ONTARIO, CA
COCHRANE
WONDERFULLY UNEXPECTED

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE – ME-2026-16

VOTING SYSTEM INTEGRITY PROCEDURE

2026 MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Approved by:

Cassandra Child, AOMC, DipI.M.A.
Clerk/Returning Officer

Town of Cochrane

October 7, 2026

1. AUTHORITY

a) This procedure is established by the Clerk pursuant to sections 11 and 12 of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, which assign responsibility to the Clerk for the conduct of the municipal election and authorize the Clerk to establish procedures and forms necessary for the proper administration of the election. The Town of Cochrane has authorized the use of alternative voting methods consisting of Internet and Telephone Voting in accordance with section 42 of the Act. This procedure also addresses subsection 47(5) of the Act as it applies to the pre-opening verification of the electronic voting system.

b) This Procedure establishes preventative controls to ensure the integrity, security, and reliability of the election voting system.

c) Incident response and recovery measures are addressed under *ME-2026-17 (Cybersecurity Incident Response Procedure).*

2. PURPOSE

a) The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that the electronic voting system used for the 2026 Municipal Election maintains the integrity, accuracy, and secrecy of the vote and that appropriate safeguards are in place to protect the reliability of the voting process.

3. PROCEDURE

a) Prior to the commencement of the voting period, the Clerk shall ensure that the electronic voting system has been tested and verified to confirm that it functions in accordance with the specifications established by the voting service provider and the procedures of the Clerk. Testing shall include verification of system functionality, authentication processes, ballot tabulation accuracy, and the ability of the system to preserve the secrecy of the vote.

b) Prior to activation of the electronic voting system at 9:00 a.m. on October 16, 2026, the auditor or Returning Officer shall access the electronic voting system using a secure user ID and password and generate a confirmation report confirming that the ballot box is empty before voting starts.

c) The confirmation report shall be reviewed to verify that the digital ballot box is empty, indicating zero (0) before voting begins. The electronic voting system shall not be activated if the report on the digital ballot box does not indicate zero (0), unless otherwise directed by the Clerk or another authorized election official.

d) Candidates or their appointed scrutineers may be present during this verification and shall be permitted to sign an attestation confirming that the digital ballot box is empty, zero (0), before activation of the electronic AVM.

e) The Clerk may require the voting service provider to demonstrate that the system incorporates appropriate encryption, authentication, and security controls designed to prevent unauthorized access or manipulation of the AVM.

f) During the voting period, the Clerk or designated election officials shall monitor system operations to confirm that the AVM remains operational and that ballots are being received and recorded properly.

g) The auditor shall conduct audit checks of the electronic voting system before the opening of the e-polls, during the voting period, and after the close of the e-polls. Upon request, copies of the resulting audit reports shall be provided to a candidate or their appointed scrutineer.

h) If authorized by the Returning Officer, the electronic voting service provider may issue secure user IDs and passwords to candidates and their appointed scrutineers during the voting period. Before access is issued, each candidate or scrutineer shall confirm to the Clerk that they have viewed the required candidate module training video. Upon receiving confirmation, the Clerk shall provide the voting service provider with the candidate's or scrutineer's name and email address, and the voting service provider shall send the user a login email granting access to the candidate module. These credentials will permit access to the candidate module to review voters' list information previously identified by the candidate for the purpose of determining whether those electors have participated in the election. The candidate module shall not disclose how an elector voted and shall indicate only whether the elector has voted. An elector who casts a vote in at least one race during the election is considered to have participated.

i) Any interruption or irregularity affecting the AVM shall be addressed in accordance with the Emergency Procedure (ME-2026-15).

4. ADMINISTRATION

a) System logs, audit reports, testing documentation, and other records relating to the operation of the AVM shall be retained by the Clerk as part of the official election record.