



## COUNCIL REPORT

To: Mayor and Council

Date: January 27, 2026

From: Ron Bowles, Chief Administrative Officer

Subject: **General Local Election 2026 – Appointment of Chief and Deputy Chief Election Officers**

Prepared by: Polly Palmer, Legislative Services Manager/Deputy Corporate Officer

Reviewed by: Mark Panneton, Director of Legislative and Legal Services

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### RECOMMENDATION:

**THAT** Polly Palmer be appointed as Chief Election Officer for the 2026 City of West Kelowna Local Government General Election;

**AND THAT** Rebecca Narinesingh be appointed as Deputy Chief Election Officer for the 2026 City of West Kelowna Local Government General Election;

**AND THAT** Mark Panneton be appointed as Deputy Chief Election Officer for the 2026 City of West Kelowna Local Government General Election;

**AND FURTHER THAT**, in the event that the Chief Election Officer is unable to fulfill their duties due to injury, incapacitation, or death, Mark Panneton be authorized to act as Chief Election Officer.

### STRATEGIC AREA(S) OF FOCUS:

**Strengthen Our Community** – We will provide opportunities for the residents of West Kelowna to build connections, celebrate successes, embrace the community's strengths and diversity, address shared needs, and contribute to shaping the community's future.

Local elections are a statutory process and help create a more connected, empowered, and responsive community. The Chief Election Officer is Responsible for maintaining a fair, lawful, accessible, and transparent voting process.

### PURPOSE:

The Election period (the period when campaign financing rules apply, pursuant to the *Local Elections Campaign Financing Act*) began on January 1, 2026. Council is being asked to appoint a Chief Election Officer and two Deputy Chief Election Officers, pursuant to section 58(1) ("Appointment of election officials") of the *Local Government Act (LGA)*.

## **ANALYSIS:**

General Voting Day for the 2026 General Local Election is Saturday, October 17, 2026.

Part 3 of the *LGA* outlines requirements for conducting a local government election. Section 58(1) requires a Local Government to appoint a Chief Election Officer and at least one Deputy Chief Election Officer.

The duties and powers of the Chief Election Officer (as outlined in Section 59 of the *LGA*) include:

- Appointing election officials for conducting election proceedings;
- Ensuring that a sufficient number of ballots are prepared for an election for voting;
- Ensuring that each voting place is supplied with sufficient ballots, ballot boxes and voting books;
- Ensuring that each voting place has an area that may be used as a voting compartment;
- Taking reasonable precautions to ensure that a person does not vote more than once in an election; and
- Doing all the necessary things for the conduct of an election in accordance with the *LGA*, the *Local Elections Campaign Financing Act*, bylaws and regulations.

Running the General Local Election is a time-intensive commitment. The Chief Election Officer can delegate tasks and duties to the Deputy Chief Election officers including:

- Supervising election officials
- Managing candidate inquiries and filings
- Coordinating advance voting opportunities
- Overseeing compliance with election advertising and campaign financing rules

Together, the proposed Election Officers bring decades of combined experience administering elections, reflecting a deep institutional knowledge of electoral processes and best practices. Their experience is outlined below.

Polly Palmer (Legislative Services Manager/Deputy Corporate Officer) – Chief Election Officer

- 2018 – Chief Election Officer (District of Peachland General Local Election)
- 2014 – Chief Election Officer (District of Peachland General Local Election)
- 2011 – Chief Election Officer (District of Peachland General Local Election)
- 2010 – Chief Election Officer (District of Peachland By-Election)
- 2009 – Chief Election Officer (District of Peachland Referendum)
- 2008 – Chief Election Officer (District of Peachland General Local Election)
- 2005 – Presiding Election Official (City of Kelowna General Local Election)
- 2002 – Election Assistant (City of Kelowna General Local election)

Rebecca Narinesingh (Corporate Records/FOI Specialist/Deputy Corporate Officer) – Deputy Chief Election Officer

- 2022 – Deputy Chief Election Officer (City of West Kelowna General Local Election)

- 2018 – Presiding Election Official (City of West Kelowna General Local Election)
- 2016 – Presiding Election Official (City of West Kelowna Referendum)
- 2014 – Election Official (City of West Kelowna General Local Election)

Mark Panneton (Director, Legislative & Legal Services) – Deputy Chief Election Officer

- 2025 – Presiding Election Official (Consultant, District of Sooke By-Election)
- 2024 – Deputy Chief Election Officer (Consultant, City of Port Alberni By-Election)
- 2022 – Deputy Chief Election Officer (District of West Vancouver General Local Election)
- 2018 – Deputy Chief Election Officer (District of West Vancouver General Local Election)
- 2016 – Deputy Chief Election Officer (District of West Vancouver By-Election)
- 2014 – Deputy Chief Election Officer (District of West Vancouver General Local Election)
- 2011 – Presiding Election Official (District of West Vancouver General Local Election)
- 2008 – Alternate Presiding Election Official (District of West Vancouver General Local Election)

**IMPLICATIONS:**

Legal/Legislative – Section 58(1) of the *LGA* requires a Local Government to appoint a Chief Election Officer and at least one Deputy Chief Election Officer.

Financial – Consideration of the budget for the 2026 General Local Election occurred in conjunction with the City’s 2026 annual budget process.

Bylaw/Policy – City of West Kelowna Local Government Election Bylaw No. 0248 applies.

**CONCLUSION:**

Council is being asked to appoint staff to the positions of Chief and Deputy Chief Election Officers for the purpose of conducting the 2026 General Local Election. To facilitate advance planning, as election preparations will occur throughout the year, staff have brought forward this request for Council’s consideration in January.

PowerPoint: Yes  No