

## **Voting at Institutions and Retirement Homes**

### **PURPOSE**

This document outlines the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake's procedures for voting in institutions (long-term care homes) and retirement homes during the 2026 municipal election.

### **APPLICATION**

These procedures apply to election officials appointed by the Town Clerk, electors, candidates, scrutineers, and staff at institutions (long-term care homes) and retirement homes during the 2026 municipal election at the following locations and times:

Monday, October 26, 2026

Roving Poll\* - Chateau Gardens (Niagara Long-Term Care Residence)

Roving Poll\* - Pleasant Manor

\*Timing to be confirmed in consultation with staff at both locations.

### **AUTHORITY / LEGISLATIVE REFERENCES**

Section 45(7) of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 (MEA) requires voting places to be provided at institutions (long-term care homes) and retirement homes on election day.

Section 45(8) of the MEA authorizes the Town Clerk to attend an elector who is a resident of an institution (long-term care home) or retirement home to allow them to vote.

Section 46(3) of the MEA authorizes the Town Clerk to reduce voting hours in institutions (long-term care homes) or retirement homes used only by residents of those facilities.

Section 53 of the Municipal Elections Act authorizes the Town Clerk to declare an emergency if circumstances prevent the election from being conducted in accordance with the Act. Section 53(2) authorizes the Town Clerk to make any arrangements considered necessary for the conduct of the election.

### **ELECTION PERSONNEL**

The Clerk is responsible for conducting the municipal election.

The Clerk may appoint Deputy Returning Officers (DROs) and other election officials as needed to conduct voting at long-term care homes (LTCHs) and retirement homes.

Election officials will travel in groups of three to ensure the secure transport of ballot boxes and election materials and to support the voting process.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY IN LONG-TERM CARE HOMES**

Each LTCH will establish any required health and safety screening protocols for election staff before entry into the facility.

Upon arrival, election officials will report to the assigned staff member responsible for screening and safety procedures if required. Facility protocols may change based on current conditions.

## **STORAGE AND SECURITY**

All tabulators, memory cards, ballots, and election supplies will be securely stored at a location designated by the Town Clerk before being transported to each long-term care or retirement home.

## **VOTING DAY PROCEDURES AND USE OF VOTE TABULATORS**

Election officials will follow the Town's "Voting Day Procedures and Procedures for the Use of Vote Tabulators" policy wherever possible.

The designated election officials will collect the required materials from the Town Administration Building, Committee Room 2, including:

- A "Critical Forms" file
- Printed voters' lists organized by institution or resident area
- A ballot box containing blank ballots
- A transfer box for completed ballots
- Pens, magnifying sheets, note pads, secrecy folders, and other voting supplies

Election officials will then travel to the first LTCH. Staff at each facility will provide a designated area for voting operations.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

1. Staff at each institution (long-term care home) and retirement home will work with election officials to support the voting process.
2. Administrative staff at each facility will provide a list of eligible resident electors before election day.
  - a. An election official will confirm that each elector appears on the voters' list.
  - b. If an elector is missing from the voters' list or if their information is incorrect, the election official will update or add the elector's information using the information provided.

3. Election officials or facility staff may assist electors who require help marking their ballot.

### **BED-TO-BED VOTING**

A designated election official will deliver all required election supplies to the Deputy Returning Officer assigned to each institution (long-term care home) and retirement home before election day.

1. On election day, residents will be brought to the designated voting area to cast their ballot.
2. Before issuing a ballot, election officials will ask the elector for identification showing their name and qualifying address and will verify the information against the voters' list.
  - a. If a resident does not have identification readily available, election officials may accept documents issued by the institution, including:
    - Resident charts
    - Bed or room identification
    - Wristbands
    - Resident lists provided by the facility

An administrator from the facility may also confirm the elector's identity.

3. To vote, the elector will mark the ballot for their preferred candidate.
  - a. If assistance is needed, an election official or facility staff member may help the elector mark the ballot.
  - b. If facility staff act as an interpreter, the designated election official will complete the Declaration of Interpreter form.
4. The elector will place the completed ballot into a secrecy folder and then into the ballot box provided by the election official.
  - a. If the elector makes an error on the ballot, the Ballot Officer will:
    - i. Fold the ballot in half
    - ii. Write "SPOILED" on the back of the ballot
    - iii. Place the ballot in the spoiled ballot envelope
    - iv. Issue a replacement ballot

5. After the ballot is placed in the ballot box, the election official will mark the elector as having voted on the voters' list.
6. Election officials will bring ballot boxes and supplies directly to bedridden residents when requested.

### **CLOSE OF VOTING**

1. After all voting at the institution (long-term care home) or retirement home is complete, the Deputy Returning Officer will:
  - a. Seal the ballot box
  - b. Place all unused ballots into the ballot transfer box
  - c. Place all remaining supplies and envelopes into the transfer carrier and seal it

The Deputy Returning Officer will ensure all ballots and election supplies remain secure until collected by a designated election official.

### **CANDIDATES AND SCRUTINEERS**

1. Candidates and scrutineers are not permitted inside institutions (long-term care homes) or retirement homes.

### **SECURITY OF THE BALLOT BOX**

A single ballot box will be used for the roving poll. The ballot box will be sealed after voting at each LTCH and reused at the next location.

After voting concludes at Pleasant Manor, the ballot box will be sealed for the final time and returned to secure storage at Town Hall.

The ballot box seal will be opened at Pleasant Manor in view of election officials, facility staff, and any authorized scrutineers present.

### **TABULATION AND RESULTS**

1. Election officials will follow the Town's "Voting Day Procedures and Procedures for the Use of Vote Tabulators" policy wherever possible.

2. Results from institution (long-term care home) and retirement home ballots will not be accessed or generated until after voting closes on election day.
3. The results will be included in the Town's official election results system on election night.

### **RETENTION OF ELECTION DOCUMENTS**

The Town Clerk will preserve all ballots, documents, and election materials in accordance with the Municipal Elections Act and this policy.

### **RECOUNTS**

If a recount is required, ballots will be counted using the same method used during the original count.

### **EMERGENCIES**

If an emergency or other circumstance threatens the integrity of the election, the Clerk may declare an emergency and make any arrangements necessary to conduct the election.

### **AMENDMENTS TO THESE PROCEDURES**

The Clerk may amend these procedures at any time to support the voting process, vote counting, tabulation, security, or any other election-related matter.

The Clerk's interpretation of these procedures is final.

June 1, 2026