

Information Sheet

Elections of School Board Trustees

James Bay Lowlands Secondary School Board

Background

Under the *Education Act*, Regulation 294 sets out a process unique to James Bay Lowlands Secondary School Board (JBLSSB) for the election of trustees at meetings of the electors held in Moosonee and Moose Factory Island.

In May 2016, the JBLSSB passed a resolution asking the Ministry of Education to consider allowing the board to have its elections conducted under the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* (MEA). This is the current process for electing municipal councillors and school board trustees in most of the province.

The change would provide more opportunities for electors to participate in elections, including more opportunities for members of the community to vote. Voters would be able to learn about registered candidates prior to voting day, and possibly to vote in advance or by proxy. Electors could also vote at any time during available voting hours on voting day.

For candidates, there would be a 3-month period of time in advance of voting day to declare their candidacy. There would be a defined campaign period, and candidates would have to follow the rules set out in the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* respecting campaigning funding, advertising, and other rules.

What's Involved

If MEA elections were conducted, the Clerk of the Town of Moosonee would be responsible for administering the elections for the trustees representing Moosonee, along with the elections for the town councillors.

On Moose Factory Island, however, municipal elections do not currently take place because it is not part of a municipality. In district school boards in Ontario that have trustee representation in non-municipal areas, the Secretary of the Board is responsible for conducting the MEA election. The Ministry is currently exploring the options of who can be assigned this authority for JBLSSB. In this document, the term “clerk” is used to refer to the person with the authority to conduct the election.

Decisions

The clerk has the authority to make a number of decisions such as where the polling station will be, what the hours of voting will be, if/which alternative methods of voting will be available, etc.

Consultations

Ministry of Education staff will be traveling to Moosonee in late February 2017. During that time, the staff will meet with the JBLSSB trustees and JBLSSB communities.

The ministry will meet with JBLSSB community members on the island and in the Town of Moosonee – scheduled for February 28 and March 1 respectively. These meetings are to provide the community with an opportunity to hear about the proposed changes, ask questions, and express their views. No decisions will be taken at these meetings. The role of ministry staff is to consult - to answer questions and listen to comments, concerns, and ideas which they will bring back for consideration by the Government.

Attached is an information sheet the ministry has prepared that outlines the differences between the current and proposed election processes.

	Current System	Proposed System
What it's called	<p>"Meeting of Electors"</p> <p>The election rules are found in Regulation 294, under the Education Act.</p>	<p>"Municipal Election"</p> <p>Because the election rules are contained in the <i>Municipal Elections Act, 1996</i> (MEA), these elections are also commonly called "MEA Elections"</p>
When it happens	<p>On a date and time determined by the board, in the month of October in an election year. The board sets a meeting time and place in Moosonee for the election of the two trustees representing Moosonee, and on Moose Factory Island for the election of the trustee representing Moose Factory Island.</p>	<p>Voting day is the 4th Monday of October in an election year. For the next elections, Voting Day will be on Monday, October 22, 2018.</p> <p>Voting is open from 10am until 8pm on voting day. The clerk may decide to open the polls earlier than 10am.</p>
How it happens	<p>The electors in Moosonee and the electors on Moose Factory Island who attend the meeting (set by the board) select a presiding officer. The presiding officer conducts the election in the manner determined by the electors present at the meeting.</p> <p>The vote must be by ballot.</p> <p>The secretary of the board records the minutes of the meeting, which will include the results of the vote.</p>	<p>Under the MEA, the clerk and Town determine the location of the polling station, available voting hours, access to advance polls, proxy voting, and alternative methods of voting.</p> <p>The clerk reports the results of the vote.</p>
How voters know when and where to vote	<p>The secretary of the board posts a notice of the meeting 6 days before in two or more prominent places in Moosonee and on Moose Factory Island for their respective election.</p> <p>The board may decide to do additional advertising.</p>	<p>The clerk is responsible for providing notice to electors of the election, location of polling station, hours of voting, and any alternative methods of voting.</p>
Voting	<p>Electors must be 18 years old, residents of the area, tax supporters of the board, and Canadian citizens.</p> <p>Electors vote in person at the meeting.</p> <p>Any objection to the right of a voter to vote is resolved through a declaration by the voter.</p>	<p>Electors must be 18 years old, residents of the area, tax supporters of the board, and Canadian citizens.</p> <p>Electors vote any time during available voting hours (with possibility of advance voting).</p> <p>A voters' list is prepared in advance and made public on September 1 of an election year. Citizens have the opportunity to ensure that their name is on the list correctly. If a citizen wants to be added to the list, or make a correction, an application can be made to the clerk up until the close of voting on voting day. This may require specific identification to be shown.</p>

<p>Running for Office</p>	<p>Candidates are nominated at the public meeting. A candidate must be present to be nominated. There is no fee for nomination.</p> <p>There are no rules related to campaigning or finances.</p>	<p>Candidates must declare themselves well in advance of voting day.</p> <p>The rules of the <i>Municipal Elections Act, 1996</i> will apply, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nomination <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Candidates complete a Nomination Form, file it with the clerk, and pay the nomination fee of \$100. The fee is refunded if the candidate files their financial statements on time. ○ Candidates can file their nomination papers from May 1 until the 4th Friday in July in an election year. For the next election, the filing deadline will be Friday, July 27, 2018. • Campaigning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The campaign period (from nomination to voting day) is when candidates can give voters information about themselves and why voters may want to vote for them. • Finances <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Candidates are required to open a separate campaign bank account, to keep records of contributions, loans and expenses related to their election campaign, and to file a financial statement. ○ There are rules around contribution limits for campaign donations, and around fundraising. ○ There are penalties for violating the financial rules. ○ Finances could be subject to applications for a compliance audit
<p>Filling a Vacancy</p>	<p>If a vacancy occurs, a new election is held by public meeting only for electors represented by the vacant trustee seat.</p>	<p>If a vacancy occurs, the board can choose to hold a by-election at its own expense, or to appoint a new trustee to the vacant seat.</p>