



Municipal Election Procedure	
Procedure Name:	Vote Tabulator Procedure
Procedure Number:	MEP CLK-17
Creation Date:	April 13, 2026

1. Authority

This Procedure applies to the 2026 Municipal and School Board Election, pursuant to Council's enactment of By-law No. 24-2025, which authorizes the use of optical vote-scanning equipment for the tabulation of ballots.

Where this Procedure does not provide for a matter, the election shall be conducted in accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* (the Act).

Where a form of words or expression is prescribed by this Procedure, deviations that do not affect the substance shall not invalidate the procedure.

Election officials may also refer to the vote tabulator user manual and operational guidance provided by the election services provider for technical instructions related to the setup, operation, troubleshooting and maintenance of the vote tabulator equipment. Such materials are intended to supplement this Procedure and shall be applied in a manner consistent with the Act.

The Clerk may amend this Procedure in writing and shall provide notice of any amendment to each candidate in a form and manner the Clerk considers appropriate to give reasonable notice.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this Procedure is to establish standardized processes for the installation, configuration, operation, security and use of vote tabulators.

3. Responsibilities

3.1. Clerk

The Clerk shall:

- designate polling locations where vote tabulators will be used;
- ensure vote tabulators are installed, configured and tested prior to use;
- ensure security measures prevent unauthorized access or tampering;
- ensure designated election officials receive training in tabulator operation; and
- ensure election results are produced and reported from the tabulation system.



3.2. Election Officials

Election officials appointed by the Clerk to support the operation of vote tabulators include Poll Supervisors and Vote Tabulator Operators (VTOs).

The VTO and Poll Supervisors (when performing VTO duties) shall:

- Initiate the printing of the zero totals report;
- assist with setup and verification of the tabulator and ballot box prior to voting;
- ensure ballots are inserted into the tabulator in accordance with prescribed procedures;
- monitor the tabulator to ensure continuous proper operation;
- respond to tabulator messages or ballot return notifications;
- maintain the security of the tabulator, ballot box, and related election materials;
- immediately report equipment malfunction, irregularity or suspected tampering; and
- assist with closing procedures for the tabulator, including printing results tapes (on Voting Day only) and securing election materials.

4. Vote Tabulator System

The vote tabulation system used for the 2026 Municipal and School Board Election shall be the SAES-1800*Plus* Precinct Court Optical Scanner.

The vote tabulator:

- scans and interprets the voter-marked paper ballots;
- electronically tabulates votes;
- stores ballot images on a secure SD memory card; and
- prints reports using an integrated thermal printer.

Ballots inserted into the tabulator are deposited into a secure ballot box attached to the tabulator unit.

5. Components and Materials

Each vote tabulator system includes the following components:

5.1. Hardware

- tabulator main unit (SAES-1800*Plus*)
- ballot box (BBX-800)



- ballot box cover
- electrical adapter and power supply
- integrated thermal printer
- touchscreen interface
- cast and return control buttons
- SD card ports
- Authentication token port (iButton)

5.2. Material and Supplies

- SC cards (for operating system, provision files, and electoral data)
- security seals
- diagnostic ballots
- calibration ballots
- cleaning sheets
- thermal printer paper rolls
- ballot marking pens

6. Tabulator Provisioning and Installation of Electoral Data

The election services provider, in coordination with the Clerk, shall provision the vote tabulator SD cards with the required electoral data and install the data on the vote tabulators during the pre-election preparation stage.

7. Preparation of Vote Tabulators

Vote tabulators shall be prepared prior to the commencement of advance voting and secured in a designated location accessible only to Clerk's staff.

Preparation activities include:

1. Unpacking and assembling tabulator components;
2. Running diagnostics to verify system functionality;
3. Installing a thermal printed paper; and
4. Securing the tabulator until deployment.

8. Assembly of Ballot Box and Tabulator

Election officials shall assemble the tabulator and ballot box in accordance with instructions provided by the Clerk.



Once assembled, security seals shall be applied to designated components to prevent tampering and maintain system integrity.

The Clerk, or designate, may authorize ballot boxes to be assembled in advance of Voting Day. Where this occurs, security seals shall not be applied until the VTO confirms the ballot box is empty prior to opening voting.

9. Testing of Vote Tabulators

Prior to Voting Day, the Clerk, together with the election services provider, shall conduct logic and accuracy testing to ensure tabulators accurately record votes.

Testing includes:

- inserting test ballots with predetermined results;
- verifying that the tabulator scans both sides of the ballot; and
- confirming printed reports reflect expected vote totals.

If any discrepancies occur, the cause shall be investigated and corrected before the tabulator is approved for use.

10. Power and Printer Set-up

Election officials shall:

1. Connect the electrical adapter to the tabulator power port;
2. Connect the power cord to an electrical outlet;
3. Turn on the tabulator using the power button; and
4. Confirm the power indicator light is illuminated.

Thermal paper shall be installed in the printer compartment to ensure reports can be printed during the election process.

11. Zero Total Verification

Prior to the opening of voting, the VTO shall print a zero totals report confirming that all candidate, by-law and question totals are zero.

If the totals are zero:

- the zero totals report shall be affixed to the exterior of the vote tabulator so that it remains visible to electors throughout the voting period; and
- the VTO, any election officials present, and any scrutineers may initial the report; and
- a second copy shall be printed and retained with the election records.

If the report indicates any totals other than zero:

- the VTO shall immediately notify the Poll Supervisor and the Clerk; and



- the vote tabulator shall not be used until the issue has been investigated and resolved in accordance with the direction of the Clerk.

12. Operation of the Tabulator During Voting

During voting hours:

1. Electors mark their ballot in a voting compartment;
2. The elector delivers the ballot within a secrecy sleeve to the VTO;
3. The VTO confirms the ballot bears Deputy Returning Officer initials;
4. The ballot is inserted into the tabulator ballot tray;
5. The tabulator scans the ballot; and
6. The ballot is deposited into the secure ballot box attached to the tabulator.

The tabulator records ballot images and vote totals electronically.

12.1. Tabulator Malfunction

Where a vote tabulator becomes inoperable during the voting period, the VTO shall immediately notify the Poll Supervisor and the Clerk.

Until the tabulator is restored to operation or replaced, ballots shall be deposited into the designated back-up compartment of the ballot box.

Ballots in the back-up compartment shall be tabulated:

- following the close of voting; or
- during a temporary lull in voting, in the presence of the Poll Supervisor and any election officials present who are able to observe the tabulation process.

Election officials shall ensure vote secrecy and election integrity are maintained.

12.2. Tabulator Messaging

The tabulator may display messages requiring elector review before a ballot can be accepted.

The VTO shall inform the elector of the message and allow the elector to determine how to proceed.

12.2.1. Blank Ballot

A Blank Ballot message may appear where the tabulator detects that no voting marks have been recorded on the ballot.

Where a blank ballot is detected, the elector may:



- cast the ballot as presented by selecting the green “Cast” button. In this case, the ballot will be accepted and deposited into the ballot box; or
- return the ballot to the elector by selecting the red “Return” button so that the elector may review or modify the ballot.

Where the ballot is returned to the elector, the ballot will not be deposited into the ballot box, and the ballot counter will not be incremented.

12.2.2. Overvote

An Overvote message may appear where the tabulator detects that more voting marks have been made in a contest than are permitted.

Where an overvoted ballot is detected, the elector may:

- cast the ballot as presented by selecting the green “Cast” button. In this case, the ballot will be accepted and deposited into the ballot box and the overvoted contest will not be counted; or
- return the ballot to the elector by selecting the red “Return” button so that the elector may seek a replacement ballot (See Procedure CLK MEP-12 for Replacement Ballot Procedure).

12.2.3. Defective

A Defective Ballot message may appear where the tabulator is unable to properly read or process the ballot due to damage, misalignment, markings on the ballot face, or another scanning issue.

Where a defective ballot is detected, the tabulator will notify the elector and automatically return the ballot to the elector. In this circumstance, the ballot will not be accepted by the tabulator.

The elector may be directed to an election official to obtain assistance or to receive one replacement ballot in accordance with the procedures established by the Clerk.

12.3. Elector Not Present

Where a ballot is returned by the tabulator and the elector is no longer present, the VTO shall return the ballot to the issuing Deputy Returning Officer. The DRO shall mark the ballot “Defective”, record it for ballot accounting purposes, and place it in the designated envelope.

13. Closing the Voting Place

13.1. Advance Voting

Results from advance voting locations shall not be printed or disclosed prior to the close of voting on Voting Day in accordance with the Act.



13.2. Voting Day Closing Procedures

After the close of voting:

1. The VTO shall prevent further ballots from being inserted;
 - a. Electors already inside the polling place at 8:00 p.m. can proceed to vote;
2. The tabulator shall print the final results report and a second copy immediately thereafter;
3. Election officials and scrutineers present may sign the results report;
4. The ballot box shall be secured and sealed; and
5. All election materials shall be packaged for return to the Clerk.

14. Back-up Tabulator Procedure

Where the vote tabulator cannot complete the tabulation of ballots following the close of voting and cannot be made operational within a reasonable time, the VTO and Poll Supervisor shall:

- secure and seal the ballot box;
- secure the vote tabulator from receiving additional ballots; and
- transport the vote tabulator, ballot box and all ballots to a location designated by the Clerk for tabulation using a replacement tabulator or for further direction from the election services provider regarding the resolution of the issue.

15. Recounts

If a recount is required pursuant to the Act:

- the Clerk shall conduct the recount using the same tabulation method used on Voting Day unless otherwise ordered by a judge;
- vote tabulators shall be tested prior to the recount; and
- ballots shall be processed according to the procedures established by the Clerk.

Additional recount procedures are set out in Procedure CLK MEP-02.

16. Storage and Transport

Once closing procedures are complete:

- vote tabulators shall be powered down and secured;
- ballots and election materials shall be sealed; and



- equipment shall be transported to the Clerk's office or another designated location immediately.

17. Scrutineers

Scrutineers may observe election procedures, including testing, zero totals verification, tabulator operation and closing procedures.

Scrutineers may ask clarifying questions at appropriate times, provided they do not interfere with election officials or disrupt the voting process.

Additional scrutineer conduct requirements are set out in Procedure CLK MEP-06.