

# **CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF SOUTH ALGONQUIN**

## **BY-LAW NO. 2026-858**

**Being a by-law to adopt the amended Policy for Alternative Voting Method – Vote by Mail, Policy Number ADM-006-00**

**WHEREAS** Section 42 (3) and (4) of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 requires all municipalities to adopt and maintain a policy with respect to the establishment of procedures and forms for use of alternative voting method;

**AND WHEREAS** Council wishes to continue using the Vote by Mail Method for the 2026 Municipal Election, in accordance with Policy No. ADM-06-00;

**NOW THEREFORE THE COUNCIL OF THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF SOUTH ALGONQUIN ENACTS AS FOLLOWS:**

1. The Vote by Mail Policy attached hereto as Schedule “A” is hereby approved and adopted.
2. All By-Laws or parts of By-Laws heretofore passed inconsistent with the provisions of the attached Policy and respecting the giving of Public Notice are hereby repealed.

**AND FURTHER THAT** this by-law, when passed, shall supersede all previous by-laws, policies, or resolutions relating to the matters contained herein and shall come into force and take effect on the date of its passing.

**READ A FIRST AND SECOND TIME this 4<sup>th</sup> day of February 2026.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ethel LaValley, Mayor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tracy Cannon, Deputy CAO/ Deputy Clerk-Planner

**READ A THIRD TIME AND PASSED AND ENACTED this 4<sup>th</sup> day of February 2026.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ethel LaValley, Mayor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tracy Cannon, Deputy CAO/ Deputy Clerk-Planner

**By signing this by-law, Mayor LaValley has granted approval and will not exercise the power to veto this by-law under Strong Mayor Powers.**

# CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF SOUTH ALGONQUIN

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>POLICY FOR ALTERNATIVE VOTING METHOD - VOTE BY MAIL</b>			
<b>TYPE:</b>	<b>ADMINISTRATION</b>	<b>POLICY NO. ADM-06-00</b>		
<b>DATE:</b> November 30, 2017	<b>REVIEW DATE:</b> January, 2026	<b>FREQUENCY:</b>	<b>REL. BY-LAW:</b> 10-380 17-547 2026-858	<b># OF PAGES:</b> 14

**Purpose:**

The Purpose of this policy is to provide procedures and rules for the alternate voting method known as Vote by Mail and to provide procedures and conflict resolution when counting votes in the Municipal Election.

**Definitions**

**Ballot Box** shall mean a sealed and secured box in which secrecy envelopes containing marked ballots are kept in advance of vote counting on Voting Day.

**Ballot Package** shall mean a package mailed to the elector which includes the voting instruction sheet, composite ballot, ballot secrecy envelope, voter declaration form and return envelope with prepaid postage.

**Ballot Returning Station (BRS)** shall mean the location where the ballots can be dropped off and will be counted, the Municipal Office at 7 Third Avenue Whitney will serve as BRS.

**Ballot Secrecy Envelope** shall mean an envelope in which the elector places the ballot after marking.

**Deputy Returning Officer** shall mean a person appointed by oath to act in the place of the Returning Officer in respect of administering oaths, revisions of the Voters List, ensuring security and other duties as may be delegated by the Returning Officer.

**Drop Box** shall mean a sealed box in which Returned Ballot Packages are placed by persons delivering their ballots.

**Election Official** shall mean a person appointed by oath to issue ballot packages, carry out the counting of votes in a ballot box, process returned ballot packages and other duties as may be delegated by the Returning Officer.

**Locked Area** shall mean an area within the Township office in which ballot boxes containing secrecy envelopes with marked ballots and rejected ballots will be stored when processing is not taking place. This area is a room to which only a limited number of staff who have been provided authority to access the area. Individuals who will be delegated access to this area will be as determined by the Deputy Returning Officer.

**Lock Down** shall mean a predetermined time on Voting Day when the counting of ballots will commence with these areas being sequestered and only those individuals who enter the room at time of sequester with proper authorization will be allowed. If a Candidate or Scrutineer leaves the room they will not be allowed to return. Once the room is sequestered Election Officials, the Returning Officer, Deputy Returning Officer and those approved by the Returning Officer under emergency circumstances will be permitted to leave and re-enter the Secure Room.

**Mail Drop Off Location** shall mean the Township of South Algonquin Municipal Office or other location as determined by the Returning Officer where voters may deposit their Returned Ballot Packages.

**Office** shall mean a position which is subject to election as defined by the Municipal Elections Act.

**Election Staff** shall mean election workers assisting the Deputy Returning Officer who will be processing mail prior to the elections and counting ballots for the election.

**Returned Ballot Packages** shall mean envelopes returned by the elector containing the voter declaration form and the ballot secrecy envelope containing the marked ballot.

**Deputy Returning Officer** shall mean the CAO/Clerk-Treasurer for the Township of South Algonquin. As Deputy Returning Officer, the CAO/Clerk-Treasurer is empowered by legislation to conduct the election and may provide for any matter that is not otherwise provided for in an Act or regulation and is, in the CAO/Clerk-Treasurer's opinion, necessary or desirable for conducting the election.

**Rejected Ballots Record** shall mean a sheet where the number and reason for rejection of ballot will be recorded.

**Secure Rooms** shall mean a room with locked access. No fewer than two people shall be in the Secure Room at one time. The Secure Room will be utilized for the storage of Returned Ballot Packages prior to counting on Voting Day. Entry to the Secure Room will be limited to Election Staff, the Returning Officer, the Deputy Returning Officer, Candidates and Scrutineers. All persons entering the Secure Room will be required to sign in and an oath shall be taken by candidates and scrutineers upon entering. No cell phones or other electronic devices will be

allowed in the Secure Room except as determined by the Returning Officer. Emergency or other entry into the Secure Room other than described herein will be as determined by the Returning Officer with said emergency or other entry being documented by the Deputy Returning Officer and communicated to candidates.

**Voting Day** shall mean the day, in accordance with the Municipal Elections Act, on which the final vote is to be taken in an election.

### **Introduction**

The Township of South Algonquin has chosen to use the alternative voting method of Vote by Mail for Municipal elections. Manual counting of votes will be conducted by election personnel appointed by the Deputy Returning Officer. Utilizing this method of voting improves elector access, enhances participation and increases the efficiency and accuracy of the count in the election.

### **Enabling Legislation**

Elections will be conducted in accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act*, as amended from time to time. The *Municipal Elections Act* outlines provisions for traditional polling station voting, but allows for Municipal Councils to choose alternate voting methods provided the necessary authorizing by-law is adopted establishing the voting system that will be used and the procedures that will be followed.

It shall be noted that the *Municipal Elections Act* is the governing legislation with respect to the election except where these procedures provide alternate governance with respect to the conduct of the election.

In accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act*, the CAO/Clerk-Treasurer has the authority to conduct the election and provide for any matter that is not otherwise provided for in an Act or regulation, and in the CAO/Clerk-Treasurer's opinion is necessary or desirable for conducting the election. Where a procedure is altered, the CAO/Clerk-Treasurer will make written note of the procedure alteration along with the reasoning behind the variation notifying all Candidates as soon as possible after the change.

### **Time Line**

The time line for the Municipal Election will be in keeping with the established time line as provided in the *Municipal Elections Act*, as may be amended from time to time.

### **Alternative Voting Procedure - Vote by Mail**

The Township of South Algonquin will utilize the services of Canada Post and Data Fix to prepare and deliver vote by mail kits to each person who qualifies to vote and who's name appears on the Preliminary List of Electors as of ten (10) days after Nomination Day.

Electors will receive a Ballot Package by mail which will be mailed to eligible electors in the first week of October to the mailing address provided by the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) or to any revised mailing address as processed by the Returning Officer or their designate.

The Ballot Package will contain:

- a Voting Instruction sheet in English
- a Ballot(s)
- a Ballot Secrecy Envelope
- a Voter Declaration Form
- a Postage Prepaid return envelope in which to return the required materials to the Returning Officer
- Only French language rights voters will receive bilingual forms only on a ballot for French language school trustees or such other materials as the CAO/Clerk-Treasurer may deem necessary

Electors who apply to revise the Voters List before the Ballot Packages are mailed will have a Ballot Package mailed using the revised information.

Electors who do not receive a Ballot Package or receive a Ballot Package with incorrect information must revise the Voters List in order to receive a Ballot Package containing the correct elector information.

Electors may verify that they are on the Voters List by:

a) Checking the Preliminary List of Voters, or have another person do so on their behalf, which will be located at the following location by August 31<sup>st</sup>, Township of South Algonquin Municipal Office 7 Third Avenue, Whitney, Ontario

b) Logging in to the on-line service offered by Elections Ontario at [Register to Vote](#)

Note that electors must enter the exact property identification or elector spelling to use this service.

It is the responsibility of the elector to ensure that the CAO/Clerk-Treasurer is aware of their proper mailing address. Ballot Packages returned to the Township "undelivered" shall be marked invalid and stored in a separate, sealed ballot box, under the care of the CAO/Clerk-Treasurer. A new ballot shall be issued to the elector once a proper mailing address has been established.

After the Ballot Packages have been mailed, electors who revise their own information on the Voters List will be issued a Ballot Package at the time they revise the list. Any person who receives a Ballot Package addressed to another person should contact the Township to receive further information and instruction as it is considered an offence under the Municipal Elections Act to exercise a vote other than your own vote.

In accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act*, the CAO/Clerk-Treasurer has the right to administer such forms as may be necessary to conduct the election. Return Ballot Packages will be received daily by mail and by personal drop off at the Mail Drop Off Location and at

the end of business each day the number of packages will be recorded and will be stored in the Secure Room.

Beginning on or about October 15<sup>th</sup> Election Staff will begin processing the Returned Ballot Packages by removing the Ballot Secrecy Envelope and the Voter Declaration Form from the Returned Ballot Package and updating the Voters List to show that the voter identified on the Voter Declaration Form has cast a ballot. The Ballot Secrecy Envelope will then be secured in a Ballot Box which is locked with a padlock.

### **Election Staff**

The Returning Officer will delegate powers and duties to a Deputy Returning Officer(s) and Election Officials. These individuals will be considered to be election staff and will be required to take an oath and be assigned such duties relating to the election as are deemed necessary by the Returning Officer.

### **Candidates and Scrutineers**

Candidates may appoint Scrutineers by completing an appointment form which can be obtained from the Returning Officer.

A Scrutineer shall, on request, show proof of his or her appointment to the Deputy Returning Officer or Election Official.

Candidates and Scrutineers may be present when Returned Ballot Packages are being processed, when the votes are being counted, during a recount and at other such times as determined by the Returning Officer.

One Scrutineer appointed for each certified candidate is permitted for each processing or counting area. The number of Scrutineers who may be present is reduced by one while the candidate who appointed them is present. Where there is only one processing or counting area, either a Candidate or a Scrutineer may be present but both may not be present at the same time.

There is no restriction with respect to the age of a Scrutineer or the relation to the candidate however they must comply with the provisions of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* as amended.

### **Rights of Candidates and Scrutineers**

A Candidate or Scrutineer may place his or her own seal on the Ballot Boxes in which Secrecy Ballot Envelopes have been deposited. Should a Candidate or Scrutineer choose to place a seal on the Ballot Box and is not present when the box is required to be re-opened (in order to place more Secrecy Ballot Envelopes in the box during the processing of the Returned Ballot Packages or for counting on Voting Day) their seal will be removed by the Deputy Returning Officer. A Candidate or Scrutineer may initial the Ballot Box seal placed on Ballot Boxes by

Election Officials and has the right to place their own seal on the Ballot Box immediately following the counting of the ballots.

In accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act*, the CAO/Clerk-Treasurer may, if he or she considers it necessary in order to interpret the statement of results, examine any of the documents and materials in a Ballot Box in the presence of the relevant Deputy Returning Officer.

The Candidate or Scrutineer may object to a Returned Ballot Package, Ballot Secrecy Envelope, Rejected Ballot or Marked Ballot. The Returning Officer or Deputy Returning Officer shall decide on all objections and their decision shall be final.

The Candidate or Scrutineer may sign the unofficial statement of the results prepared by the Returning Officer.

### **Candidates and Scrutineer Conduct**

The Returning Officer is responsible for the conduct of the election and no Candidate or Scrutineer has the right to interfere with the Returning Officer or Election Officials in the discharge of his or her duties.

Any Candidate or Scrutineer who is creating a disturbance or interferes with Election Staff in the Secure Room or in any location where personnel are performing election duties will be removed by the Returning Officer, Election Official or other persons deemed appropriate including law enforcement officials. Once removed, re-entry will not be permitted for the remainder of the election.

Before being admitted to the Secure Room, a person appointed as a Scrutineer shall produce and show his/her "Appointment of Scrutineer by Candidate" form to the Returning Officer or Election Official and both the Candidate and Scrutineer must take the oral Oath of Secrecy. If there is any question with respect to the "Appointment of Scrutineer by Candidate" form or if the required Oath is not taken, no admittance will be permitted.

Candidates or Scrutineers wishing to observe the counting of votes must be in the Secure Room prior to Lock Down and will not be allowed entry once the door has been locked. Should a Candidate or Scrutineer leave the Secure Room after Lock Down, they will not be permitted re-entry. At no time will electronic devices including but not limited to cell phones, lap tops or recording devices be permitted in the Secure Room unless approved by the Returning Officer. Any Candidate or Scrutineer who is found to be in possession of any electronic device will be asked to leave the Secure Room. Re-entry will be at the discretion of the Returning Officer except during Lock Down when re-entry will not be permitted.

## **Access to Voters List**

Individuals can logon to the online tool, [Register to Vote](#) . and electronically check to see if they are on the Voters List. Note that the exact property identification or elector spelling must be used.

Any member of the public may inspect the Voters List at the location outlined above commencing on August 31 in the year of the election. Within 10 days after Nomination Day, the Interim Revision List shall also be available for public inspection.

Candidates and those providing written notice to request a Voters List, as provided in the *Municipal Elections Act*, will receive a Voters List and Interim Revision List in accordance with the above time line.

## **Revision of Voters List**

Voters List revision will take place at the Township of South Algonquin Municipal Office (or other location as determined by the Returning Officer), during normal office hours, Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., except on Voting Day. On Voting Day applications may be made from 8:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

A person may revise information about themselves in person or by mail or in person by his/her agent from the Tuesday after Labour Day until the close of Voting Day at the Municipal Office (or other location as determined by the Returning Officer). Applications for revision must be made on the prescribed form available from the Returning Officer.

A person may remove another person's name in person or by mail from the Tuesday after Labour Day until Nomination Day at the Municipal Office (or other location as determined by the Returning Officer). Applications for removal must be made on the prescribed form available from the Returning Officer.

The Returning Officer, Deputy Returning Officer or Election Staff will respond to all written and in-person inquiries about entries on the list. However, a Ballot Package will only be mailed or issued to the elector entitled to use it.

Electors added to the Voters' List after the third week of September must pick up their Vote by Mail Ballot Package at the Municipal Office located at 7 Third Avenue, Whitney, Ontario. It is the responsibility of the elector to ensure that their ballot is returned to the municipality prior to the close of the poll at 8:00 p.m., local time.

## **Applications for Revisions of Elector's Own Information**

Until the end of the third week in September, electors may call the Township of South Algonquin Municipal Office at (613) 637-2650 to request that the appropriate form be mailed to them for completion and return to the Municipal Office. If the application is endorsed, the elector will receive his/her Ballot Package by mail.

Electors may also attend at the Municipal Office to complete and file the form. If the application is endorsed, the elector will be given his/her Ballot Package at that time.

After the beginning of the fourth week in September, the elector must attend at the Township of South Algonquin Municipal Office located at 7 Third Avenue Whitney to complete and file the form. If the application is endorsed, the elector will be issued his/her Ballot Package at that time.

### **Applications for Replacement Ballot Packages**

If an elector on the Voters List does not receive his/her Ballot Package which was mailed, or if the Ballot Package is lost or destroyed, a replacement Ballot Package may be issued. The elector must attend in person at the Municipal Office and complete the appropriate application form to obtain a replacement Ballot Package. The Returning Officer or a designate will confirm that the elector is qualified, administer the declaration and issue the replacement Ballot Package. A log of all replacement ballot packages issued will be maintained.

All blank "Replacement Ballot Packages" shall be secured in a locked area where access is restricted to individuals who have been authorized by the Deputy Returning Officer.

The Deputy Returning Officer or designate shall be responsible for monitoring and reconciling the inventory of blank ballot packages.

### **Security of the Ballots Prior to Voting**

Ballots will be printed under the supervision of DataFix, the number of which have been printed having been forwarded to the CAO/Clerk-Treasurer.

In addition to the ballots mailed, and to accommodate those individuals who are added to the Voters List or require a replacement ballot, the CAO/Clerk-Treasurer will ensure that approximately 15% more ballots are printed.

The number of ballots distributed by the CAO/Clerk-Treasurer to persons qualifying to be voters will be recorded.

### **During and After Voting**

At the end of each day, the CAO/Clerk-Treasurer or designated Election Official, shall affix a seal to each of the ballot boxes in use that day, initial the seal and cause the sealed ballot boxes to be placed in the Locked Area.

Each morning, the CAO/Clerk-Treasurer or designated Election Official in the presence of another designated Election Official shall retrieve the current ballot boxes in use and shall

inspect the seals to ensure that they are intact, then break the seals to access the slots for use during the day.

If the boxes are full, they shall be retained in the care of the CAO/Clerk-Treasurer in the Locked Area until the time of counting on voting day, after which time they will be transported to the Ballot Counting Centre by the CAO/Clerk-Treasurer or their designate.

After the count, each bundle of ballots, along with the duplicate original Statement of Results, will be placed in the ballot box, the box will be sealed and initialed by the Deputy Returning Officer, Deputy Returning Officer or designated Election Staff, and transferred to the Locked Area under the control of the CAO/Clerk-Treasurer.

## **Voting**

### **Ballot Returning Station**

For the period from the mailing by Canada Post of the Voter Ballot Packages to 4:00 p.m. on Election Day, the Municipal Office located at 7 Third Avenue, Whitney, Ontario shall, during normal office hours, Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., serve as the Ballot Return Station.

The procedures for voting are set out in the Voter Instruction Sheet which accompanies the Ballot Package. Voters requiring assistance with the Vote by Mail method should attend at the Municipal Office or call (613) 637-2650 for assistance from election staff during normal office hours during the election period and on Voting Day from 8:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Election staff will not give advice with regard to whom an elector should vote for.

Voters will be advised to mail their Returned Ballot Package by the second week in October, to ensure its arrival and inclusion in the count. While this is an advisory, all ballots received by mail or otherwise prior to 8:00 p.m. on Voting Day will be processed.

### **Voting Day Ballot Returning Station**

On Voting Day, the Ballot Returning Station shall be located as follows: Council Chambers at the Municipal Office located at 7 Third Avenue, Whitney, Ontario from 8:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

### **Advanced Poll and Proxy Voting**

There will be no advanced polls and no proxy voting in a Vote by Mail election.

### **Processing of Returned Ballot Packages**

Candidates or their Scrutineers are allowed to be present throughout the processing of Returned Ballot Packages but shall not interfere with the process.

Mailed or dropped off Returned Ballot Packages must reach the Mail Drop Off Location by 8:00 p.m. on Voting Day to be included in the count.

An attendance log sheet will be displayed on the door to the Secure Room. All who enter and leave the Secure Room must log their entry and exit on the attendance log sheet. At the discretion of the Deputy Returning Officer, failure to log in and log out may result in a ban from future attendance in the Secure Room.

Upon delivery from the post office, the Deputy Returning Officer or designate will take charge of the Returned Ballot Packages, record the number received, bind them together indicating the date received, and place them in a ballot box stored in the Locked Area.

Returned Ballot Packages may be dropped off at the Mail Drop Off Location and will as soon as possible be placed in a Ballot Box. The Ballot Box shall be clearly marked as a "Returned Ballot Package Drop Box". The Deputy Returning Officer or designate will monitor the Ballot Box(es) and place the contents in the Locked Area as often as necessary. The contents of the Ballot Box(es) will be processed with the mailed Returned Ballot Packages. At the end of each day, the Ballot Boxes will be placed in the Locked Area.

Staff shall check the night depository, located near the front entrance of the Municipal Office at the time of each office opening and closing. Any Returned Ballot Packages contained in the night depository shall be placed in the Ballot Box to be secured until its transfer to the Locked Area of the Secure Room for storage or processing.

At a pre-determined time each day, in the morning to retrieve the Ballot Box and again at the end of business to place it back in, a minimum of two election staff will enter the Secure Room. Candidates and Scrutineers who wish to be present will be required to take the necessary oath.

Beginning on or about October 15<sup>th</sup>, the Returned Ballot Packages will be removed from the Locked Area and opened. Election staff will remove the Voter Declaration Form and Ballot Secrecy Envelope from the Returned Ballot Package. Election staff will identify the voter from the Voter Declaration Form and also confirm that the Voter Declaration Form is properly signed.

Election staff will then initial the Ballot Secrecy Envelope and using scanning equipment, mark the voter on the Voters List as having voted. The Ballot Secrecy Envelopes will be placed in batches of 25 (twenty-five) and shall then be placed in Ballot Boxes. When a Ballot Box has 300 (three hundred) Ballot Secrecy Envelopes, it shall be closed, locked and sealed until its counting on Voting Day. Partially filled Ballot Boxes shall be closed, locked and sealed until the commencement of the next day's processing. Those present shall be given the opportunity to sign or initial any seals on any Ballot Box or to place their own seal on the Ballot Box.

Voter Declaration Forms that have been processed will be made available for Candidates or Scrutineers to review or update their Voters Lists if desired. A list of electors who voted each day will be prepared and available the day following for Candidates or Scrutineers.

Should it be suspected that the Voter Declaration Form be included in with the Secrecy Envelope, the envelope shall be initialed and all documentation placed in an envelope without processing. The Deputy Returning Officer shall be provided with an accounting of the number of such instances and will make a determination as to how to handle such returned ballots.

## **Rejected Ballots**

### **Daily Processing of Returned Ballot Packages**

Any rejected ballots found during the daily processing of Returned Ballot Packages will be marked as such and kept separately in a sealed and secured Ballot Box and not included in the count, nor will the Voter Declaration Form be processed to indicate that the elector voted. Where a Ballot Secrecy Envelope is rejected, the reason for the rejection shall be sequentially recorded by numbering the Ballot Secrecy Envelope and noting the number and reason for the rejection on a separate Rejected Ballots Record.

If a Returned Ballot Package contains a different number of Voter Declarations than the number of Ballot Secrecy Envelopes that are contained within the same Returned Ballot Package, the ballot(s) will be rejected.

If a Returned Ballot Package contains a Voter Declaration which has not been signed by the elector, the ballot will be rejected.

If a Returned Ballot Package contains a Voter Declaration which has been signed by someone other than the elector, the ballot will be rejected.

If a Returned Ballot Package contains writing or marks that is torn or defaced or otherwise in a way that may identify him or her, the ballot will be rejected.

If the voter has already been struck off the list as having voted, the ballot will be rejected.

If the Voter Declaration Form is not for the Township of South Algonquin the ballot will be rejected.

### **Removing the Ballot from the Ballot Secrecy Envelope**

If a Ballot Secrecy Envelope contains more than one ballot, they will be retained with the envelope and dealt with as rejected in the counting.

If the ballot is not for the Township of South Algonquin it will be retained with the envelope and dealt with as rejected in the counting.

### **Late Receiving of Ballots**

Any ballots received by mail or dropped off after 8:00 p.m. on Voting Day will **not** be included in the election count.

The Returning Officer shall make the final determination on rejected ballots.

### **Voting Day**

Returned Ballot Packages must be received at the Mail Drop Off Location by 8:00 p.m. on Voting Day. Electors who are in the Mail Drop Off Location at 8:00 p.m. will be permitted to deposit their Return Ballot Packages in the secured Ballot Box provided for this purpose. Processing up to the point of removal of ballot from the Ballot Secrecy Envelope will take place in a pre-determined location once the Secure Room becomes sequestered. Ballot Secrecy Envelopes will then be turned over to the election staff in the Secure Room to process further.

### **Counting the Votes**

Proceedings in the Secure Room are under the direction of the Returning Officer or designate and no other person shall touch any ballot unless delegated such authority by the Returning Officer. At no time during the processing should the Ballot Boxes be left unattended by the duly appointed persons.

At 6:00 p.m. (or earlier if there is a large number of Ballot Secrecy Envelopes) on Voting Day, the sealed Ballot Boxes containing Ballot Secrecy Envelopes will be taken out of the Locked Area and delivered to individual Secure Rooms or counting stations for processing. Once delivered, the room will then be in Lock Down and no one shall be allowed to enter unless authorized by the Returning Officer. To maintain the integrity of the vote count, Candidates or Scrutineers attending in the Secure Rooms during the count of the ballots shall not be allowed to leave prior to 8:00 p.m., the close of voting hours. Candidates or Scrutineers shall not be allowed use of any electronic devices while in attendance in a Secure Room during the count of the ballot and may be requested to surrender such devices to the Returning Officer or their designate prior to entering.

Election Officials will open the Ballot Boxes one at a time, remove the ballots from the Ballot Secrecy Envelopes and organize the ballots for processing. Ballots will remain in their specified number per group batch. The Election Official shall note any damage which occurs to a ballot during the opening procedure on the reverse of the ballot.

The Returning Officer and Election Officials will complete the tabulation process and generate the necessary vote totaling report(s).

The Returning Officer will unofficially determine the results and declare the unofficial results for their ballot boxes to the Returning Officer as soon as possible but not before 8:00 p.m. As results return they will be announced in the Council Chambers.

As soon as possible the unofficial results will be announced by posting on the Township website and on the elections bulletin board located just inside the front entrance of the front door to the Municipal Offices as to be accessible for public viewing. Results will be e-mailed or faxed to any members of the media who has requested this information in writing in advance.

The Returning Officer will verify the unofficial results and the official results will be prepared for declaration by the CAO/Clerk-Treasurer by close of business on the day after Voting Day.

### **Emergencies**

It is impossible to predict if an emergency will occur, and if so, to what extent the conduct of the election will be affected. In the event of an emergency, the CAO/Clerk-Treasurer may, in accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act*, declare an emergency and make such arrangements as are considered necessary for the conduct of the election.

### **Accessibility**

The Vote by Mail method allows for all persons who are qualified voters to receive a Ballot Package thus allowing access to everyone.

If a qualified voter has a question and/or requires further assistance they should contact the CAO/Clerk-Treasurer at 613-637-2650 ext. 202 for assistance.

The Township will adhere to its accessibility policy throughout the election.

### **Amendments to these Procedures**

The CAO/Clerk-Treasurer has, at any time, the right to amend this document to facilitate the vote, count, tabulation of votes, and security. Every effort will be made to inform Candidates of the modifications that have been made.

The CAO/Clerk-Treasurer's ruling on any interpretation of this document is final.