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## Election Agreement with Saskatoon's School Divisions

### Recommendation

That the Governance and Priorities Committee recommend to City Council:

1. That the City enter into a formalized, tri-partite election cost-sharing and responsibility agreement with Saskatoon Public Schools and Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools, including the cost-sharing formula passed by Council on November 15, 1982;
2. That the City Solicitor be requested to prepare the necessary agreement as outlined within this report; and
3. That the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized to execute the agreement on behalf of the City of Saskatoon.

### Topic and Purpose

The purpose of this report is to obtain approval to develop a tri-partite agreement between the City of Saskatoon, Saskatoon Public Schools and Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools. Such an agreement would formalize the existing practice of election cost-sharing along with the responsibilities of all parties prior to the 2020 municipal and school board elections.

### Report Highlights

1. The formalization of municipal/school board election agreements is a standard practice.
2. An agreement will clarify the election duties of all parties, specify each party's proportionate share of the costs that are incurred with election processes, and assist with ongoing election readiness.

### Strategic Goals

This report relates to the strategic goals of Continuous Improvement and Asset & Financial Sustainability. Formalizing an agreement with Saskatoon's school boards to support ongoing election readiness reinforces that high-quality election services will be delivered to citizens, while ensuring that public funds continue to be utilized in an effective and efficient manner.

### Background

*The Local Government Election Act* allows for a council and a school board to enter into an arrangement with respect to the sharing of costs and the provision of services necessary for an election. Presently, the City conducts elections on behalf of Saskatoon's school boards in conjunction with general municipal elections. To compensate the City for these services, the school divisions have historically paid 50% of all costs associated with election activities. Each school division's portion of election expenses is then adjusted to reflect their percentage of declared taxable property assessments. This cost-sharing method was authorized on November 15, 1982, when City Council resolved that a net taxable property assessment based cost-sharing

formula be adopted for municipal and school board elections. City Council's resolution is included as Attachment 1 to this Report.

### Report

The 1982 cost-sharing resolution sets out an equitable, transparent formula for covering ongoing election expenses between all parties. Using this formula, the City covers the full expenditure of an election, invoicing each school division after the conclusion of an election for their portion of incurred costs. In this way, the City undertakes a financial and leadership role to ensure municipal and school board elections are successfully administered. However, the provision of - and payment for - key services for Saskatoon's school board elections has historically been by way of an informal understanding. For instance, some of the key election services currently provided by the City as part of this understanding include: the procurement and management of election equipment and software; the lease of election office/warehouse space; facility rentals for election purposes; election worker recruitment, training and remuneration; and the administration of by-elections.

A review of comparable municipal jurisdictions indicates that a formalized agreement is a standard municipal practice. For instance, the City of Regina renewed its election expense-sharing agreement with its school divisions in 2016 and cities such as Halifax, NS, Greater Sudbury, ON and Red Deer, AB have had formalized election agreements in place with their school divisions for several years. Such agreements are typically reviewed and renewed prior to an election.

Preliminary discussions with administrative representatives from Saskatoon's two school divisions have taken place, with both expressing interest in pursuing a formalized agreement. A tri-partite agreement is recommended that includes the cost-sharing formula for the following:

- Vote tabulation equipment and related election management systems and software (including assistive voting devices and technology);
- Lease of election office/warehouse space and office equipment;
- Facility rentals and use of school facilities for election purposes;
- Personnel costs related to electoral management and the hiring, training and managing of temporary election workers;
- Administrative expenses such as advertising, telephone, printing, photocopying and postage;
- Expenses related to by-elections, recounts and other votes;
- Records management;
- Dispute resolution; and
- Means of review and renewal.

### **Options to the Recommendation**

City Council can choose not to enter into a tri-partite election agreement with Saskatoon Public Schools and Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools. Administration does not recommend this option. Opting not to enter into such an agreement may elevate financial, reputational, operational or legislative compliance risks to the City.

Administration values its relationship with Saskatoon's school divisions regarding the delivery of accessible and fair elections and seeks to effectively manage its risks to preserve and protect the City's reputation, resources and delivery of core services. Through its risk management program, City Council has previously acknowledged a low appetite for such risks.

### **Public and/or Stakeholder Involvement**

Preliminary discussions with administrative representatives from Saskatoon's school divisions have taken place. Administration will continue to engage the appropriate representatives in related discussions on this matter.

### **Financial Implications**

The total cost for the 2016 municipal and school board elections was \$535,811. The City's portion was \$267,906, Saskatoon Public Schools contributed \$196,412 and Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools contributed \$71,493. While there are no direct financial implications stemming from this recommendation, a formalized agreement ensures that future election costs will continue to be equitably shared amongst all parties.

### **Other Considerations/Implications**

There are no environmental, Privacy or CPTED implications or considerations.

### **Due Date for Follow-up and/or Project Completion**

Pending Council's authorization to advance such an agreement and subject to approval by Saskatoon Public Schools and Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools, an agreement is anticipated to be completed and signed by all parties by the end of Q4 2019.

### **Public Notice**

Public Notice pursuant to Section 3 of Policy No. C01-021, Public Notice Policy, is not required.

### **Attachment**

1. Council resolution dated November 15, 1982

### **Report Approval**

Written by: Jennifer Brooks, Executive Intern, City Clerk's Office  
Reviewed by: City Solicitor's Office; Nicole Garman, Corporate Risk Manager  
Approved by: Joanne Sproule, City Clerk