



*Issued by Stasia Carr
Township of Assignack Clerk*

Township of Assignack's 2026 Municipal Election Regulations and Procedures

This Policy document is prepared under the authority of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 and By-law #2026-?? of the Township of Assignack.

The 2026 Municipal Election will be held on October 26, 2026, and will be conducted using the Vote by Mail process. Every elector has the responsibility to complete their ballot in accordance with the instructions provided within the voting kit and return the ballot, by mail or in person to the Municipal Office.

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1. General Rules

- a) The Council of the Township of Assignack enacted By-law #2026-06. This By-law provides for the conduct of the 2026 Municipal Election using the "Vote by Mail" method. The Municipal Elections Act, 1996 allows the use of alternative voting methods, Sections 43 concerning advance polls and 44 concerning voting proxies apply only if the By-law also specifies. The Vote by mail method eliminates the need for any advance polls and proxy voting.

- b) The purpose of this document is to establish procedures for the use of the "Vote By Mail" method which are consistent with the principles of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996. Section 43 of the Act requires that the Clerk establish procedures and forms for the use of an alternative voting method and provide a copy of the procedures to each candidate.
- c) Questions regarding these procedures are encouraged. It is anticipated that all election officials, candidates and other stakeholders will work to ensure the integrity of the procedures.
- d) If it is necessary to amend these procedures, a copy of the amendment will be mailed to each candidate at the address shown on the Certified Nomination Form or emailed to the number listed on the same form.
- e) The Clerk is responsible for administering and conducting the Municipal Election, establishing procedures and rules and interpreting the procedures and rules, except as varied by a Court. With respect to matters of policy and procedures for Voting by Mail and for the conduct of the election in general, the Clerk's decision is final.

2. Staffing

- a) The Clerk may appoint in writing, Deputy Returning Officers (DROs) and such other officials/staff as required, assisting in the administration, management, security and control of the 2026 Municipal Election and "Vote by Mail" process.
- b) Written appointments and delegations of duties for DROs and election officials shall include the authority to require any person to furnish proof of identity or qualifications pursuant to the Municipal Elections Act, 1996.

3. Notices

- a) When required under the Municipal Elections Act, notices will be circulated using a multitude of resources. Notice will be posted on the Townships website at <http://www.assignack.ca> on social media and when possible, published in the Manitoulin Expositor, to ensure maximum reach to voters.
- b) Notice of Nomination is to be published and posted before Nomination Day. Nomination Day is August 21, 2026.
- c) Notice of Election is on Monday, October 26, 2026. Notice will be posted and published on or before September 22, 2026.
- d) Notice of Revision of Voters List is to be provided to those as listed in s.23 s.27(1)(a) during the revision period from September 20, 2026, to September 30, 2026, at 5:00pm.

4. Revision of Voters List Procedures

- a) The period for revisions to the voters list is from September 1, 2026, until the close of voting on October 26, 2026.

August 21, 2026 (Nomination Day) is the last day for making an application to remove another person's name from the voters list.

Revision of the list will be conducted at the Municipal Office on forms available from the Clerk's Department, during regular office hours from 8:00am to 5:00pm up to and including the Voting Day on October 26, 2026, additions can take place from 10:00 am to 8:00pm.

The Clerk is responsible for maintaining a list of changes.

- b) Applications to revise the voters list may be filed in person or by mail by the applicant or in by person by an agent.

Electors added to the list before September 20, 2026 will receive their ballot package by mail from the Municipality.

After October 1, 2026, it is recommended that those persons making application to add their names to the list do so in person at the Municipal Office. If the application is certified by the Clerk, or designate, the electors will receive a ballot package from the clerk at that time.

In a "Vote by Mail" system, the onus is on the eligible Elector TO ENSURE that their name and relevant information are on the Voters List. Due to time constraints, the Clerk cannot ensure that ballot packages mailed out after October 1, 2026, will reach electors on time for them to execute their right to vote. As a result, ballot packages requested by mail from the Municipal Office after October 1, 2026, may not reach the electors in time to meet the last drop off date.

5. Preliminary List and Voters List

- a) The preliminary list and voters list are public documents and may be inspected by the public at the Municipal Office at 156 Arthur Street, Manitowaning, Ontario.
- b) The Clerk shall provide, upon request, each candidate with a copy of the voters list that contains the names of the electors who are entitled to vote for that office. Candidates will be required to sign a declaration, stating that the voters list will be used only for election purposes.

6. Voter Identification

- a) The identification requirements for the 2026 Municipal Election will be conducted in accordance with the Ontario Regulation 500/09.
- b) Electors who receive a voting kit must sign a voter declaration form which will take the place of confirming their identity as required in Section 5.a).

7. Procedures for "Vote By Mail"

- a) In accordance with By-law #2026-06, the Municipality shall provide every elector whose name appears on the Voters List, a voting kit by way of regular mail. The "Vote by Mail" kit shall consist of:
 - Voting Instruction Sheet
 - Composite Ballot Form
 - Ballot Secrecy Envelope
 - Voter Declaration Form
 - Outer Return Envelope, with prepaid postage.
- b) If a qualified elector does not receive their "Vote by Mail" kit or if the kit is destroyed, a new kit may be issued by attending the Municipal Office. The Clerk or designate will confirm that the elector is qualified and have the elector or agent sign a statement by qualified elector, and a new "Vote by Mail" kit will be issued. Electors must satisfy identification requirements in accordance with Section 5.a), and it shall be noted on the voters list that the elector/agent was issued a new "Vote by Mail" kit.
- c) Upon receipt of the "Vote by Mail" Kit, the voter shall complete the ballot, place it in the Ballot Secrecy Envelope and seal that envelope. The voter shall complete the Voter Declaration Form and place it, along with the sealed Ballot Secrecy Envelope in the yellow prepaid business reply envelope. If a voter requires assistance in voting, they shall mark an "X" on the signature line of the voter declaration form and have a witness sign beside the "X", noting witness status. The yellow prepaid business reply return envelope may be mailed or delivered to the Ballot Return Station at the Municipal Office. Return envelopes mailed within Canada will be prepaid.
- d) In addition to using mail, the Ballot Return Station will be established for those electors wishing to deposit or have deposited, their Return Voting Envelope directly to the Clerk at the Municipal Office during regular office hours between 8:00am and 8:00pm and on Voting Day.

- e) The final day to deposit the Return Voting Envelope in the mail to ensure delivery to the Clerk is October 23, 2026. Following this date, voters are encouraged to deposit their Return Voting Envelope at the designated Ballot Return Station located at the Municipal Office.
- f) Return Voting Envelopes deposited in the mail drop box located at the Municipal office until October 26, 2026, at 8:00pm., will be considered as having been mailed.
- g) A separate Return Voting envelope will be provided for each individual elector. Any return envelope which contains more than one Voter Declaration Form or more than one inner Ballot Secrecy Envelope shall be treated in the following manner:
 - Envelopes containing equal number of Ballot Secrecy envelopes to Voter Declarations will be counted
 - Envelopes containing more Ballot Secrecy Envelopes to Voter Declaration Forms or more Voter Declaration Forms to Ballot Secrecy Envelopes will be rejected.
- h) Blank Voter's Kits shall be stored in the Office of the Clerk, in a locked container.

8. On Receipt of Ballot Packages at the Municipal Office

- a) On Wednesday, October 14th and 21st, the Deputy Returning Officers will collect all the envelopes returned by mail or hand delivered to the Municipal Office. As close to 2:00pm as possible, the Deputy Returning Officers shall open the return envelope, (business reply envelopes) remove, and separate the inner Ballot Secrecy Envelope and the Voter Declaration, Sort the envelopes by poll (using the declaration), place the inner Ballot Secrecy Envelope in the appropriate sealed Ballot Box, Strike the elector's name from the Voter's List and file the declaration by poll, alphabetically.

9. Counting and Reconciliation

- a) On Voting Day, at 8:00pm at the Counting Location, ballot boxes will be opened, and the ballots removed, sorted and counted. Sorted means that the ballots will be unfolded and placed in piles of 50 to facilitate the ease of counting.
- b) Ballot Packages received after 8:00pm, will be date stamped but will not be counted and will be placed in a secure container and retained for statutory document retention period.
- c) Counting Ballots, completion of the statement of results and handling of election materials will proceed as set out in the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 subject to whatever modifications may be required due to the vote by

mail process.

In addition to rejecting cast ballots for violations of Municipal Elections Act, 1996, the following conditions will also cause a ballot to be rejected if:

- Upon opening the Return Vote Envelope, no Voter Declaration Form is present.
 - Upon opening the Return Vote Envelope, there is a different number of Ballot Secrecy Envelopes to Voter Declaration Forms.
 - There are identifiable marks on the sealed Ballot Secrecy Envelope.
 - The sealed Ballot Secrecy Envelope contains more than one Ballot.
- d) If ballots are found to be incomplete due to the Voter Declaration Form, DRO's or their designates can attempt to contact the voter by telephone or electronic mail, and the voter can attend the Municipal Office to sign the declaration form.
- e) After 8pm on October 26, 2026, the sealed Ballot Secrecy Envelopes will be counted and the statement of results undertaken. Prior to opening, Ballot Secrecy envelopes will have been sorted.
- f) Reconciliation of ballots will be based on:
- Number of Voter Kits mailed to electors
 - Number issued through revision process
 - Number returned undeliverable
 - Number returned in time for counting
 - Number returned after the close of voting
- g) Original statements of results will be forwarded to the Municipal Clerk. The duplicate original statements will remain affixed to the ballots and stored in a secure place under control of the Municipal Clerk.
- h) Unofficial results of the counting will be posted in the Council Chambers in the Municipal Office following the conclusion of the counting. Official results will be posted by the Municipal Clerk in the Municipal Office and on the municipal website as soon as possible after Voting Day.
- i) Statistical analysis of 'voter turnouts will be drawn from the reconciliation process and by the counting of the number of ballots dealt with on voting day as set out in the statement of the Deputy Returning Officer.

In a traditional election, reconciliation of ballots is a means of ensuring that the number of ballots handed out is the same as the number of ballots returned. It must be understood that in a "Vote by Mail" process, the reconciliation is only meaningful in terms of election statistics.

10. Scrutineers

- a) A candidate may appoint scrutineers to represent the candidate during the removal of the ballots from the ballot envelopes and the counting of the ballots, including the recount. A scrutineer shall upon request, show proof of appointment to the Election Officials.
- b) Scrutineers may also be present for the opening of the Ballot Packages at the hours designated for such purpose. They are entitled to object to the Deputy Returning Officers' decision to accept or reject from the count any envelope.
- c) A sign-in form will be required for the candidates and scrutineers entering or leaving the Ballot Counting Station. Candidates may enter the Station at 8:00pm on Voting Day and will not be permitted to return once they leave.