



## Municipal Affairs and Housing

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Greetings CAO's and Municipal Clerks:

While some of you may remember me from my CAO days, I have been appointed the Municipal Election Officer for the Province of Nova Scotia.

For those of you I have not yet had the pleasure to meet, I retired from Victoria County after fifteen years as CAO. In that position I also acted as their Returning Officer for four regular elections and for four Special elections.

I am reaching out to all the municipal units to both introduce myself and to direct your thoughts toward the October 2020 regular election.

I begin by bringing to your attention Section 4(1B) of the *Municipal Election Act* (MEA) which states "the council shall appoint the returning officer for a regular election on or before the fifteenth day of March of the regular election year". While many municipal units have their RO already appointed, it would be helpful if you could forward me their contact information, as we begin planning for elections in October.

I would also point out that the recent sitting of the Legislature included amendments to the MEA which will have some bearing on the conduct of the October election. These amendments included changes to section 17 and 18 to address the issue of volunteer board or committee members having to resign or seek a leave of absence to run as a candidate in the municipal election. The amendments also include provisions to allow seven days for accepting nominations by appointment instead of the current five days. Provisions are also made to increase polling station sizes from 700 voters to a maximum 1000. Returning Officers will now be permitted to extend the hours for voting on ordinary polling day if an emergency situation hampers voter access to the polls. It should be noted this extension cannot be extended past midnight on regular polling day. The final amendment allows the Returning Officer to establish a central polling place for advanced polls. To view these amendments, please visit:

[https://nslegislature.ca/legc/bills/63rd\\_2nd/1st\\_read/b192.htm](https://nslegislature.ca/legc/bills/63rd_2nd/1st_read/b192.htm)

The October 2020 municipal election process will be somewhat different than previous years as there will be no elections for English language school boards. That being said, there will still be Conseil scolaire acadien provincial elections across the province.

I would welcome your comments and questions as we set our sights on the October municipal and CSAP elections.

Respectfully Yours

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