

Supplement to: **REGULAR OPEN BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING**

Date: **February 5, 2024**

Submitted by: **Mark Brown, Chief Election Officer**

Item: **Requiring Action Yes ☐ No ☐ For Information ☒**

Subject: **Chief Election Officer's Report – February 3, 2024 By-Election Results**

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Chief Election Officer's report dated February 5, 2024, regarding the 2024 by-election results for the office of School Trustee for School District No. 40 (New Westminster) be received for information.

1.0 Purpose

To provide to the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) a report on the 2024 by-election, pursuant to section 158 of the *Local Government Act*, on the official results for the office of School Trustee.

2.0 Executive Summary

The 2024 by-election official results were declared at 3:30 p.m. on February 5, 2024, by the Chief Election Officer, Mark Brown, with candidate Kathleen Carlsen elected to the office of School Trustee.

3.0 Legislation/Bylaw/Policy

The 2024 by-election is regulated by the *Local Elections Campaign Financing Act*, the *Local Government Act*, the *School Act*, School District No. 40 (New Westminster) Trustee Elections Bylaw No. 2022-TE-SD40-01, City of New Westminster Local Government Elections Procedures Bylaw No. 7985, 2018 (as amended), Automated Voting Machines Authorization Bylaw No. 6542, 1999 (as amended) and Sign Bylaw No. 7867, 2017 (as amended)

4.0 Background

At the September 26, 2023 Regular Open Board Meeting of the New Westminster Board of Education, Chair Russell made the following statement to the Board and Members of the Public:

"Trustee Dee Beattie has resigned from her position on the Board of Education. She informed the District that she is moving away from New Westminster to focus on her retirement and her health. The Board of Education will provide Municipal Council notice of this resignation in accordance with the provisions of the School Act; this notice will trigger a By-election to fill this vacant position. The date of this By-election will be determined by the municipally appointed Chief Election Officer and will be communicated out as soon as these dates are set.

In the meantime, you can be confident that your Board will remain focused on the important work that we need to do here; together.”

At the October 24, 2023 Regular Open Board Meeting of the New Westminster Board of Education the following resolution was adopted:

“THAT the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) provide notice per section 36(3) of the School Act to advise the City of New Westminster of the resignation of Trustee Dee Beattie from her position which will necessitate a by-election.”

At the November 20, 2023 Special Council Meeting of the City of New Westminster the following resolution was adopted:

“THAT pursuant to Section 58(1) of the Local Government Act, Council appoint Mark Brown, as Chief Election Officer, and Kelly Wharton, as Deputy Chief Election Officer for the 2024 School Board By-Election.”

The nomination period for the 2024 by-election began at 9:00 a.m. December 19, 2023, and ended at 4:00 p.m. December 29, 2023. At the end of the nomination period there were four (4) candidates nominated for the office of School Trustee for the one (1) position available and they were declared candidates by the Chief Election Officer. At 4:00 p.m. on January 8, 2024, the Chief Election Officer declared that there were four (4) candidates for the office of School Trustee and, as there were more candidates for the office of School Trustee than there are to be elected to this office that an election by voting was required to be held on February 3, 2024.

5.0 Analysis

5.1 Voting Opportunities

The 2024 by-election provided two (2) advance voting opportunities on January 24, 2024 at Queensborough Community Centre and January 31, 2024 at New Westminster City Hall, both from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

A special voting opportunity was also provided on January 24, 2024 from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Royal Columbian Hospital.

General Voting Day on Saturday, February 3, 2024 was held from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. at five (5) voting locations throughout New Westminster as follows: Queen Elizabeth Elementary School, Lord Tweedsmuir Elementary School, Fraser River Middle School, Glenbrook Middle School and Skwo:wech Elementary School.

In addition to the aforementioned voting opportunities, a mail ballot voting opportunity was also provided to electors. Applications for mail ballots began on December 18, 2023 and applications were accepted until February 2, 2024. Mail ballots were processed beginning at 6:00 p.m. on February 3, 2024 and completed ballots accepted until 8:00 p.m. at New Westminster City Hall.

5.2 Public Communication

All statutory notices were published in accordance with the City of New Westminster Public Notice Bylaw No. 8417, 2023, which utilizes the City's website, its CityPages subscription service, and notice boards at City Hall and the two branches of the New Westminster Public Library (Uptown and Queensborough). Statutory notices included:

- Notice of Nominations
- Notice of Election by Voting
- Notice of Mail Ballot Voting
- Notice of Advance Voting
- Notice of Special Voting
- Declaration of Official Election Results

The City of New Westminster website was also used for the following information and forms:

- By-Election Key Dates
- 16 and 17 year old Future Voters List Registration
- Candidate Nomination Package and Forms
- Candidate Information Session Presentation
- Candidate Election Information
- Candidate Elections BC Guides
- School Trustee Election Procedures Guide
- Candidate Local Election Campaign Financing
- Election Signage Regulations
- Candidate Profiles
- Elector Organizations
- Elections BC Information
- Voter Information
- Mail Ballot Application Forms
- Declaration of Candidates
- Declaration of Election By Voting
- Preliminary Election Results

A Voter Information Card was also mailed to all residents in New Westminster. The card contained information regarding the locations, dates and times of the various voting opportunities, as well as website links and other contact information for the public.

5.3 Administrative Support

The City of New Westminster and School District No. 40 staff provided essential support to the Deputy and Chief Election Officers in meeting all the legislative requirements for election notices, as well as public engagement and outreach through electronic media and other means. Kelly Wharton, Deputy Chief Election Officer, assisted with training sessions for Election Officials and organized the information session for candidates. Ms. Wharton was instrumental in providing the comprehensive administrative services required to conduct the election.

Larry Hill, Elections Assistant, provided invaluable assistance and support throughout the entire election process, including but not limited to: election official recruitment and training, voting location logistics, procurement of voting supplies and production of election materials.

6.0 Conclusions

After voting closed at 8:00 p.m. on General Voting Day February 3, 2024, the voting results from the automated voting tabulators for the two (2) advance voting days, the special voting opportunity and mail ballots were printed off after 8:00 p.m. at City Hall. The preliminary results from the five (5) polling stations were posted on the City of New Westminster website after the electronic voting results and tabulator print outs were provided to, and reviewed by, the Chief Election Officer.

Candidates and their agents/scrutineers were notified that the determination of the Official Election results was to be conducted in the New Westminster City Hall by the Chief Election Officer at 3:00 p.m. on February 5, 2024. The ballot accounts and vote tabulator results tapes for all the voting stations were subsequently reviewed. At 3:30 p.m. on February 5, 2024 the 2024 by-election official results were then declared by the Chief Election Officer, with candidate Kathleen Carlsen elected to the office of School Trustee.

(Original signed by Mark Brown)

Mark Brown
Chief Election Officer

Attachment A: 2024 By-Election Determination of Official Election Results

Attachment B: 2024 By-Election Declaration of Official Election Results