



## Staff Report C2025-11

Committee 2025-07-14

Council 2025-07-28

Amendments ☐

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**Submitted To:** Committee of the Whole | Council  
**Submitted By:** Sara Almas, Director, Legislative Services/Clerk  
**Prepared By:** Becky Dahl, Manager, Legislative Services/Deputy Clerk  
**Subject:** 2026 Municipal and School Board Election: Alternative Voting Methods

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### Recommendation

**THAT** Staff Report C2025-10, 2026 Municipal and School Board Election: Alternative Voting Methods, be received;

**AND THAT** Council approve the implementation of a hybrid Internet and Paper Ballot voting system with the use of tabulators for the 2026 Municipal and School Board Elections;

**AND THAT** the necessary by-law to authorize the recommended alternate voting method be brought forward to Council for consideration.

### Amendments

None.

## 1. Executive Summary

In preparation for the 2026 Municipal and School Board Election (the 'Election'), each municipality must determine the method(s) of voting for their electorate. As such, Council is required to select the preferred voting method(s) for Collingwood and pass the requisite by-law. Staff have conducted a thorough evaluation and analysis of potential voting options that offer a simple process while encouraging a greater voter turnout for the 2026 Election. In 2022, voter turnout was at an all time low for Provincial and Municipal Elections with the average turnout being 32.90% as reported by AMO, with Collingwood

high at 39.67% compared to the provincial average while utilizing a hybrid of internet and paper ballot voting. Staff are recommending the same methods be used for the 2026 Election, only change recommended is to end internet voting the day prior to Election Day and offer paper ballot only on Election Day to avoid any technology disruption. This combination of voting methods ensures flexibility, allowing voters to decide both how and where to cast their votes, while also providing accessible voting options.

## 2. Analysis

### Background

The Municipal Elections Act, 1996 permits municipalities to make use of alternative voting methods for the Election, including (but not limited to) the use of internet and/or telephone voting, voting by mail, electronic tabulators or any combination thereof. Council is required to pass a by-law setting the method and manner of voting by May 1st the year of the election (May 1, 2026). These alternative voting methods compared to a traditional polling station and paper ballot voting only, can provide enhanced accessibility to voters when casting a ballot, decrease counting errors through manual counting of ballots, increase efficiencies and reduce the time it takes to calculate election results.

Confirming the election method sooner will provide greater opportunity to secure a reputable vendor(s) providing election services, as many vendors have a set capacity that they can support in a municipal election year.

Research and data on voting behavior often support the notion that while the voting method can influence convenience and accessibility, it is not the sole driver of voter turnout. Key considerations in voter turnout include:

1. Voter Engagement
2. Political Environment
3. Social and Community Factors
4. Convenience Factors (including voting methods)

## **Election Principles**

In determining the best method to cast a ballot in the 2026 Election for the Town of Collingwood, it is important to understand the needs of the electorate, while upholding the principles of the Municipal Elections Act which include:

- maintaining the secrecy and confidentiality of the voting process and individual votes
- providing an election that is accessible to the voters
- providing an election that is fair and non-biased
- ensuring the integrity of the process is maintained throughout the election
- ensuring the results of the election reflect the votes cast, and that valid votes be counted and invalid votes be rejected so far as reasonably possible
- ensuring voters and candidates are treated fairly and consistently within the municipality.

## **What was done in the past in Collingwood**

The Town of Collingwood is comprised of both permanent and seasonal residents, with eligible electors currently estimated at 26,000. In 2018, the Town of Collingwood used internet and telephone voting only. Due to challenges with telephone voting, and a technology interruption from our service provider on election day, that led to an extension in voting, Council supported a change for the 2022 election voting methods which included a hybrid Internet and Paper Ballot system with the use of tabulators. Prior to 2018, vote by mail had been used since 1997.

In the 2022 Election, Collingwood had a voter turnout of 39.67% (8,784), with 43.72% (7,897) of the voters being residents and 21.75% (887) being seasonal residents.

In terms of other statistics gathered from the last Election, the majority of voters chose to vote online, with the highest age range of voters being between 66 and 83.

Internet Voting: 77.24% (6,785 votes)

Polling Station (Paper Ballot): 22.76% (1,999 votes)

Election Day (October 24) was the most active in voting with 1,677 ballots cast through online (internet) voting and 954 cast using a paper ballot, with online voting open for 16 days and 5 advance poll dates for paper ballot voting offered. It should be noted that Polling Stations have been regularly utilized for advance voting and on election day whether used for paper ballots or internet voting kiosks in 2022 or internet voting kiosks in 2018. This provides the opportunity for voters to attend in person if they choose, regardless of the method or their access to technology.

To further assist those voters with mobility or technology issues, mobile home voting was also offered with the use of either voting methods upon request. An accessible vote casting device was also offered at the advance polling location that offered devices such as audio, sip and puff, and paddle technology to assist in casting a paper ballot.

Counting tabulators were used in the 2022 Election to assist with the counting of paper ballots, providing an accurate count of the paper ballots with quick results. The results calculated through the tabulators of the paper ballots was then added to the results provided through internet voting, with the compiled final results of the election available within an hour after the polls were closed.

### **Standards in election and voting technologies**

Since the 2022 Municipal and School Board Election, the Digital Governance Standards Institution (DGSI) (Standards Council of Canada) has developed standards in accordance with the Requirements & Guidance – Accreditation of Standards Development Organizations. These standards provide vendors and municipalities with a standardized approach to both promote and maintain public trust in the use of these technologies and a means of promoting continuous improvements and use of technologies in elections. The standards offer best practices for election administrators and vendors of election technologies, which include the following:

- **Online voting:** online voting security requirements, voter security, voter identity and vote authentication, testing and auditability of the system, technical documentation including architecture and technical specifications, security of the vote, ballot design and accessibility, bandwidth and network capacity requirements, and election management and administration.
- **Tabulators:** technical design requirements, accessibility, privacy measures, ballot secrecy, auditability, verifiability, interoperability, security controls, system integrity, and governance/lifecycle security engineering of the system and device being used.
- **Electronic Voters List Management (e-poll books):** technical design requirements, transparency in system design, usability and accessibility, privacy, authentication, auditability, security, system integrity, network reliability requirements and governance/lifecycle security engineering of the system and device being used.

Staff will be considering these best practices when seeking qualified vendors to support the 2026 Election in the technologies approved by Council.

How do we ensure someone doesn't vote twice? The online voting system is connected to the voters list. When someone casts a ballot online, their name is struck off the list in real time. If that voter was to come to a polling location to cast a paper ballot, their name would already be struck from the voters list and identify as casting a ballot online, or vice versa, if someone has already cast a paper ballot at a polling location and tried to vote online afterwards, they would receive a message when accessing the voter site that they have already voted.

### **Alternative Voting Methods**

When looking at ways in which an elector can cast a ballot, there are a number of methods that can be considered, with the most popular methods provided below.

Details of how the alternate voting method works are clarified in Appendix B.

## Options

### a) Traditional Paper Ballot

#### Advantages of Traditional Paper Ballot Voting

- **Security and Reliability:** Provides a tangible record of votes, allowing for manual recounts and verification if needed. Less susceptible to certain forms of fraud associated with electronic voting systems, such as hacking.
- **Voter Confidence:** Visible and physical process can enhance voter trust and confidence in the electoral system. Immediate confirmation of vote submission provides reassurance that the vote has been cast correctly.
- **Ease of Understanding:** Simple and intuitive process that requires minimal technical knowledge, making it accessible to all demographics. Familiarity due to its long-standing use in many jurisdictions.
- **Auditability:** Allows for straightforward auditing and recount processes due to the physical nature of the ballots. Paper ballots can be stored securely for post-election reviews if necessary.
- **Resilience:** Not reliant on electronic systems, which can be vulnerable to technical failures or cyber-attacks. Can operate independently of power and network requirements, making it suitable in areas with limited technology infrastructure.

#### Disadvantages of Traditional Paper Ballot Voting

- **Resource Intensiveness:** Requires significant human and logistical resources for setup, administration, and counting. Potentially costly, with expenditures on materials, staffing, and transporting ballots.
- **Time-Consuming:** Counting paper ballots can be time-intensive, potentially delaying election results compared to quicker electronic tallies. Physical ballots require careful handling and sorting, which can slow the process.
- **Accessibility Issues:** May present challenges for individuals with disabilities or mobility issues in reaching polling stations. Requires voters to be physically present at designated voting locations, which can be inconvenient for some.

- **Human Error:** Susceptible to human errors, such as miscounting or incorrect marking of ballots, impacting the accuracy of results. Potential for ballots to be damaged or lost during handling and transport.
- **Voter Bottlenecks:** Limited polling stations or high voter turnout can lead to long lines and wait times, discouraging voter participation.

**Environmental Consideration:** High environmental impact due to paper usage, printing, and carbon footprint of emissions related to transporting materials and people to polling stations.

**Approximate cost per elector:** \$2.60\*

Expenses:

- **Material Costs:** Printing ballots, purchasing ballot boxes, postage, and other supplies.
- **Personnel Costs:** Hiring and training staff to run polling stations, oversee the vote, and manually count ballots.
- **Facility Costs:** Renting of various polling locations and moving ballots securely from polling stations to counting centers.

Considerations:

- Generally labor-intensive, with staffing being a major cost driver.
- Requires substantial logistical support, especially in large elections.

## **b) Vote by Mail**

Advantages of Voting by Mail

- **Increased Accessibility:** Enables voting for individuals who may have difficulty reaching polling stations due to disabilities, illness, or mobility issues.
- **Convenience:** Allows voters to complete their ballots at their own convenience without having to navigate potentially long lines at polling places. Reduces the need to travel to polling stations.

- **Paper Trail:** Provides a physical paper trail, aiding in the verification and recount processes if required. Enhances transparency and trust in the voting process with tangible evidence of votes.

#### Disadvantages of Voting by Mail

- **Security Concerns:** Potential for mail theft or tampering with ballots can threaten the integrity of the vote. Risk of lost or delayed ballots in the postal system, possibly disenfranchising voters.
- **Voter Fraud:** Perceived risk of increased opportunities for voter fraud, such as ballot harvesting or false voter registrations. Challenges in ensuring ballots are filled out by the intended voter without coercion or assistance.
- **Delivery and Logistics:** Dependence on postal service efficiency and reliability; delays or errors can affect ballot delivery and return timelines. Voters must ensure ballots are sent back in time to be counted, which can be a logistical challenge. Risk of postal strikes in past elections.
- **Voter Confusion:** Complex instructions or errors in completing mail-in ballots can lead to disenfranchisement if not filled correctly. Potential for ballots to be rejected due to signature mismatches or other validation issues.
- **Reduced Election Day Experience:** Diminishes the communal and participatory atmosphere of traditional in-person voting. Lack of immediate feedback or confirmation of casting a ballot as voters do in person.

**Environmental Consideration:** Significant environmental impact due to paper waste and the carbon footprint associated with mailing processes.

**Approximate cost per elector:** \$3.11\*

Expenses:

- **Printing Costs:** Production of ballots and informational materials.
- **Postal Costs:** Increase in postage due to mailing of ballot kits to and from voters.



- **Personnel Costs:** Staff for ballot verification and handling, ensuring a secure ballot return process. Counting of ballots if tabulators are not used.

Considerations:

- Variable costs depending on postal rates and the scale of the election.
- Requires robust verification systems to manage ballot integrity.

\*does not include costs associated with communications, staffing, legal, office supplies

### c) **Use of Vote Count Tabulators for Counting of Paper Ballots (recommended)**

Advantages of Using a Vote Count Tabulator

- **Efficiency:** Significantly speeds up the counting process compared to manual tallying, allowing for quicker election result announcements. Capable of processing large volumes of ballots efficiently, reducing time and labor costs.
- **Accuracy:** Minimizes human error in the counting process by automating the tallying of votes. Precise in capturing voter markings, which can lead to more accurate outcomes.
- **Auditability:** Modern tabulators create a digital record and retain the original paper ballots, facilitating post-election audits. Provides a dual layer of verification with both electronic and physical records of the votes.
- **Error Detection:** Capable of detecting anomalies such as over-votes or under-votes and alerting election officials for resolution. Can prompt voters to correct ballots if errors are detected, enhancing vote validity and reducing spoilage.
- **Scalability:** Easily scales to accommodate elections of various sizes, from local to national levels, without significant delays in processing.

Disadvantages of Using a Vote Count Tabulator

- **Initial Cost:** High upfront costs for purchasing and maintaining vote tabulator machines can be a financial burden for some jurisdictions. Additional costs for staff training, technical support, and maintenance over time.

- **Technical Vulnerabilities:** Potential for technical malfunctions, breakdowns, or inaccuracies if machines are not properly maintained or if software issues arise. Concerns over security and susceptibility to tampering or hacking, necessitating stringent security measures.
- **Voter Hesitancy:** Some voters may distrust electronic systems, preferring manual counts due to transparency concerns. Misunderstandings about the technology may reduce confidence in the election process.
- **Dependency on Technology:** Relies on a stable power supply and functioning technology, which can be challenging in areas with infrastructure issues. If a machine fails, it can cause delays in the counting process and require contingency plans.
- **Complexity of Operation:** Requires trained personnel for setup, operation, and troubleshooting, demanding comprehensive staff training programs.

Approximate cost per elector: \$2.60\*

Expenses:

- **Technology Costs:** Purchase and maintenance of tabulator machines.
- **Training Costs:** Training staff to operate and troubleshoot machines.
- **Security Costs:** Ensuring physical and digital security of tabulators, memory cards and ballots.

Considerations:

- Reduces manual labor costs over time by automating counting processes.
- Ongoing maintenance and updates are necessary.
- Auditing of system to ensure count is being tabulated correctly.

\*does not include costs associated with communications, staffing, legal, office supplies

**d) Internet Voting** (recommended in conjunction with Paper Ballots and Count Tabulators)

Advantages of Internet Voting

- **Increased Accessibility:** Provides easier access for voters with disabilities or those living in remote areas. Facilitates voting for individuals living outside of the municipality or are away during the voting period but are eligible to vote.
- **Convenience:** Allows voters to cast their ballot from anywhere with internet access, reducing time constraints and potentially increasing voter turnout.
- **Efficiency:** Reduces the need for physical polling stations, which can decrease operational costs. Potential to streamline the counting process and provide quicker election results.
- **Appeal to Younger Voters:** Can engage younger demographics who are more comfortable with digital technologies.

#### Disadvantages of Internet Voting

- **Security Concerns:** Vulnerability to hacking, cyber-attacks, and data breaches can threaten the integrity of election results. Risk of malware or viruses compromising voter devices and confidential data.
- **Privacy Issues:** Ensuring voter anonymity while maintaining a secure system can be challenging. Potential for breaches of personal information if security protocols are inadequate.
- **Technical Barriers:** Requires reliable internet access and technological literacy, which may exclude certain populations. (additional voting method of paper ballots recommended)
- **Lack of Trust:** Public skepticism regarding the security and reliability of online voting systems can lead to decreased trust in election outcomes. (new standards to address this concern)

**Environmental Impact:** Decreases the use of paper, contributing to more environmentally friendly election processes.

Approximate cost per elector: \$3.28\*

#### Expenses:

- **Technology Costs:** Developing, testing, and maintaining secure online voting platforms.

- Security Costs: Advanced security measures, including encryption and cybersecurity protections.
- Voter Access Costs: Ensuring that the system is user-friendly and accessible to people with disabilities.
- Material Costs: Postage for voter letters.

Considerations:

- High initial costs for system development and deployment.
- Potentially lower operational costs once the infrastructure is established.
- Continuous investment in cybersecurity is essential.

\*does not include costs associated with communications, staffing, legal, office supplies

**e) Telephone Voting (not recommended)**

Telephone voting was used as a secondary method of voting during the 2018 Municipal Election but provided an additional challenge for voters. The large volume of candidates on the 2018 ballot meant that voting by telephone took a considerable amount of time and dropped calls were a frequent complaint. Despite being implemented as an accessibility feature, telephone voting was ultimately an additional impediment to voters, and is not recommended.

**Considerations:** During peak voting periods for internet voting, the system can experience delays as in 2022 (time extended by 1 hour on election day), or complete server shut down as happened in 2018 (resulting in an extension of 1 full day). As a result of this possibility, some municipalities implemented internet voting up to the day before election day, and only offered paper ballot options on election day. A robust communication and education plan would be in place to ensure that voters would be aware of this should Council recommend proceeding in a similar manner for the 2026 Election. Alternatively, if Council prefers that both methods (Internet and Paper Ballot) be used up to the close of Election, and if there is a system delay, the Clerk maintains the authority to extend the Election deadline at their discretion to provide voters with additional reasonable time required to ensure they are able to cast their ballot.

Additionally, Council may wish to delay making a decision on an alternative election method until September, to provide an opportunity for further public input.

**Recommendation / Financial Impact:**

Staff recommend proceeding with a hybrid voting model that would include the use of online voting, paper ballots counted by vote tabulators with online voting offered continuously through the advanced voting period, with 5 advance poll dates offered at a municipal facility for paper ballot voting, with dates and locations to be determined closer to the election. On election day, only paper ballots would be offered to address bandwidth issues experienced in the 2018 and 2022 elections.

Although a hybrid election, incorporating both internet and paper ballots, incurs higher costs, staff believe that the benefits realized from offering both voting methods, as demonstrated in the 2022 election, surpass the financial implications.

The costs specific to voting are provided below and are approximate only and are based on 25,000 eligible voters. These funds have been accounted for annually in the election reserve.

|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| Paper Ballot Election with use of Vote Tabulators: | \$28,000         |
| Online Voting Election:                            | \$52,000         |
| Postage for Voter Letters:                         | \$30,000         |
| Voter List Management Solution:                    | \$22,550         |
| <b>Total:</b>                                      | <b>\$132,550</b> |

Additional expenses related to the election will be highlighted in the 2026 municipal budget. These include staff resources, advertising and communications, legal, and office supplies. The total cost for the 2026 Municipal and School Board Election is estimated at \$180,000.

## Conclusion

Staff recommend proceeding with a hybrid voting model that would include the use of online voting, paper ballots counted by vote tabulators with online voting offered continuously through the advanced voting period, with 5 advance poll dates offered at a municipal facility for paper ballot voting. On election day, only paper ballots would be offered to address bandwidth issues experienced in the 2018 and 2022 elections.

## 3. Input from Other Sources

Simcoe County Clerks

Digital Governance Standards Institution (DGSi)

Consultation with Accessibility Advisory Committee has been scheduled for July 17, with any recommendations from the Committee to be included in the final report to Council.

## 4. Applicable Policy or Legislation

Municipal Elections Act, 1996 s42 (1) permits a Council of a local municipality to pass by-laws:

- a) authorizing the use of voting and vote-counting equipment such as voting machines,
- b) voting recorders or optical scanning vote tabulators;
- c) authorizing electors to use an alternative voting method, such as voting by mail or by telephone, that does not require electors to attend at a voting place in order to vote. 1996, c. 32, Sched., s. 42 (1).

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

Community Based Strategic Plan: Pillar #4 Responsible

Promote a healthy local democracy through consideration of initiatives to increase voter engagement and turnout in local elections by using alternative voting methods, offering more than one way to cast a ballot at the convenience of the voter, meeting their accessibility needs.

## 5. Considerations

2024-2028 Community Based Strategic Plan: Advances pillar(s) below:

- ☐ Sustainable   ☐ Connected   ☐ Vibrant   ☒ Responsible
- ☒ Services adjusted if any   Municipal Elections Support
- ☒ Climate Change / Sustainability:   Consideration provided
- ☒ Communication / Engagement:   Advertisement/Notice will be provided
- ☒ Accessibility / Equity, Diversity, Inclusion:   Consultation with AAC Planned
- ☐ Registered Lobbyist(s) relating to content: Nil
- ☐ Rights of Indigenous Peoples ([UNDRIP](#)): N/A

Next steps and future action required following endorsement:

- By-law to be prepared to establish alternative voting methods to be used in the 2026 Municipal and School Board Election.
- Once approved by Council, Staff to procure services for required voting solutions.
- Election procedures to be updated in preparation of 2026 Municipal and School Board Election.

## 6. Appendices and Other Resources

**Appendix A:** Draft Alternative Voting By-law

**Appendix B:** Alternative Voting Methods and How They Work

**Resource 1:** [Municipal Elections Act](#)

**Resource 2:** [Digital Governance Standards for Election and Voting Technologies](#)

DGSI 119-2:2023, DGSI 119-1:2023, CAN/DGSI 111-1:2024

## 7. Approval

**Prepared By:**

Becky Dahl, Manager, Legislative Services / Deputy Clerk

**Reviewed By:**

Sara Almas, Director, Legislative Services / Clerk

**CAO Comments:**

☒ Endorsed by ED Pegg (Acting CAO) on July 9, 2025 to proceed to COW.



## Appendix A: Draft Alternative Voting By-law

**BY-LAW No. 2025-XXX**  
**OF THE**  
**CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF COLLINGWOOD**



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BEING A BY-LAW TO AUTHORIZE THE USE OF AN ALTERNATIVE VOTING  
METHOD FOR THE 2026 MUNICIPAL AND SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION

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**WHEREAS** Section 42 of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 (the Act) provides that a local council may, by by-law, authorize the use of an alternate voting method that does not require electors to attend at a voting place in order to vote;

**AND WHEREAS** Section 42(5) of the Act provides when a by-law authorizing the use of an alternative voting method is in effect, sections 43 and 44 apply only if the by-law so specifies;

**AND WHEREAS** Council deems it appropriate and in the public interest to conduct the Municipal and School Board Election using an alternative voting method and electronic tabulators;

**NOW THEREFORE COUNCIL OF THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF COLLINGWOOD ENACTS AS FOLLOWS:**

1. **THAT** the alternative voting method of “internet” is hereby authorized for the 2026 Municipal and School Board Election in conjunction with the use of a “paper ballot”.
2. **THAT** proxy voting not be permitted in the 2026 municipal election.
3. **THAT** the counting of ballots by electronic methods, in keeping with the “internet” voting method, and use of optical scanning vote tabulators for the purpose of counting paper ballots, is hereby authorized.
4. **THAT** By-law No. 2021-050 be hereby repealed.
5. **THAT** this By-law shall come into full force and effect on the date of final passage hereof at which time all By-laws and/or resolutions that are inconsistent with the

provisions of this By-law and the same are hereby repealed or rescinded insofar as it is necessary to give effect to the provisions of this By-law.

**ENACTED AND PASSED** this 28th day of July, 2026.

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MAYOR

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CLERK

## Appendix B: Alternative voting methods analysis and how they work

### a) Traditional Paper Ballot

#### How it Works:

The preliminary voter list is provided to the municipality from Elections Ontario, with electors able to confirm or update their status online or in person. In the lead up to the election, voters receive a voter card informing them of advance poll dates and polling locations and identification requirements. Voting takes place at advance polling location(s), and at polling locations on election day. Voters mark their ballot by hand and drop it into a secure ballot box manned by staff and/or volunteers. Upon the close of polls, all ballot boxes are securely brought to a central location and ballots counted by election staff. Unofficial results are certified by the Clerk and the successful candidates announced.

A minimum of two election officials (preferably three or more) would be required to be present at each voting site at any time polls are open. Permitting several days of advance voting at 2 or 3 voting sites would require an extensive compliment of part time election workers. Additional staffing may be required should insufficient election volunteers be recruited.

Ballots are either counted manually at the close of the election or run through a vote count tabulator to calculate the results electronically.

Traditional paper ballot voting, also known as in-person voting using paper ballots, has long been a staple of electoral systems.

### b) Vote by Mail

#### How it Works

Vote by mail was the primary method of voting for the Town from the mid-1990s through to the 2014 election. In the lead up to the election, a voting package is mailed to each

eligible elector that includes instructions on how to vote, a voter declaration, a paper ballot, secrecy envelope, and a prepaid return envelope. Voters are required to return their ballot by mail by a determined date to ensure their ballot is received prior to the close of the election or drop it off in person at a polling site by the close of polls on election night. When a ballot kit is received from the voter, the voter declaration form is removed from the return envelope where it is validated by election staff and the voter is marked as voted on the voters list. The secrecy envelope containing the ballot is placed in a sealed ballot box until election day. On election day, the sealed secrecy envelope containing the ballot is opened and run through a tabulator to be counted. Upon the close of polls, all memory cards from the count tabulators are collated to determine election results. Unofficial results are certified by the Clerk and the successful candidates announced.

Vote by mail offers an alternative approach to traditional in-person paper ballot voting.

#### **c) Use of Vote Count Tabulators for Counting of Paper Ballots**

Using a vote count tabulator to count paper ballots can enhance the efficiency and accuracy of elections. If vote tabulators are utilized, once a Voter has completed their ballot, it is inserted into a tabulator where the ballot is scanned and the votes on the ballot are recorded on internal memory card. Once the tabulator is done scanning the ballot, it is dropped into a secure ballot box that is attached to the tabulator. Upon the close of polls, all memory cards are securely brought to a central location and collated to determine election results through software provided by the tabulator supplier. Unofficial results are certified by the Clerk and the successful candidates announced.

#### **d) Internet Voting** (recommended in conjunction with Paper Ballots and Count Tabulators)

##### **How it Works**

The Initial MPAC voter list is received by the Town and electors can confirm or update their status online. In the lead up to the election, each elector is mailed a personal voter notification letter containing voting instructions as well as:

- A voter ID number
- A unique voter PIN
- The URL and telephone number used to vote

At any point during the voting period, voters can log into the system over the internet using their voter ID, voter PIN and a security question (generally date of birth). They are then required to agree to a voter declaration confirming their eligibility to vote. Voters then select their preferred candidates (if any) from each of the races and confirm their final ballot prior to submission.

Depending on the product selected, a one-step or two-step verification process can be used. A two-step process requires registration over the internet with email, SMS or mailed authentication, following by logging into the system and voting using the credentials provided in the voter notification letter. The One-step process does not require additional registration beyond the information included in the voter notification letter and security question.

A staffed Help Centre would be established at a convenient location in Town (such as the Library) to permit voters to update the voter list prior to the election, provide information on the voting process, provide access to a computer for voting and/or assist electors with the voting process. Temporary Help Centres would be established at locations such as care homes or retirement facilities to improve accessibility. Results are stored on remote servers but made inaccessible until after the voting period. Once polls close, unofficial results are certified by the Clerk and the successful candidates announced.