



Village of Merrickville-Wolford

TRADITIONAL (PAPER BALLOT) VOTING ELECTION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE 2026 ONTARIO MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Approved by the
Clerk / Returning Officer of
the Village of Merrickville-Wolford
this 9th day of April, 2026

1. Number and Location of Voting Places

The Clerk shall establish the number and location of Voting Places as they consider most convenient for electors, as long as the space is not being used as a dwelling.

Where there are voting places, the entire property may be designated as the voting place. This will make it easier to require removal of prohibited election materials – Section 48(3).

The Clerk shall ensure that each Voting Place is accessible, and each location is confirmed in writing using the “Certificate as to Location of Voting Place” form.

For the casting of traditional (paper ballot) votes, the voting location shall be:

Name of Location	Address	Date	Hours
Eastons Corners Centennial Hall	43 Park Street, Jasper, ON	Wednesday, October 21, 2026	10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Merrickville Community Centre	106 Read Street, Merrickville, Ontario	Monday, October 26, 2026	10:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.

An Election Official(s) will be provided at the following location on the specified date and hours for paper ballot voting:

Name of Location	Date	Hours
Rosebridge Manor	Monday, October 26, 2026	TBD

2. Hours and Location of Voting

At a minimum, the Clerk shall post a “Notice of Election Information” in two conspicuous places within the municipality and, where there is a publication having general circulation in the municipality, publish a notice once in the publication, advising the date and time of voting, including the location of the Voting Place.

Voting Day:

The Voting Place is to be open from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Voting Day will be on Monday, October 26, 2026.

3. Supplies and Equipment

Each Voting Place shall be furnished with compartments in which Electors may mark their ballots without other persons being able to see how they are marked and it is the duty of the Clerk and Deputy Returning Officer (DRO) respectively to ensure that a sufficient number of compartments are provided at each voting location.

The Clerk shall, before Voting Day, cause to be delivered to every DRO in the municipality:

- A ballot box for their Voting Place
- A sufficient number of ballots to supply the expected number of electors at the Voting Place
- A sufficient number of the prescribed directions for the guidance of electors for the purposes of the Voting Place
- A computer with connectivity to allow access to the electronic Voters' List, where required
- All materials necessary for the electors to mark their ballots
- Privacy screens
- Appropriate legislation and Election Manual; and
- Such other materials as are prescribed.

A ballot box shall be made of durable material and constructed so that the ballots can be deposited therein and cannot be withdrawn without the box being unsealed or being unsealed and unlocked, as the case may be.

The Clerk shall deliver the ballots for a Voting Place to the DRO and both shall certify the number of ballots delivered using the "Certificate and Receipt for Ballots". The Clerk and the DRO shall keep a copy of the Form. Upon close of the Voting Place, the Clerk or DRO shall complete and return the Form, with the other election documents required to be returned to the Clerk.

Every DRO before opening the Voting Place shall post outside the Voting Place and in every compartment of the Voting Place information related to voting such as instructions on how to vote, who may vote, etc., and shall see that they remain posted until the close of voting.

4. Setting up the Voting Place

The DRO shall ensure the following at the Voting Place:

- It is accessible
- Voter privacy screens are placed in a location that ensures privacy to the voter

- There is no Campaign Advertising or Third-Party Advertising
- Pencils are placed in the voting booths
- “Statutory Provisions Regulating Voting Procedures” are posted
- “Voting Instructions (Manual Count Ballot)” and the “Notice of Offence Corrupt Practice” are posted in the Voting Place and in the voting booth

5. Setting up the Ballot Boxes

Immediately before opening the Voting Place, the DRO must show the ballot box to anyone present to demonstrate that it is empty and then seal it in such a way that it cannot be opened without breaking the seal. The Clerk will instruct the DRO as to how the ballot box should be sealed. It should then be placed on a table in full view and not opened until the time for counting the voters takes place.

6. Examining the Balots

Candidates or Scrutineers who are present and have registered, have the opportunity to inspect the ballots and all other materials relating to the Voting Place. This must be done during the fifteen-minute period prior to the opening of the Voting Place, provided this does not interfere with the opening of the Voting Place.

7. Opening of the Voting Place

The doors to the Voting Place shall be opened at exactly 10:00 a.m. at which time the DRO shall be ready to receive electors.

The DRO and other Election Officials shall arrive early enough to set up the Voting Place (at least one-half hour prior to opening). The DRO shall ensure that all Election Officials have been appointed and take the appropriate oath.

8. Who May Remain in the Voting Place

Only Election Officials appointed for the Voting Place, Certified Candidates (other than those acclaimed) and Scrutineers may remain in the Voting Place. One Scrutineer appointed for each Certified Candidate for each ballot box in use at the Voting Place may be present – only the Certified Candidate or their Scrutineer may be present, but not both.

In addition, the Scrutineers appointed by a municipality in relation to a by-law or question and the Scrutineers appointed by a local board or the Minister in relation to a question may also remain in the Voting Place.

Certified Candidates and/or Scrutineers shall arrive at the Voting Place 15 minutes before the Voting Place opens. Certified Candidates must present the

necessary identification, and Scrutineers must present their certificate of appointment to the Clerk or DRO.

It is the responsibility of the Clerk or DRO to ensure smooth operation of the Voting Place. If in the DRO's opinion, individuals present at the Voting Place are interfering with this process, then the DRO should report the problem to the Clerk and, if applicable, the OPP.

9. Prohibition

While an Elector is in a Voting Place, no person shall attempt, directly or indirectly, to influence how the Elector votes.

No person shall display a candidates' election campaign material or literature in a Voting Place which includes any place in the immediate vicinity of the Voting Place designated by the Clerk.

10. Secrecy

Every person who is present in a Voting Place or at the counting of the votes shall help to maintain the secrecy of the voting.

No person shall:

- Interfere or attempt to interfere with an Elector who is marking the ballot
- Obtain or attempt to obtain at a Voting Place, information about how an Elector intends to vote or has voted

No Elector shall:

- Take a photograph or video recording of his or her marked ballot; or
- Show his or her marked ballot to any person to reveal how he or she has voted, except in connection with obtaining assistance in voting

Cell phones shall be turned off upon entering the Voting Place and their use is prohibited in the Voting Place. An exemption to this provision is the use of cell phones by Election Officials for the purpose of conducting the election and ensuring smooth and necessary communications.

All complaints regarding any and/or all breaches of secrecy shall be documented by the DRO as well as questions and answers of the complainant and, if deemed appropriate, the Clerk shall submit same to the OPP for further investigation and prosecution.

11. Voting Procedure

When an Elector arrives to vote, an Election Official will determine if the Elector has in their possession a voter notification letter with PIN. If the individual does

not have such document, they will be directed to an Election Official whose responsibility it will be to check the electronic Voters' List to determine if the individual is eligible to vote or if they do not appear, if they may be added to the Voters' List. The voter will be provided with a paper containing the appropriate PIN as determined the by the Election Official.

Once eligibility is determined, or if the Elector has to voter notification letter on their person, the DRO must verify that the person is entitled to vote by checking the electronic Voters' List to ensure that the PIN is active and has not yet been voted. The DRO must then remove the Elector's name from the electronic Voters' List in accordance with procedures provided by Intelivote Systems Inc.

If an Elector requests an explanation of the voting procedure, the DRO or the Election Official must briefly and accurately explain the procedure.

12. Provide Proof of Identity

All Eligible Electors will be required to provide proof of identity and residence as per O. Reg 304/13 or complete the "Oath of Qualification" in order to obtain a paper ballot at the Voting Place.

13. Marking of the Paper Ballot

The Elector shall:

- Proceed immediately to the voting booth
- Mark the ballot provided with a cross or other mark, within the space designated for the marking of the ballot beside the name of each candidate for whom the Elector wishes to vote (or in the case of a by-law or question, beside the answer for which he or she wishes to vote)
- Fold the ballot to conceal how the Elector voted
- Without delay, return the ballot to the Election Official
- The voter should stay long enough to make sure the Election Official deposits the ballot in the ballot box and must then leave the Voting Place.

The Election Official should immediately deposit the ballot in the ballot box, in the full view of the Elector and any persons who are in the Voting Place.

A person whose ballot has been placed in the ballot box by the Election Official is deemed to have voted and is not, under any circumstances, entitled to another ballot.

14. Forfeited Ballots

An Elector is no longer entitled to vote if, after receiving a ballot, they leave the Voting Place without returning the ballot. The DRO should then mark “forfeited” on the electronic Voters’ List in accordance with the procedures provided by Intelivote Systems Inc.

15. If Record Shows an Elector Has Already Voted

Provision is made to allow an Elector to vote if it appears that someone else has already voted in their name or that their name has been removed from the Voters’ List in error. The Elector must be willing to take the prescribed “Oath of Qualification” and to provide proof of identity and residence as prescribed in O. Reg 304/13.

16. Challenging Eligibility

If the DRO, Certified Candidate or Scrutineer objects to the person voting, the DRO shall have the fact of the objection and by whom it was made recorded. (For example – “objected to by (name of the candidate)” or “objected to by (the name of the scrutineer) on behalf of (name of candidate)”).

When an objection has been made, the DRO shall give the person a ballot if the person takes the “Oath of Qualification”. If the person refuses, a ballot must be refused and the word “refused” must be marked on the electronic Voters’ List in accordance with the procedures provided by Intelivote Systems Inc.

17. Electors Requiring Assistance – Accessibility Needs

An Election Official may permit an Elector who needs assistance in voting to have such assistance as the Election Official considers necessary.

Oral Oath to Vote with Assistance

A voter who requires such assistance to vote may as the Election Official for assistance. The Election Official shall require the voter making the request to take the Oral Oath to Vote with Assistance on the “Oral Oaths at Voting Place” form and then vote as directed by the voter. Any other person present must withdraw until the voter finishes instructing the Election Official. Upon completion, the Election Official shall place the ballot in the ballot box in the presence of the voter.

Oral Oath of Friend of Elector

In lieu of the Election Official voting for the voter, the voter may request that a friend accompany the voter into the voting booth and vote for the voter. Any friend who is permitted to vote shall be required to take the Oral Oath of Friend of Elector on the “Oral Oaths at Voting Place” form. No person shall be allowed to act as a friend of more than one voter at a Voting Place.

18. Elector Declining to Vote

If an Elector returns a ballot to the Election Official and indicates that the Elector is declining to vote, the Elector is no longer entitled to vote and the DRO shall immediately write the word “declined” upon the ballot and place the ballot in the envelope provided for declined ballots. The declined ballot shall be recorded on the tally sheet provided and will count toward the total number of votes cast.

Where a composite ballot is in use and an Elector has declined the right to vote for a particular office, the Elector should be issued a ballot and should mark the ballot except for the office being declined. The marked ballot should be returned to the DRO and placed in the ballot box – no other steps are necessary.

If the Elector declines the entire ballot, the DRO should proceed with the procedure for declined ballots.

19. Cancelled Ballot(s)

An accidentally spoiled ballot may be returned to the DRO in exchange for a new one. The DRO must immediately write “cancelled” on the ballot and place it in the envelope provided for cancelled ballots.

The cancelled ballot shall be recorded on the tally sheet provided, so that the total number of ballots issued are recorded; however, they do not count toward the total number of votes cast.

20. Voters’ List

Access to Advance Voters” Advance voters will have been crossed off the electronic Voters’ List and their PINs will have been disabled. The Clerk shall, if requested by any Certified Candidate or their Scrutineer, provide a copy of the List of Persons Who Voted at an Advance Vote to the Candidate or Scrutineer during normal office hours. Each Candidate will be afforded an opportunity in real time the persons who have voted, through the Candidate’s module as offered by Intelivote Systems Inc.

21. Closing the Voting Place on Election Day

The Voting Place shall be closed at exactly 8:00 p.m. Anyone waiting in line at the close of the Voting Place is entitled to vote.

In the case of an election emergency, the Clerk may direct that the Voting Place remain open for a period of time beyond 8:00 p.m.

22. Counting of Votes

Immediately after the close of voting on Voting Day and after the last voter remaining in the Voting Place has cast their ballot and left the Voting Place, the Election Officials shall lock the doors of the Voting Place, open the ballot boxes for their poll and proceed to count and record for the following offices:

- Head of Council (Mayor)
- Councillor – Merrickville Ward
- Councillor – Woford Ward
- English Language Public School Trustee
- French Language Public School Trustee
- English Language Separate School Trustee
- French Language Separate School Trustee

During the counting of votes, ballots shall be sorted into marked envelopes as:

- Counted
- Cancelled/declined
- Rejected
- Unused ballots

23. Authority to Reject Ballots and Determine Objections

The DRO and Election Official shall reject from the count all ballots and votes on a ballot that do not comply with the following prescribed rules as per *O. Reg 01/97*:

- All votes on a ballot, if the ballot:
 - was not supplied by the Deputy Returning Officer or Clerk, or
 - contains writing or marks that may identify the Elector, or is torn, defaced or otherwise dealt with by the Elector in a way that may identify them;
- All votes in a ballot for an office, if votes have been cast for more candidates for the office than are to be elected;
- All votes in a ballot on a by-law, if votes have been cast for both the affirmative and negative on the by-law;
- All votes in a ballot on a question, if votes have been cast for more than one answer on the question;
- Any vote in a ballot, if the vote is not marked inside the space provided for marking the ballot.

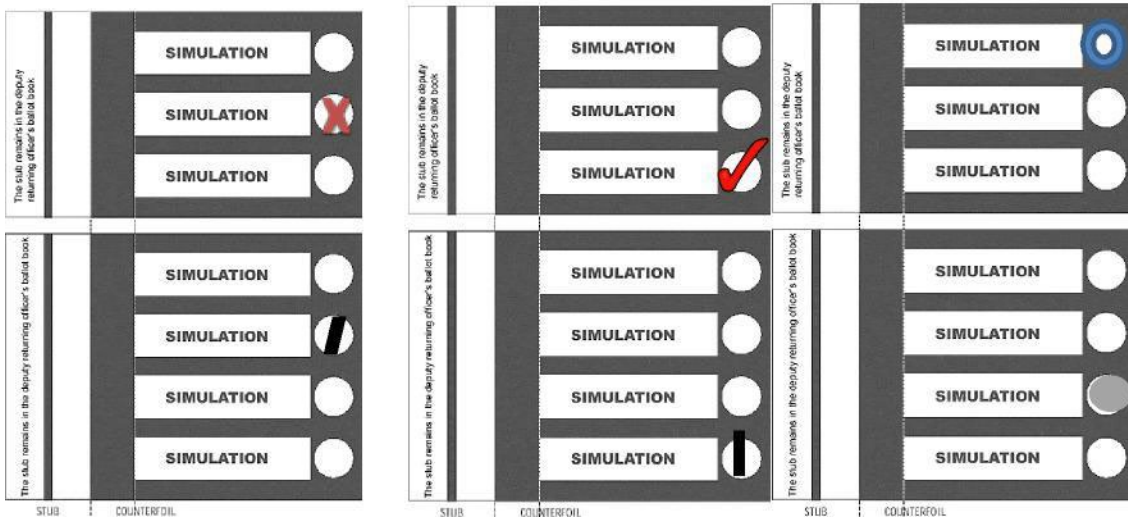
The DRO shall:

- Decide all objections;

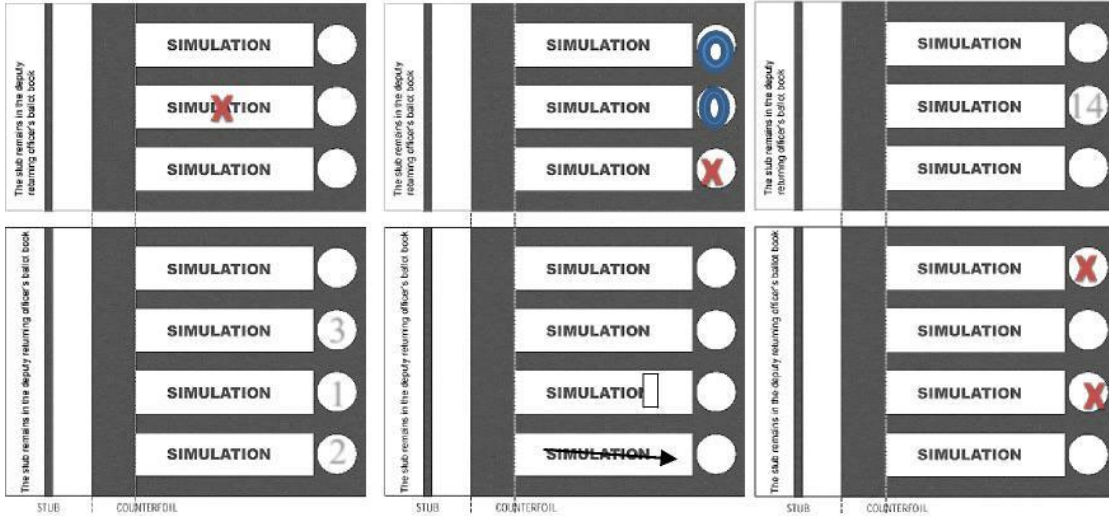
- Prepare a list in which the objections are summarized and individually numbered. The summary should include the statement “Objected to by (the candidate’s name or the candidate’s scrutineer or the scrutineer’s name in the case of a by-law or question)”;
- Write the number of each objection on the back of the relevant ballot and initial number;
- To count the ballots as required by legislation and make decisions related to the ballots as noted above. This does not preclude the appointment of more than one DRO for a Voting Place.

In addition to rejecting ballots for violations for the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, a ballot will not be counted if any vote in a ballot where the voter’s intent is not clear.

The sample marked ballot below should be accepted and counted.



The sample marked ballots below should be rejected.



24. Count Procedures

The DRO and any others present shall sign the count summary report indicating the results.

- The Clerk, Deputy Returning Officers, appointed Election Officials, Certified Candidates (an acclaimed Candidate or their Scrutineer is NOT permitted) and authorized Scrutineers will be permitted to remain in the building during the count.
- Before being admitted to the building for the count, upon request by the Clerk or DRO, Candidate's Scrutineers and Election Officials shall be required to show proof of identity as prescribed in *O. Reg 304/13*.
- Entrance to the building during the count will not be permitted after 8:00 p.m. on Voting Day and only Election Officials will be allowed to enter thereafter. Candidates and Scrutineers are to arrive between 7:45 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.
- Once admitted to the building where the count is taking place, no one shall be permitted to leave until the results are received and the Vote Count Summary Report has been signed by all in attendance.
- The Candidates or Scrutineers **shall not** communicate the results to anyone until the Clerk has released the unofficial results to the general public.
- **All cell phones and other devices shall be turned off** upon entering the building where the count is taking place and their use is prohibited except by Election Officials.

- No campaign materials will be allowed on the grounds or within the building where the count takes place.
- The Municipal Office located at 317 Brock St. West, Merrickville, will be the official results centre. Only authorized Village staff, the Clerk, Deputy Returning Officers, appointed Election Officials, Candidates and authorized Scrutineers will be allowed to remain at the Municipal Office.
- The election results will be made available for public and media to view on the municipal website or in person at the Municipal Office, at 317 Brock Street West, Merrickville.
- Anyone that is creating a disturbance at the official results centre or the Voting Place will be removed as directed by the Clerk.

25. Election Materials to be Delivered to the Clerk

After counting the ballots and ensuring that all ballots are accounted for as Counted, Cancelled/Declined, Rejected, or Unused, the DRO shall:

- Prepare a statement, in duplicate, showing the results of the election at the Voting Place;
- Place the ballots in the designated sealed envelopes and all other materials and documents related to the election except the original statement of results and application forms to amend the Voters' List in the ballot box;
- Seal the ballot box so that ballots cannot be deposited in or withdrawn from it without breaking the seal;
- Complete the Final Oath or Affirmation form;
- Deliver ballot box and statement of results to the Clerk'
- Not give a copy of the statement of results to anyone but the Clerk. Scrutineers or Candidates are entitled to receive a copy of the statement of results from the Clerk, on request.

26. Notice of Results

The Clerk will ensure that the unofficial results are posted on the Village website and made available at the public/media reception centre as soon as practical on Monday, October 26, 2026.

27. Declaration of Results

As soon as practical after Voting Day, the Clerk shall declare the official election results using the "Declaration of Election Results" form and post the results at the

Municipal Office and on the website. The Clerk shall provide each school board with the School Board Trustee Election Results.

28. Information to the Public

As soon as possible after Voting Day, the Clerk shall make the Official Election Results available for viewing by the public on the Municipal website.

29. Recount

All recounts shall be conducted in accordance with the Village of Merrickville-Wolford Municipal Elections Recount Policy.