

DATE: September 1, 2017

TO: MAYOR AND COUNCIL

NAME AND TITLE: WALTER BABICZ, GENERAL MANAGER OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

SUBJECT: **October 28, 2017 Assent Voting (Referendum)**

ATTACHMENTS: 2017 Assent Voting (Referendum) Locations

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION the report dated September 1, 2017 from the General Manager of Administrative Services titled "October 28, 2017 Assent Voting (Referendum)".

PURPOSE:

This report provides an overview of the key dates and process for the upcoming assent voting (referendum) related to the replacement of the Four Seasons Leisure Pool and Fire Hall No. 1 projects.

POLICY / REGULATORY ANALYSIS:

On April 24, 2017, Council resolved to hold an assent voting (referendum) process to obtain elector assent to the loan authorization bylaws for the replacement of the Four Seasons Leisure Pool and Fire Hall No. 1, and appointed the Chief Election Officer and Deputy Chief Election Officer for that process.

On August 21, 2017, Council gave first three readings to each of "Four Seasons Leisure Pool Replacement Loan Authorization Bylaw No. 8888, 2017" and "Fire Hall #1 Replacement Loan Authorization Bylaw No. 8889, 2017", and approved the questions to be placed on the ballot for the assent voting (referendum) to be held on October 28, 2017, as follows:

- Are you in favour of the City of Prince George adopting "Four Seasons Leisure Pool Replacement Loan Authorization Bylaw No. 8888, 2017" which will authorize Council to borrow a sum not exceeding thirty five million dollars (\$35,000,000), repayable over a period of no more than twenty (20) years, for the development and construction of a new pool building to replace the Four Seasons Leisure Pool?
- Are you in favour of the City of Prince George adopting "Fire Hall #1 Replacement Loan Authorization Bylaw No. 8889, 2017" which will authorize Council to borrow a sum not exceeding fifteen million dollars (\$15,000,000), repayable over a period of no more than twenty (20) years, for the development and construction of a new fire hall building to replace Fire Hall #1?

On August 28, 2017, the City received statutory approval of the two loan authorization bylaws from the Inspector of Municipalities. This statutory approval allows the City to officially proceed with the assent voting (referendum) process.

CONDUCT OF ASSENT VOTING:

Shared Responsibility

The assent voting (referendum) will be conducted in accordance with provincial legislation and the “Election and Other Voting Procedures Bylaw No. 6067, 1993”, which outlines various procedures and requirements to be applied during the assent voting process. Generally, assent voting is conducted in the same manner as a local election.

Local governments and Elections BC now share responsibility for elections and assent voting (referendums). The City of Prince George, through the Chief Election Officer and Deputy Chief Election Officer, will administer the assent voting and set voting dates, times and places, count ballots and announce the assent voting results. However, Elections BC now administers, investigates and enforces assent voting advertising rules under the *Local Elections Campaign Financing Act*.

Voting Dates and Locations

The Election Officers have prepared the following schedule to achieve all requirements of Bylaw No. 6067, the *Local Government Act* and *Community Charter*. The following key dates have been established, and voting hours for all opportunities will be from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Advance Voting Opportunities:

- Wednesday, October 18, 2017 at City Hall and UNBC;
- Thursday, October 19, 2017 at the College of New Caledonia; and
- Tuesday, October 24, 2017 at City Hall.

The advance voting opportunities will assist in providing further opportunities for residents to vote. A new location for advance voting at the College of New Caledonia has been established, to provide further accessibility for voters in that area. In addition, mail ballot voting will be available on or about September 22, 2017, and special (mobile) voting will take place at select health care and community living facilities. Also, a ballot marking machine for electors with hearing, visual or other physical impairments will be available at the two (2) advance voting opportunities at City Hall.

Election Officials plan to have the following eight (8) voting locations open on general voting day, Saturday, October 28, 2017 from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.:

- John McInnis Centre
- DP Todd Secondary School
- Kelly Road Secondary School
- Edgewood Elementary School
- Malaspina Elementary School
- Ron Brent Elementary School
- Vanway Elementary School
- Blackburn Elementary School

The map attached to this report shows all the advance and general voting dates and locations.

Signage Locations

On August 21, 2017, Council adopted “City of Prince George Election and Political Signs Bylaw No. 8867, 2017” which identifies permitted signage locations for elections and assent voting (referendums). The IT Division has since been working on preparing a new layer in PG Map that will clearly show the permitted areas for election and political signage. Further investigation is being done on the integration of the “City of Prince George Election and Political Signs Bylaw No. 8867, 2017” bylaw into the CityofPG App that would facilitate reporting of alleged bylaw infractions regarding signage location.

As indicated above, Elections BC oversees and manages the investigation and enforcement of other advertising provisions for assent voting, through the *Local Elections Campaign Financing Act* (LECFA). This means that advertising sponsors (both favouring and opposing a question) for the referendum must register with Elections BC before sponsoring any advertising, and must follow the requirements in LECFA. Therefore, all questions related to referendum advertising (except for permitted signage locations) must be directed to Elections BC. A link to the Elections BC Guide for Local Non-election Assent Voting Advertising Sponsors in BC will be available on the City’s referendum webpage.

Eligibility to Vote

Voter eligibility rules for assent voting are the same as the eligibility rules for a local election. Generally, an individual will be eligible to vote in the referendum if they:

- are 18 years of age or older on general voting day (October 28, 2017);
- are a Canadian citizen;
- have been a resident of BC for at least 6 months;
- have lived within the City of Prince George for at least 30 days, or have owned real property within the City of Prince George for at least 30 days; and
- are not disqualified under the Local Government Act or another law from voting in a local election.

Obtaining Assent of the Electors

The two subject loan authorization bylaws may not be adopted by Council without approval of the electors. A separate question for each loan authorization bylaw will be on the ballot.

Assent of the electors to “Four Seasons Leisure Pool Replacement Loan Authorization Bylaw No. 8888, 2017” will be obtained if a majority of the votes counted as valid are in favour of the bylaw.

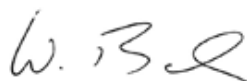
Assent of the electors to “Fire Hall #1 Replacement Loan Authorization Bylaw No. 8889, 2017” will be obtained if a majority of the votes counted as valid are in favour of the bylaw.

The Chief Election Officer will report the preliminary results of the assent voting when available after the close of general voting on October 28, 2017, and will declare the official results no later than 4:00 p.m. on November 1, 2017, as required by legislation. It is anticipated that the official results will be available for the regular Council meeting on October 30, 2017.

CONCLUSION:

Key dates and arrangements for the assent voting (referendum) process for the replacement of the Four Seasons Leisure Pool and Fire Hall No.1 projects have been established. The City’s referendum webpage will provide a wide range of more detailed information and helpful links related to the assent voting process.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:



Walter Babicz, Chief Election Officer
General Manager of Administrative Services

APPROVED:



Kathleen Soltis, City Manager
Meeting date: September 11, 2017