

## **November 5, 2018 Election Report – Rural Municipality of Miltonvale Park**

The November 5, 2018 elections saw ten candidates vie for six council positions, with Hal Parker acclaimed to the Mayor's position.

Information about the election was shared through the required advertisements in the newspaper, along with the two large outdoor signs, posters on the community message boards, at the hall and convenience store, notifications on social media and the website as well as information in 500 newsletters distributed in the municipality and online, along with the provincial information in the media. At the first meeting of the newly elected Council, it was suggested additional outdoor signage also be considered.

Nomination forms were available from the bulletin board at the Milton Community Hall, at Community notice boards and online.

As the Municipal Government Act's requirements for elections were significantly more onerous than for the previous community election meetings, it may have been beneficial for the MEO to hold a meeting with the candidates to ensure they were aware of the regulations. The nomination form did not include the candidate's email address, and this would have made it easier to inform them of regulations and obligations. The MEO emailed candidates several times and delivered paper copies of the first email message to homes of candidates for whom no email address was available. If an email address is not requested on the nomination forms for the next election, it should be obtained when the nomination papers are received.

There was one nomination paper received from an ineligible candidate, who was a business owner rather than a resident. There were also queries from several residents about the eligibility of another candidate; however, no challenges were filed and when approached informally by the MEO, the candidate verbally confirmed residency.

It was not felt that a debate was needed in the municipality for an election for Councillors; however, some voters mentioned not knowing anything about the candidates. Although it is the responsibility of the candidates to make themselves known to voters; it would obviously be beneficial to the community, as a whole, to have voters who are informed. Council may wish to consider including a section on the municipal website to allow candidates equal opportunity to submit information about themselves, their priorities and experience to help residents become educated about their options.

Municipal Affairs cautioned about the municipality itself hosting events, unless all candidates could attend. As the MEO, and one candidate were active on the Hall Committee, they would have had to distance themselves from the organizing of an event such as a candidate meet and greet by the Hall, which would have been another logical way to allow residents to interact with all candidates, as long as the public perception remained of impartiality and fairness. Groups and individuals can host events to allow residents to gather information.

Municipal Affairs provided a variety of training sessions and handbooks, documents, and e-newsletters which were much appreciated, and very valuable.

Elections PEI provided a voters' list and supplies for a very affordable fee of \$100. Updates from our election list will be forwarded to the Elections PEI in the near future, with their permission for the delay. Voters' lists were protected carefully and were distributed to, and returned by, two candidates.

There were 863 residents on the voters' list and 186 residents voted. The Advance Poll which was held from 9 a.m. -12 noon on Saturday, November allowed 37 electors to cast their ballots, while 149 electors voted at the election poll from 9 a.m.-7 p.m. on Monday, November 5.

Voter turnout was 21.55%, which, while quite low, attracted over six times as many residents as the previous two community election meetings which had 25 and 30 people vote.

There were also four people (three residents of Charlottetown and one from Wheatley River) who intended to vote in our election, as well as another resident of the unincorporated community of Wheatley River who made a telephone inquiry regarding voting. There were two voters who did not bring any ID, but I believe they both returned later with ID and voted.

Council's Election Bylaw sets out the 9 a.m.-12 noon hours on the Saturday before the election for the Advance Poll. There were several people who made the office aware they were unable to attend and suggested a greater span of days between the advance poll and the election. Two were out of the province over both days, and one resident worked at an election in another municipality. If not enough nominations had been received, and the nomination period extended until November 26, an earlier date would have been logistically challenging. Elections PEI noted that best practice for advance polls is to hold them on a Saturday. Ballots would need to be printed, notice given, and advertisements would need to be booked. I do not recommend changing the day for the Advance Poll, as it would be fairly rare that people would be away over a weekend and the following Monday. Council may wish to consider extending the poll hours over the noon hour, in case that might allow those who may be working slightly more flexibility. This would require a change to the bylaw.

There was discussion about the number of polling stations to have. It was recommended that polls contain about 400 voters, and Miltonvale Park's two polling stations were divided alphabetically after MacDonalds, to approximately 430 people per poll. There were two polling stations at the Advance Poll, with four workers, plus the Municipal Electoral Officer (MEO) in the office. With approximately ten voters per hour, one polling station may have been adequate, although this slower time did allow poll workers to become familiar with their roles, the rigorous paperwork and various situations that might arise.

On voting day an additional worker was added to the two polls, to allow for breaks, and to help direct voters. The additional person was also useful in being able to register voters who were not on the list, decreasing delays to voters behind them in the line. Had there been

significantly fewer candidates, given the historical turnout, serious consideration was given to having only one polling station.

The Returning Officer was Kaye Rodd, while Connie MacDonald acted as Deputy MEO and Poll Clerk. Dianne Garnham also was a poll clerk. Anne Marie MacEwen was DRO for election day, a role which Allison MacDonald filled at the Advance Poll. He floated between Poll clerk, DRO and Information Officer on November 5,

Signage was used in the line to reinforce voting information (check mark, up to six candidates, sample ballot...), in the hope this would help the voting move along quickly.

Line ups were not significant, with any line of four or five voters being very rare. Only one voter, who was not on the voters' list, and appeared early in the morning at the Advance Poll, expressed concern over the time it took to vote, and complete the paperwork.

A rolling chair was positioned near the doorway and was used by several voters with mobility issues.

Council provided pizza for supper on Election Day for the workers, who were present for approximately 13 hours that day. This was much appreciated by the poll workers.

There were no spoiled ballots. Two candidates were present for the count and another was present for the recount, which was triggered by the close margin between candidates.

**Official Results: Mayor - PARKER, Hal (by acclamation)**

**Councillors**

| Candidate                     | Votes | Elected |
|-------------------------------|-------|---------|
| <b>COSH-MACKENZIE, Tamsyn</b> | 85    | E       |
| CURTIS, Sheila                | 83    |         |
| <b>FRIZZELL, Andrew</b>       | 113   | E       |
| <b>HOOPER, Philip</b>         | 135   | E       |
| <b>MACDONALD, Spencer</b>     | 91    | E       |
| MACDONALD-VAIL, Denise        | 79    |         |
| MACKINNON, Sheila             | 66    |         |
| <b>POOLE, Paul</b>            | 110   | E       |
| <b>RHYNES, Lindsey</b>        | 103   | E       |
| SHAW, Helen                   | 48    |         |

Campaign contributions and election expenses forms were all filed on time by all candidates, and a summary of the information was posted at the Milton Community Hall, the municipal website and social media.

| <b>Candidate</b>      | <b>Contributions</b> | <b>Expenses</b> |
|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| Helen Shaw            | \$ 0                 | \$ 0            |
| Philip Hooper         | \$ 0                 | \$ 0            |
| Tamsyn Cosh-MacKenzie | \$ 0                 | \$ 0            |
| Lindsey Rhynes        | \$ 0                 | \$118.05        |
| Paul Poole            | \$ 0                 | \$ 0            |
| Hal Parker            | \$ 0                 | \$ 0            |
| Andrew Frizzell       | \$ 0                 | \$ 0            |
| Sheila Curtis         | \$ 0                 | \$ 0            |
| Denise MacDonald-Vail | \$ 0                 | \$ 0            |
| <b>TOTAL</b>          | <b>\$ 0</b>          | <b>118.05</b>   |

Overall, the elections ran quite smoothly. They took a lot of administrative time which is not accounted for in the summary of the election expenses. Council’s lease with the hall allows for four free rentals annually, which included the election.

**Election Expenses**

|  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| Elections PE I agreement -voters list and supplies | \$100.00          |
| Training, poll honoraria and mileage               | \$1,734.81        |
| Advertisements                                     | \$616.32          |
| Ballots  | \$227.85          |
| Pizza  | \$33.48           |
| <b>Total</b>                                       | <b>\$2,712.46</b> |

It should be noted if there is a byelection in the future, there would still be the requirement for 13 hours of having the polls open for voting (possibly with just one polling station), and advertisements and ballots.

Respectively submitted,  
 Shari MacDonald, MEO and CAO  
 January 13, 2019