

Report

Date April 1, 2026
Subject Election Personnel Remuneration Policy

File: 4200

PURPOSE

To introduce a new Election Personnel Remuneration Policy that establishes standardized, transparent remuneration rates for election workers appointed to administer local government elections and other voting opportunities conducted by North Cowichan.

BACKGROUND

Under the Local Government Act, municipalities are required to appoint a Chief Election Officer (CEO) and Deputy Chief Election Officer (DCEO) to administer elections and assent voting. Additional election personnel such as Presiding Election Officials (PEOs), Alternate PEOs (APEOs), and Election Officials (EOs) are subsequently hired and appointed by the CEO to support voting proceedings.

An internal review of election official remuneration has been completed, and a new Election Personnel Remuneration Policy (Attachment 1) has been drafted for Council's consideration. The proposed policy formalizes and standardizes the compensation framework used for the October 2022 general local election and the April 2025 by-election.

Prior to the 2022 election cycle, North Cowichan relied heavily on internal staff to serve as election officials. These staff were compensated at their regular municipal wage rates, regardless of the specific role they performed during voting. This approach ensured a capable and knowledgeable workforce, but it also resulted in higher labour costs, as many municipal wage rates exceed typical election-based remuneration. This practice also created inconsistencies and inequities, with individuals performing the same election duties receiving different compensation depending on their regular employment classification.

Beginning in 2022, North Cowichan broadened recruitment to include more local residents and adopted a daily-rate compensation model commonly used across BC. These changes reduced reliance on internal staff, improved fairness and transparency, increased operational flexibility, and supported a more cost-effective and community-focused election workforce.

DISCUSSION

The proposed Election Personnel Remuneration Policy defines election roles, standardizes remuneration rates for each position, and establishes consistent payment processes for local government elections and any other voting opportunities administered by North Cowichan. Rates have been structured to reflect current labour standards, regional comparators, and the extended working hours required for advance and general voting days.

The Local Government Management Association Elections Manual, 2026 Edition, recommends that at least 50% of election officials be members of the public rather than municipal staff, to avoid perceptions of bias or favouritism in election administration. Historically, North Cowichan's approach did not align with this guideline; prior to 2022, approximately 80% of election roles were filled by internal staff and only 20% by members of the public. Beginning in 2022, recruitment practices were broadened to increase public participation in election roles, support compliance with best-practice guidance, and enhance transparency, fairness, and public confidence in the election process. This shift has also reduced pressure on internal staffing resources while contributing to a more balanced and resilient election workforce.

The proposed policy provides standardized flat rates for the Chief Election Officer and Deputy Chief Election Officer. Flat-fee compensation is used to reflect the significant responsibilities these senior roles carry outside regular working hours, including after-hours training, candidate orientation, preparation of voting materials, oversight of advance and general voting operations, and response to time-sensitive election matters. In both the 2022 and 2025 elections, the CEO worked over 100 hours and the DCEO worked over 50 hours outside their regular schedules to fulfill these statutory and operational duties. The flat-fee structure accounts for this workload and ensures their compensation fairly reflects these extended responsibilities.

The proposed policy also includes standardized day rates for the Presiding Election Officials, Alternate Presiding Election Officials, and Election Officials, and hourly rates for voting location set-up, mandatory training sessions, and meals.

The rates align with other local governments in B.C. of a similar size and have been calculated to reflect the extended hours required on advance voting days and general voting day, ensuring consistent and equitable compensation for all election personnel.

OPTIONS

1. **(Recommended Option)** THAT Council approves the "Election Personnel Remuneration Policy" attached to the Manager, Legislative Services report dated April 1, 2026.
 - Adopting this policy will support ongoing transparency, equity, and consistency in future election years and for any other voting opportunities administered by North Cowichan.
2. THAT Council refer the draft Election Personnel Remuneration Policy back to staff to include the following amendments:
 - (1) [insert amendments]
 - (2)
3. THAT Council decline to approve the draft Election Personnel Remuneration Policy and direct staff to continue applying existing remuneration practices.

IMPLICATIONS

Election remuneration costs will continue to be incorporated into the municipal budget during election years and for any by-elections or assent voting events that may arise. Standardizing the rates enhances transparency for both election officials and the public. Of the approved \$131,000 election budget for the 2026 general local election, \$60,000 has been allocated to election personnel remuneration.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council approves the "Election Personnel Remuneration Policy" attached to the Manager, Legislative Services report dated April 1, 2026.

Report prepared by:



Tricia Mayea
Manager, Legislative Services

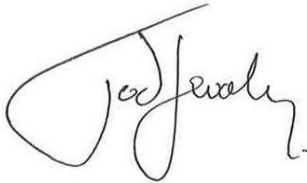
Community Relations

Report reviewed by:



Bill Corsan
General Manager, Corporate Services and

Approved to be forwarded to Council:



Ted Swabey
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachment:

(1) Election Personnel Remuneration Policy