



CITY OF ST. ALBERT ADMINISTRATIVE BACKGROUNDER

TITLE: MAIL-IN BALLOTS FOR THE 2021 MUNICIPAL ELECTION

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to present a motion for which Mayor Heron gave notice on November 16, 2020.

PROPOSED MOTION(S):

That the City of St. Albert second the Town of Okotoks' 2021 Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA) resolution advocating Provincial establishment of a Regulation under the Local Authorities Election Act to enable special ballot provisions for any eligible elector for use in the 2021 civic election.

ALIGNMENT TO PRIORITIES IN COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PLAN

N/A

ALIGNMENT TO LEVELS OF SERVICE DELIVERY

N/A

ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL DIRECTION OR MANDATORY STATUTORY PROVISION

Local Authorities Election Act
City of St. Albert Municipal Elections Bylaw 20/2017

BACKGROUND:

The Town of Okotoks has approached the City of St. Albert to second an emergent resolution for the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA), which advocates for the removal of eligibility criteria for electors to request and use special ballot in the upcoming election.

The Town of Okotoks approved the resolution at their November 9, 2020 Council Meeting.

Under the AUMA's recently revised Resolution Policy, for a resolution to be seconded, it must be supported by a Council Motion by a seconding municipality.

The Backgrounder prepared in Okotoks' proposed resolution reads as follows:

The nomination period for local authorities' elections start on January 1, 2021. Municipalities need to be able to plan for and provide timely information to candidates and electors about the processes for the 2021 general election. In addition to conducting an election during a pandemic, it is anticipated that municipalities will be obligated to conduct senatorial election and provincial referendum votes on behalf of the province. The complexity of limiting the spread of COVID-19 and conducting other votes on behalf of the province is creating the need for extra planning, procedures, and options to ensure the election is held properly and safely.

In order to limit behaviors that spread the COVID-19 virus by compelling electors to attend voting stations in person, the option of voting by special ballots (mail-in voting) should be provided to all electors or as determined by each municipality according to needs.

The proposed resolution calls on the AUMA to advocate to the province to pass a regulation under section 160 (1)(a) of the *Local Authorities Election Act* to modify the special ballot voting requirements which will allow any eligible elector to request to vote by special ballot in the 2021 election, if provided by the local authority.

The Province providing this enabling regulatory authority would be the first step to achieve the intended outcome; subsequent changes at a local level, including Bylaw revisions and administrative procedural changes would be required to implement.

Report Date: December 7, 2020

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Chief Administrative Officer: Kevin Scoble