



Memorandum

TO: Krista Power, Director of Legislative Services & City Clerk **FILE:**

FROM: Councillor Kristen Oliver
Chair – Inter-Governmental Affairs Committee

DATE: 11/13/2024

SUBJECT: Provincial Updates to the Municipal Elections Act

MEETING & DATE: Committee of the Whole - 12/02/2024

The Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks, and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO) is advocating for improvements to the *Municipal Elections Act (MEA)* to support fair, accessible, and clear election processes.

Ontario's *MEA*, which will be thirty years old by the 2026 election, requires a complete overhaul to align with the 21st century, addressing the impacts of the digital era. This includes setting standards for online voting, updating the language to reflect the shift from paper-based processes to electronic methods, and adapting to technological changes that could affect the democratic process.

Furthermore, streamlining and modernizing the *MEA* will help voters, candidates, contributors, and advertisers better understand their responsibilities, while also reducing the operational and administrative burden on election officials.

AMCTO recommends updating the *MEA* by mid-2025 to allow adequate time for planning ahead of the 2026 elections. They further recommend that the *MEA* be reviewed and updated every four years to keep pace with changing voter expectations, technology, and trends.

The Inter-Governmental Affairs committee supports the efforts of AMCTO in addition to the endorsement of Thunder Bay's City Clerk and Returning Officer, Krista Power, and as such the following motion is presented for Council's consideration:

WITH RESPECT to the Memorandum from Kristen Oliver, Chair – Inter-Governmental Affairs Committee, dated November 13, 2024, we recommend that

the Province be called upon to update the *Municipal Elections Act (MEA)* with priority amendments as outlined by the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks, and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO), in advance of Summer 2025 to allow adequate time for planning for the 2026 municipal elections;

AND THAT the Province commence work to review and re-write the *MEA* with longer-term recommendations ahead of the 2030 elections;

AND THAT the *MEA* be reviewed and updated every four years to keep pace with changing voter expectations, technology, and trends;

AND THAT a copy of this resolution be provided to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Minister of Education, Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery, Minister of Finance, the Premier of Ontario, MPP Thunder Bay–Atikokan, MPP Thunder Bay–Superior North, and AMCTO;

AND THAT any necessary by-laws be presented to City Council for ratification.