

Memo

Calgary



2018 March 1

To: Mayor and Councillors

From: Laura M. Kennedy, City Clerk

RE: Response to Administrative Inquiry
2018 February 20 Council Meeting – Plebiscite
Submitted by Councillors Demong, Farkas, Chu and Magliocca

Administrative Inquiry:

"This would be a general inquiry as to the costs, timing and processes that would be required to put forward a plebiscite/referendum on an Olympic Bid."

Legislation

Rules for a plebiscite/referendum, referred to the municipal context as a vote by electors, are governed by section 236 of the *Municipal Government Act* ("MGA") and the conduct of this type of vote is governed by the *Local Authorities Election Act* ("LAEA"). The MGA provides that a municipality may conduct a vote of the electors, however, the legislation specifically indicates that the result of the vote does not bind Council.

Timing

Timelines to conduct this type of vote would ideally be a minimum of 6 months from Council's decision to commence. This timing would allow adequate time for Administration to find various locations across the City, complete hiring and training of 3000 workers and complete all legislated processes. The LAEA does not define a timeline for completion of this type of vote. It is my recommendation that the optimum time would be sometime in October as Calgarians are familiar with this month as the general election is held in that month.

PROPOSED URGENT BUSINESS

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Processes to be Completed within the 6 months

- *Development of the Question and Summary of a “for and against” vote - 1+ month.* The LAEA s. 44 requires that Council formally determine the wording to be used on the ballot. The LAEA s. 35 (3) also requires that a reasonably complete summary of the question be accepted. The summary will be used to explain to a voter what a “for or against” vote means. In my experience, the question and summary is drafted by an external consultant who specializes in ensuring clarity of the question and summary. This helps mitigate a challenge to the results based on ambiguity.
- *Registration of scrutineers for the “for or against” campaigns - 1+ month.* The difficulty with this type of vote, is there is no formal nomination process. In my experience, it is advisable to have the Returning Officer accept registrations of scrutineers early in the process. The scrutineers would be the key individuals we would communicate with on legislated processes and direct the public to obtain more information from.
- *Vote preparation - 6 months.* This will ensure we can hire and train staff, find locations to hold the vote, supply preparation and distribution, develop communications (public education and legislated advertisements), and hold advance and election day votes.

Costs

To conduct a city-wide vote, the anticipated cost would be approximately \$1.96 million. These costs would include the following:

- hiring and training 3,000 workers for the various vote opportunities (\$1,000,000),
- rental of locations (\$80,000),
- purchasing and distribution of supplies (\$80,000),
- technology and related support (\$200,000),
- printing of ballots and legislated forms (\$100,000),
- legislative advertisement and public education information, household voter card and postage (\$400,000), and
- contingency (\$100,000).

Laura M. Kennedy
City Clerk