

To: Delegation during AMO Conference August 2023
From: FONOM Board
Date: August 21, 2023
Subject: School Board Trustee Elections in 2026

ISSUE:

Municipal Staff oversees the Municipal and multiple School Board elections. The ratepayers of the Municipality are currently responsible for covering all costs associated with the Elections, even when there is no Municipal Election.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM) requests that the Government of Ontario make school boards responsible for conducting their own trustee election or that the school boards fully compensate municipalities for overseeing such trustee elections.

ANALYSIS:

The Boards often will not allow their facilities (school) to be used on Election Day. The biggest challenges Municipality have with the School Board Elections are;

Citizens do not understand the rules that go along with being able to vote for a particular board (i.e., their children go to catholic school, but the parents are not catholic, so they cannot vote for the Trustee for the Catholic Board). The 2026 Election will be even more confusing for School Board Elections with the Province taking over the voters' list. Currently, MPAC cannot share an individual's school board designation with the province. FONOM knows they are still working on this issue, but if MPAC cannot share this information, this will add an extraordinary amount of work for the Clerk's Department. Going so far as saying the municipality will hire additional election assistants to have one person dedicated to ensuring everyone's school board information is correct.

School Board Elections and “non-resident” Electors are always confusing for Election workers. If you do not live in the Municipality (non-resident), you cannot vote for a school board trustee – you must vote for the trustee in the Municipality you reside in.

80-90 % of the calls the Clerks Department receives before and on Election Day are related to School Board issues.

Also, 31 Municipalities in 2022 had Councils that were acclaimed. Those Municipalities still had to prepare and operate School Board Elections at ratepayers’ expense. We polled those Municipalities, and their costs were between \$3000-30,000. The total cost of 2022 Municipal and two of the four School Board Elections in North Bay was \$324,735.00, with the Clerk attributing 50% of the cost to the School Board Elections (noting that the Ballot cost only \$0.29; it is the education of the election worker and citizens is the challenge)

Due to Provincial Legislation, there currently is no financial support for a Municipality to help offset the cost of the Trustee Election. When there is no Municipal Election, the Municipality still has the responsibility and cost.

Due to the challenges, costs, and responsibility to conduct the trustee elections. FONOM believes the School Boards operate their own elections or financially compensate the municipality for the costs incurred.

Municipal Councils that were Acclaimed		Amount for Trustee Elections
1	Township of Armour	-
2	Township of Armstrong	
3	Town of Blind River (6 acclaimed of 7 member council, 1 vacancy)	\$ 26,044.06
4	Township of Brethour	
5	Township of Chamberlain (also 2018)	
6	Township of Chapleau	
7	Municipality of Charlton and Dack (also 2018)	
8	Township of Dawn-Euphemia	13,310.69
9	Township of Dorion (also 2018)	
10	Township of Drummond/North Elmsley	\$ 29,126.00
11	Township of East Garafraxa (also 2018)	\$ 3,302.75
12	Town of Enniskillen (also 2018)	\$ 4,026.30
13	Township of Evanturel (also 2018)	
14	Front of Yonge Township	
15	Municipality of Gordon/Barrie Island (also 2018)	
16	Township of Hilliard (4 acclaimed, 5 member council, 1 vacancy)	
17	Township of Hilton (also 2018)	
18	Village of Hilton Beach	
19	Township of Hornepayne	-
20	Township of Howick	\$ 14,702.00
21	Township of Kerns (also 2018)	
22	Township of Lake of the Woods	
23	Town of Laurentian Hills	
24	Town of Minto	\$ 62,000.00
25	Village of Oil Springs (also 2018)	\$ 5,932.14
26	Township of Perry	\$ 3,012.00
27	Township of Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls	
28	Village of South River	
29	Township of Tay	\$ 29,526.00
30	Township of The Archipelago	
31	Town of Thessalon	\$ 4,425.29
32	Village of Thornloe (also 2018)	

Comments

- We are not experts on the questions that candidates have with regard to each board, this again would be further justification to have the boards run and manage their own elections.
- It was difficult at times trying to get timely information from the school boards. We were left trying our best to answer questions about districts, lead municipality, compensation etc., for the candidates running in the school board election.

- What isn't included is all the soft costs, as time is not tracked and all the administrative and coordination required from our Clerk and Deputy to administer the school board election. Being a small rural township, our School Board election candidate-ward boundaries are combined with three other municipalities, and as you can imagine it's a bit of a challenge.
- I should note that I do not book admin time for election purposes. The expenses are direct payouts by the Township for materials, wages, and advertising. Advertising was shared by most of the County municipalities to reduce costs. I should also note that we made use of the existing inventory of election forms and ballot boxes.
- No school board Election - However, there was an expense of almost \$18,000.00 for the election due to having to pay for the electronic voting and training, regardless of whether it was used or not.
- Including advertisements, mailing costs for Voter Information cards to electors, payments to Simply Voting and Datafix for online