

Memo



Date: June 09, 2011
File: 0625-01
To: City Manager
From: Deputy City Clerk
Subject: Voter Assist Terminal Amendment to Bylaw No.10546 Use of Automated Voting Machines

Recommendation:

THAT Council, receives, for information the Report from the Deputy City Clerk dated June 9, 2011 regarding amending Bylaw No. 10546 being the 'Procedures for the Use of Automated Voting General Elections and Other Voting' at third reading to include the use of the Voter Assist Terminal.

Purpose:

To seek Council approval for the use of a Voter Assist Terminal during the 2011 Local Government General Election.

Background:

Under the legislation, electors who require assistance voting may request either an election official, or an accompanying individual, to assist in marking their ballot after signing a declaration of assistance to ensure the secrecy and independence of their vote. The declaration states that those assisting an elector must preserve the secrecy of the ballot, mark the ballot in accordance with the wishes of the elector, and refrain from influencing the elector in any way.

In November 2008, prior to the Local Government General Election, staff were made aware by the Accessibility Advisory Committee (formerly Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities) that, although they recognize the integrity and intent of the current process, the independence of the vote for many in our community who are visually impaired or have physical impairments, is the ability to mark their own ballot.

During Local Government Awareness Week, May16-20, the Accessibility Advisory Committee and others in the community were invited to a demonstration of a Voter Assist Terminal (VAT). The VAT is an optical scan ballot-marking device that has been designed to provide privacy and accessibility to voters with disabilities. The feedback provided from the community (see attached) and the Accessibility Advisory Committee was very positive and staff is therefore recommending the City arrange for the use of a VAT during the 2011 Local Government Elections.

Due to the cost and the staffing requirements to assist in familiarizing voters with this technology, staff is recommending the Voter Assist Terminal be provided only at the City Hall voting location during additional advance voting days of November 16, 17, 18 and at the City Hall voting location during general voting on November 19. Accessibility to transit, parking, and the

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be a stylized 'N' or similar character.

number of voting opportunities (4) were factors in determining this to be the best location for electors wishing to use the Voter Assist Terminal.

The amendment to the bylaw allows for those electors requesting use of the VAT for assistance in marking their ballot, be provided the opportunity once they have been issued their ballot. The procedures for the use of the automated voting machines will not change as all marked ballots will be inserted into the vote tabulating unit, including those marked with assistance by the VAT.

Legal/Statutory Authority: *Local Government Act s.102*

Financial/Budgetary Considerations: the rental of the Voter Assist Terminal is approximately \$2000.00 to be funded through the Election budget.

Considerations not applicable to this report:

Internal Circulation:

Legal/Statutory Procedural Requirements:

Existing Policy:

Personnel Implications:

External Agency/Public Comments:

Community & Media Relations Comments:

Alternate Recommendation:

Submitted by:



K Needham,
Deputy City Clerk

Approved for inclusion:



R Mayne, Director Corporate Services



Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians

L'Alliance pour l'égalité des personnes aveugles du Canada

May 26, 2011

Karen Needham
City of Kelowna
1435 Water Street,
Kelowna, BC V1Y 1J4

Dear Karen,

I am writing on behalf of the Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians (AEBC) a not-for-profit national organization of people who are blind, deaf-blind and partially sighted, who work together toward increased access to services and information. We have a small chapter here in Kelowna with 15 members.

Four of our members were able to come down and test the ES&S Automark Voting Assist Terminal at city hall on May 16, 2011. We discussed this experience at our last chapter meeting and we want to pass along some of our comments. We thought the instructions were easy to follow, the braille useful, the keypad simple, and the voice output clear. It was also pointed out that the review of our ballot at the end of the process and the chance to change our choices was very helpful.

We all appreciated the opportunity to test the machine before we actually have to vote in November. We look forward to being able to cast our vote independently and most of all be able to verify our ballot.

Sincerely,

Denise Sanders, Central Okanagan AEBC Secretary

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