

GRIMSBY VOTES

October 24, 2022

2022 Municipal Election Accessibility Report

If you need this document in an alternate format, please contact the Clerk's Department at 905-945-9634 or by e-mailing Katie Viccica at kviccica@grimsby.ca

Polling Locations

In preparation for the 2022 Municipal Election, staff consulted with the Town's Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee when determining possible voting locations.

A comprehensive checklist was created prior to the 2022 Election using the Town's Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee "2022 Municipal Accessibility Checklist" document.

Eight potential locations were visited and assessed for use during the Election.

The following factors were considered when determining suitable facilities for the Town of Grimsby to use for the Municipal Election:

Building Exterior

All parking locations had onsite accessible parking spots that were clearly marked with the International Symbol of Accessibility and had an accessible route from the vehicle to the voting location within the building. Parking lots were well maintained and paths were well lit.

Future Areas to Consider:

- More or larger signage to advertise the voting location.

Building Entrance

Any barriers were removed to allow for entry for all electors and staff. Every effort was made to ensure that the doors of the interior voting area were wide enough for a wheelchair, scooter, other assistive device or service animal to pass through safely and easily. If the doors of the interior voting area were not accessible, the doors remained propped open and or a greeter was stationed at the door to ensure electors with accessibility issues could make their way to the voting area. One location had the use of stairs and a ramp.

Future Areas to Consider

- Locations to have signs instructing voters on how to use the automatic doors.

Voting Booths

Booths were made available at each voting location. The tables were low in height and had a wide area to allow for wheelchairs, scooters, and other assistive devices or animals. Seating was also made available at the booths.

Following the assessment of all potential voting locations, it was decided that one (1) Advanced Polling location would be at Town Hall and ten (10) Election Day Polling locations would be established.

Future Areas to Consider:

- Establish a designated online booth at each polling location.

Voter Help Centre | 160 Livingston Avenue (Town Hall)

The Town hosted a Voter Help Centre from Tuesday, October 11 to Monday, October 24th between regular office hours (8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.). This location was used for all members of the public, including those with a disability, could visit, call or email to get assistance with the voting process.

A room with signage in large font was posted on the doors of the room. It was set up with telephone and internet access, including keyboards and a touch screen iPad for the online and telephone voting option. Staff were trained to provide assistance if requested by the public.

Voters who lost their VIN card or never received one was able to come to the Help Centre with proper identification and receive one in order to vote online or by telephone.

Library | 18 Carnegie Lane

Designated computers and library staff were made available for Voters using the online method.

Institutions

The Municipal Elections Act requires that on voting day, a voting location shall be provided on the premises of any retirement and nursing homes with more than 20 beds.

For the 2022 Municipal Election, the following institutions were given the option of paper ballot voting with the use of Smartmatic vote tabulators:

- Deer Park Villa and Suites
- Revera Kilean Lodge Long Term Care Home
- Lincoln Park Retirement Services
- Revera Maplecrest Village
- Shalom Manor & Gardens

The Town of Grimsby attended each location one (1) week before Election Day to provide residents of these institutions the option of online voting using iPads.

Future Areas to Consider:

- Scheduling longer polling locations at certain institutions to better support voters.
- Communicate further about expectations of the institutions in preparing the polling locations.
- Offer early registration.
- Ensure VIN cards are sent to the Town instead of the institutions.

- Have proper privacy screens and designated voting booths.

Voting

It was a priority of the Town of Grimsby to ensure that every voter was able to cast their ballot in an accessible manner:

Accessible Voting Options

Council selected an additional method of voting for the 2022 Municipal Election, which included internet and telephone options. This method created more ease for those with disabilities or mobile restrictions. Internet and telephone voting provides equal access and equal opportunity to persons with disabilities.

Persons with disabilities could access the voting system over the telephone, both mobile and land line or by internet. This enabled persons with a disability the opportunity to vote from any location, using more than one method. As a result, there was an increase in their level of independence in voting.

Voatz Voting System

Voatz internet voting system supports a minimum of WCAG 2.1 Level AA accessibility standards and is compatible with all market leading screen readers and web accessible devices. The Voatz system fully complies with AODA requirements for optimal user experience.

Voatz web voting apps and website support smartphone, computer, and browser accessibility features, including the following:

- VoiceOver and TalkBack screen readers
- Configurable font size
- Speech-to-Text
- Support for Bluetooth assisted devices.

Voatz presented their online voting app to the Towns Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee and was successful.

Smartmatic Tabulators

In the 2022 Election, the Town of Grimsby used Smartmatic tabulators. When a voter marked their ballot, they placed it in a secrecy folder and brought it to the Tabulator Operator to cast their vote. There were no accessibility issues as the Tabulator Operator took the ballot and fed it through the tabulator. The secrecy folder allowed for private casting of votes. Once the tabulator showed the ballot was properly accounted for, the Tabulator Operator indicated the vote was successful and the elector could leave the premises.

Voting Assistance

Electors under the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 were provided with the option to have an individual accompany them when casting their ballot by reciting “Oath of Incapacity to Vote without Assistance”.

Staff working the Election were prepared and trained to assist any voter who asked for assistance by reciting “Oath of a Friend of Elector”. This oath ensured privacy and confidentiality prior to providing assistance behind the voting screen.

Voting Proxy

Electors that were physically unable to attend a polling location had the option to appoint another qualified elector to vote on their behalf by using the proxy process.

Training

Only Town staff were utilized to assist throughout the election process.

Voter Lookup

Voter Lookup and registration was completed through MPAC’s online program. This program allowed Voters to update information about themselves and add themselves to the list. This list was then sent to Datafix which created and mailed the VIN cards.

Advertising

The Election website contained information on the voting method, assistance and location of the Election Help Centre in order to expand services.

The Town’s water bills included a 2022 Municipal Election insert containing voting information and registration.

Through the use of various ads and social media, the Town along with the Region promoted: candidate information sessions, the nomination period, “Are you on the voters’ list?”, and voting dates and times.

Options and Discussions

In general, online, tabulator and telephone voting offered electors multiple options to cast their ballot. The flexibility of telephone and online voting positively impacted accessibility for electors with disabilities.

Feedback

Public feedback regarding how election services were provided to those with accessible needs may be submitted to Bonnie Nistico-Dunk, Town Clerk by the following methods:

- Telephone: 905-945-9634 ext. 2171
- Email: bdunk@grimsby.ca
- Mail or in person: 160 Livingston Avenue, Grimsby, Ontario,

The feedback process will provide staff with an opportunity to correct and prevent any accessible issues to enhance service delivery, prevent reoccurring issues, and address training.

Bonnie Nistico-Dunk
Town Clerk