s.88.28);
- No compliance audit proceeding has been commenced; and
- The period for commencing a compliance audit proceeding has expired.

Third Party Filing Default (s.88.27(1))

A registered third party cannot participate in the next regular election if;

- They did not file their financial statement;
- There was a surplus and this surplus was not paid to the Clerk;
- The financial statement shows that the third-party advertiser exceeded their expense limit; or
- If a document filed under s.88.32 has a surplus and the third party registered has not paid the surplus to the Clerk by the relevant date.

Clerk to Give Notice of Default (s. 88.27(2))

The Clerk is required to notify the registered third party in writing that a default has occurred and the nature of the default. The Clerk also has to make this information public.

Section 13 Election Records

Candidates

All voter information obtained by candidates during the 2026 Municipal Election shall be destroyed after the election and confirmed in writing to the Clerk. The candidate may return documents to the Clerk for destruction with other election material.

Clerk – Disposition of Records (s.88)

Election records shall be destroyed in accordance with Section 88 of the Municipal Election Act, 1996. Following the passage of 120 days after Voting Day, the Clerk shall, unless a Judge's order or recount request has been received, instruct Simply Voting Inc. to destroy all ballots associated with the election. Simply Voting Inc. will provide written confirmation of same to the Clerk.

The Clerk may also destroy any other documents and materials related to the election in the presence of two witnesses. The witnesses shall complete the "Witness Statements as to Destruction of Records" Form MEL25.

The Clerk shall retain candidates' financial statements and auditor's report until the members of the council or local board elected at the next regular election have taken office. The ballots and any other documents shall not be destroyed if a court orders that they be retained and a recount has been commenced and not finally disposed of.

Section 14 Accessibility

The Clerk shall have regard to the needs of electors and candidates with disabilities.

Accessible Voting

The internet and telephone voting system shall be designed with accessible features to ensure that voters with accessibility requirements can use the system, consistent with the Municipality's principles of dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity.

The Clerk shall ensure that each Help Centre is accessible to electors with disabilities and shall establish a roving Help Centre to attend institutional and certain multi-residential buildings to assist with accommodation needs.

Report

Prior to Voting Day, the Clerk shall prepare a plan for the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect voters and candidates with disabilities and make the plan available to the public.

Within 90 days after Voting Day in a regular election but no later than Monday, January 25, 2027, the Clerk shall submit a report to Council about the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities.

Section 15 Emergencies

Pursuant to Section 53 of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, an emergency shall be declared in the event of any circumstance that in the opinion of the Clerk compromises the integrity and/or execution of the election.

In the event of an emergency, the Clerk shall advertise on the municipal website, radio, and social media if possible, and post notices to the extent possible, that the election has been delayed or extended as the case may be.

In the event of an emergency, and a decision by the Clerk, Simply Voting Inc. under direction from the Clerk, shall stop the Voting System from accepting calls via telephone and connections from the Internet, thus preventing the election from continuing or starting as the case may be, or direct Simply Voting Inc. to extend the voting period past the scheduled end time.

In the event the Clerk is unable to be present to conduct procedures on Voting Day, there shall be a substitute qualified person appointed or available to attend to the election details.

Given the options available to electors to vote from any touch-tone telephone or internet-enabled device with an internet connection, any event that results in one or more voting locations becoming unavailable for use on Voting Day (e.g. flooding, power failure) may not be sufficient to cause the Clerk to declare an emergency, delay the vote, open a new voting location, or extend the voting hours.

The Clerk may declare an emergency if of the opinion that circumstances have arisen that are likely to prevent the election being conducted in accordance with the Act. On declaring an emergency, the Clerk shall make such arrangements as deemed advisable for the conduct of the election. The arrangements made by the Clerk, if they are consistent with the principles of the Act, prevail over anything in the Act and the regulations made under it.

The emergency continues until the Clerk declares that it has ended. If made in good faith, the Clerk's declaration of emergency and arrangements shall not be reviewed or set aside on account of unreasonableness.

The Clerk shall provide notice of such emergency to the best of their ability and in keeping with the circumstance. If required, the Clerk may consider alternate options for any part of the election process. Simply Voting Inc. will take direction from the Clerk as to what actions will be taken.

Section 16 Corrupt Practices

The *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* provides for penalties and enforcement of corrupt practices and other offences during an election process. Penalties can include a fine up to $25,000, forfeiture of office, ineligibility to run for office in the following election, and/or imprisonment up to 6 months.

Offences, Penalties and Enforcement (s.89 and 90)

The principles and the integrity of the election process are enforceable. Section 89 of the Act provides for penalties and enforcement of corrupt practices and other offences during an election process. These include a person who:

- votes without being entitled to do so;
- votes more times than this Act allows;
- induces a person to vote when that person is not entitled to do so;
- before or during an election, publishes a false statement of a candidate's withdrawal;
- furnishes false or misleading information to a person whom this Act authorizes to obtain information;
- without authority, supplies a voter credentials/ballot to anyone;
- takes, opens or otherwise deals with a ballot without having authority to do so; and
- deals with voter credentials/ballot, without having authority to do so.

No person shall solicit a Voter Information Letter containing voter credentials from an eligible elector. All valid complaints or knowledge of solicitation shall be reported immediately for investigation of corrupt practices. If a person is convicted of an offence and the offence was committed knowingly, the offence also constitutes a corrupt practice.

Although many provisions of the Act also deal with voting places, ballots and ballot boxes, etc. the same must be used interchangeably with the alternative forms of voting since the principle of the Act must be maintained and is therefore enforceable and subject to penalties.

As such, the Clerk in this alternative form of voting, has agreed to the following rules and regulations:

1. That all complaints submitted in writing about actions which may contravene the provisions of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, will be considered by the Clerk;

2. That all such valid complaints submitting in writing, once deemed by the Clerk to be substantiated, will be submitted to the appropriate authorities;

3. That the Clerk or any Election Official will not attempt to intervene in the prosecution and may be called to give evidence during prosecution.

Notice of Penalties

Section 88.19 of the Municipal Elections Act outlines the details of expenses a candidate may incur. Pursuant to Section 88.20(13), within 10 days after the Clerk has made corrections to the Preliminary List of Electors received from Elections Ontario, the Clerk will calculate the maximum permitted expenses for each office and will provide a Certificate of the applicable maximum to each candidate.

Section 88.25(1) of the Municipal Elections Act states that "on or before 2 p.m. on the filing date, a candidate shall file with the Clerk with whom the nomination was filed a financial statement and auditor's report, each in the prescribed form, reflecting the candidate's election campaign finances,

- in the case of a regular election, as of December 31 in the year of the election; and
- in the case of a by-election, as of the 45th day after voting day."

Section 88.31 of the Municipal Elections Act outlines details of a candidate's "surplus" if contributions exceed expenses and a candidate's "deficit" if the reverse is true.

Section 88.23(1) of the Municipal Elections Act provides that a candidate is subject to the penalties listed in Subsection (2), in addition to any other penalty that may be imposed under this Act, if,

a) if the candidate fails to file a document as required under section 88.25 or 88.32 by the relevant date;

b) if a document filed under section 88.25 shows on its face a surplus, as described in section 88.31, and the candidate fails to pay the amount required by subsection 88.31 (4) to the clerk by the relevant date;

c) if a document filed under section 88.25 shows on its face that the candidate has incurred expenses exceeding what is permitted under section 88.20; or

d) if a document filed under section 88.32 shows on its face a surplus and the candidate fails to pay the amount required by that section by the relevant date.

Section 88.23(2) of the Municipal Elections Act provides for the following penalties in the case of a default described in subsection (1):

a) the candidate forfeits any office to which he or she was elected and the office is deemed to be vacant; and

b) until the next regular election has taken place, the candidate is ineligible to be elected or appointed to any office to which this Act applies.

Section 92(1) of the Municipal Elections Act provides that a candidate is guilty of an offence and, on conviction, in addition to any other penalty that may be imposed under this Act, is subject to the penalties described in subsection 88.23 (2),

a) if the candidate incurs expenses that exceed the amount determined for the office under section 88.20; or

b) if the candidate files a document under section 88.25 or 88.32 that is incorrect or otherwise does not comply with that section.

Mail Tampering - Criminal Offence and Prosecution

Notification of the voting process and how electors can vote will be provided in the Voter Information Letter.

The Criminal Code of Canada states that tampering with the mail of an individual is a criminal offence and a person found guilty is liable to a term of imprisonment not exceeding ten (10) years. Since the Municipality's election methods rely on delivery of the Voter Information Letters to eligible electors in order to allow those electors to exercise their right to vote, any instance or substantiated account of mail tampering will be taken very seriously and reported to the authorities.

In order to ensure the integrity and confidence of the voting process for all electors and candidates, the Clerk agrees to the following rules and regulations:

1. That all complaints about actions which may contravene the provisions of the Criminal Code of Canada with respect to mail tampering, submitted in writing, will be considered by the Clerk;

2. That all such valid complaints, once deemed by the Clerk to be substantiated, will be submitted to the appropriate authorities;

3. That the Clerk or any Election Official will not attempt to intervene in the prosecution and may be called to give evidence during prosecution.

Section 17 Discretionary Powers of the Clerk (s.12)

A Clerk who is responsible for conducting an election may provide for any matter or procedure that;

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

Other than the forms prescribed by the Minister, the Clerk has the authority to establish forms, including forms for oaths and declarations that are required to be used. The Clerk's authority also includes the power to require a person to furnish proof that is satisfactory to the election official as to the person's identity or qualifications including citizenship or residency.

The Clerk's authority does not include the power to require a person for the purposes of the procedure set out in section 52(1) to furnish proof of identity and residence in addition to what is prescribed. The discretionary authority provided to the Clerk in the MEA brings with it a degree of risk and inherent liability.

Under the revised MEA, Clerks have expanded powers/discretion, where no Council approval is required in the following areas:

- establishment of advance voting dates, locations and hours;
- establishment of reduced voting hours at long term care facilities;
- management of the Voters' List (additions/deletions/modifications);
- determination of whether filing of financial statements electronically will be permitted and any conditions or limits associated with electronic filing; and
- authority to develop a policy and present to Council for adoption of a by-law by May 1 of an election year to define circumstances under which a recount would be conducted.

Section 18 Index of Forms

Form #	Description
	Ministry of Municipal Affairs Forms
Form 1	Nomination Paper
Form 2	Endorsement of Nomination
Form 4	Financial Statement - Auditor's Report (Candidate)
Form 5	Financial Statement - Subsequent Expenses
Form 6	Notice of Extension of Campaign Period
Form 7	Notice of Registration – Third Party
Form 8	Financial Statement - Auditor's Report (Third Party)
	Municipality of Meaford Forms
Form MEL 1	Declaration of Qualification - Council
Form MEL2	Declaration of Qualification - School Board Trustee
Form MEL3	Candidate's Consent to Release Personal Information
Form MEL4a	Estimated Maximum Campaign Expenses - Council
Form MEL4b	Estimated Self-Funding Limit – Council
Form MEL4c	Estimated Maximum Campaign Expenses – Third-Party Advertisers
Form MEL5	Estimated Maximum Campaign Expenses - English Public School Board
Form MEL6a	Certificate of Maximum Campaign Expenses - Council
Form MEL6b	Certificate of Self-Funding Limit – Council
Form MEL6c	Certificate of Maximum Expenses for Registered Third Parties

Form #	Description
Form MEL 7	Certificate of Maximum Campaign Expenses - English Public School Board
Form MEL8	Unofficial List of Candidates
Form MEL9	Notice of Rejection of Nominations
Form MEL10	Withdrawal of Nomination
Form MEL11	Official List of Certified Candidates
Form MEL12	Declaration of Acclamation to Office
Form MEL13	Declaration of Proper Use of the Voters' List
Form MEL14	Application to Amend Voters' List
Form MEL15a	Affidavit of Qualification - Owner
Form MEL15b	Affidavit of Qualification - Spouse of Owner or Tenant
Form MEL15c	Affidavit of Qualification – Tenant
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Form MEL16	Application for Removal of Another's Name from Voters' List
Form MEL17	Appointment of Scrutineer
Form MEL18	Oral Oath of Secrecy
Form MEL19	Activation of Voting System
Form MEL20a	Appointment and Oath of Election Officials
Form MEL20b	Appointment and Oath of Election Officials (Clerk)
Form MEL21	Re-issue of a Voter Information Letter (Lost and Unused)
Form MEL22	Re-issue of a Voter Information Letter (Imposter)
Form MEL23	Oral Oath at Help Centre
Form MEL24	Declaration of Qualification – Third-Party Advertiser

Form #	Description
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Form MEL26	Registered Electors as of September 20
Form MEL27	Certificate of Maximum Amount of Expenses for Parties Etc. After Voting Day
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Form MEL29	Request for Electronic Voter Information Letter (VIL)
Form MEL30	Declaration of Election Results
Form MEL31	Third-Party Advertiser – Consent to Release Personal Information