

## 2024 Local Government Elections – Appointment of Returning Officer

### ISSUE

In accordance with provincial legislation and City of Saskatoon bylaw, the City must appoint a Returning Officer to administer municipal elections. The purpose of this report is to inform the Governance and Priorities Committee of the appointment of a Returning Officer for the 2024 Local Government Elections.

### BACKGROUND

City Council passed Bylaw No. 9370, *The Returning Officer Appointment Bylaw, 2016* (the Bylaw) at its meeting held on April 25, 2016.

Section 4 of the Bylaw states:

A Returning Officer for elections within the City of Saskatoon is hereby appointed by City Council as follows:

- (a) the person holding the position of City Clerk;
- (b) or a person appointed by the City Clerk as Returning Officer.

The Returning Officer is to perform all duties and functions prescribed under *The Local Government Election Act, 2015* as well as administrative duties in accordance with the Act, bylaws and policies of the City.

### CURRENT STATUS

During the 2020 Local Government Elections, the City Clerk's Office had a Deputy City Clerk role focused on organizing and managing municipal and school board elections, also acting as Returning Officer. Since then, the position underwent assessment and transformation into an Elections and Appeals Manager role in March of 2023. This position reports to the City Clerk through the Deputy City Clerk, who serves as the Director of Legislative Services.

### DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Shellie Bryant, the Deputy City Clerk and Director of Legislative Services, has been designated as the Returning Officer for the 2024 Local Government Elections. In this role, she assumes all statutory obligations associated with the position and will concentrate exclusively on overseeing the municipal election leading up to Election Day on November 13, 2024. With considerable experience in the City Clerk's Office, Shellie brings knowledge from involvement in previous municipal elections in various capacities. The Election Program falls under the purview of the City Clerk's Office, and the City Clerk's involvement in this appointment pertains solely to non-statutory matters and administrative assistance as needed. This internal arrangement mirrors the

approach adopted for the 2020 Municipal Elections, where the Deputy City Clerk assumed the role of Returning Officer, supported administratively by the City Clerk.

The Elections and Appeals Manager position is largely dedicated to planning and operations for executing municipal and school board elections and by-elections and the expectation that he acts as Assistant Returning Officer.

The Returning Officer is in the process of setting up a distinct Election Office at 145 – First Avenue North, separate from City Hall. This office will be staffed by dedicated support personnel, primarily drawn from the existing staff of the City Clerk’s Office and will serve as the central hub for all Election Program activities.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

An election reserve is in place and costs of general elections are historically shared with the School Boards (50 percent). The appointment of a Returning Officer does not produce any new financial or budgetary implications as it is already approved within the existing budget of the Office of the City Clerk.

**OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

There are no privacy, legal, social, or environmental implications identified.

**NEXT STEPS**

No further action is required with respect to this appointment.

**Report Approval**

Written and Approved by: Adam Tittlemore, City Clerk