



THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF AMHERSTBURG

OFFICE OF THE CAO

Mission Statement: As stewards of the Town of Amherstburg, we strive to improve the quality of life of all residents through the delivery of effective, efficient, and affordable services.

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Author's Phone: 519 736 0012 ext. 2272 / 2237	Date to Council: April 13, 2026
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To: Mayor and Members of Town Council

Subject: 2026 Election Compliance Audit Committee

1. **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that:

1. A Joint Election Compliance Audit Committee **BE ESTABLISHED** for the 2026-2030 term of Council;
2. The Joint Election Compliance Audit Committee Terms of Reference **BE ADOPTED**;
3. By-law 2026-018, being a By-law to establish a Joint Election Compliance Audit Committee be read three times and finally passed and the Mayor and Clerk **BE AUTHORIZED** to sign same.

2. **BACKGROUND:**

The Municipal Elections Act, 1996 (MEA) requires a municipality to establish an Election Compliance Audit Committee prior to October 1st of an election year to deal with matters regarding election campaign finances and contributions.

Section 88.33 of the MEA permits an elector who believes on reasonable grounds that a Candidate or a Registered Third Party has contravened a provision of the MEA relating to election campaign finances to apply for a compliance audit of the Candidate's or Registered Third Party's election campaign finances.

The Committee's mandate is to determine whether a request for a compliance audit should be granted or rejected. If the Committee grants the application, then the Committee is obliged by the MEA to appoint an Auditor to conduct the compliance audit of the Candidate's or Registered Third Party's election campaign finances. The appointed Auditor is obliged to audit the Candidate's or Registered Third Party's campaign finances to determine whether they have complied with the provisions of the MEA relating to campaign finances and provide a report to the Committee stating the Auditor's conclusions.

3. DISCUSSION:

The mandate of the Election Compliance Audit Committee is considered complete at the end of each four-year term of Council at which time a successor Committee must be appointed. It therefore is necessary to appoint a Committee for the 2026-2030 term of Council. The MEA specifies that Election Compliance Audit Committees shall be composed of between three (3) and seven (7) members and shall not include:

- a) Employees of Officers of the municipality or local board;
- b) Members of Council or local board;
- c) Any persons who are Candidates in the election for which the Committee is established; or,
- d) Any persons who are Registered Third Parties in the municipality in the election for which the Committee is established.

An increasingly common practice across municipalities in Ontario is the establishment of a Joint Election Compliance Audit Committee. These Joint Committees are comprised of several municipalities which are geographically located in an upper-tier municipality. For example, the County of Middlesex, County of Elgin, County of Simcoe, Regional Municipality of Halton, Regional Municipality of York, and Regional Municipality of Niagara have each established Joint Committees in past elections and will continue to engage in this practice for the 2026 Municipal Elections.

Establishment of a Joint Committee offers numerous efficiencies while remaining compliant with relevant provisions of the MEA. Particularly, a Joint Committee offers the greatest potential to reach the broadest spectrum of interested and qualified applicants across Essex County in a cost-effective manner. Moreover, requests for compliance audits are typically rare, with no applications received in previous elections. As such, it is mutually beneficial for participating municipalities to share the resources and responsibilities related to Election Compliance Audit Committees.

Administration recommends that Council establish a Joint Election Compliance Audit Committee with the Town of Essex, Town of Kingsville, Municipality of Lakeshore, Town of Lasalle, and Town of Tecumseh for the 2026-2030 term of Council. The Committee will operate pursuant to the Terms of Reference attached as Schedule 'A' to By-law 2026-000. The Committee would be composed of five (5) members and one (1) alternate selected by the Clerks of the participating municipalities. Selection will be based on the following criteria, with a preference given to those persons who have demonstrated experience in public accounting, auditing, legal and the application of campaign finance rules:

- a) Demonstrated knowledge and understanding of municipal election campaign financing rules;
- b) Proven analytical and decision-making skills;
- c) Experience working on a committee, task force, or similar setting;
- d) Availability and willingness to attend meetings; and,
- e) Excellent oral and written communication skills.

Upon approval of the Terms of Reference, recruitment of members for the Election Compliance Audit Committee will commence.

4. RISK ANALYSIS:

Establishing an Election Compliance Audit Committee ensures compliance with the MEA. If Council chooses not to proceed with a Joint Election Compliance Audit Committee, there is a risk that the Town will not secure applications and appointments ahead of the October 1st deadline to remain compliant with the MEA.

5. FINANCIAL MATTERS:

As per Section 88.37(7) of the MEA, it is the responsibility of the municipality to cover all costs in relation to the Committee's operations and activities. Costs may include:

- General costs associated with the Committee's operations (advertising, training, remuneration);
- Cost of the Auditor for any audit that takes place; and,
- Cost of external legal counsel for the Committee, if necessary.

Costs incurred for advertising are included in the 2026 Municipal Elections budget. A mandatory training session for all Committee members will be shared equally among the participating municipalities. No further costs are anticipated unless the Committee is required to convene due to receipt of an application for a compliance audit. Should an application arise, it will be the responsibility of the responding municipality to cover any further costs associated with the Committee's operations and activities.

Administration has surveyed other municipalities and determined that the average compensation is \$150.00 per member, per meeting, plus mileage. There were no meetings held in the last term across the participating municipalities, however, members were compensated for attending a mandatory training session.

6. ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPACTS:

N/A

7. CONSULTATIONS:

Town of Essex
Town of Kingsville

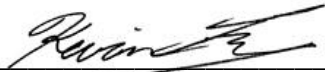
8. CORPORATE STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT:

Vision: Preserving our past while forging our future.

<i>Amherstburg Community Strategic Plan 2022 - 2026</i>	
<p style="text-align: center;">PILLAR 1 Deliver Trusted & Accountable Local Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Improve trust between council and staff, and residents, by strengthening governance and internal accountability structures. ✓ Deliver transparent and efficient financial management. <input type="checkbox"/> Increase effective communication and engagement with residents. <input type="checkbox"/> Develop our staff team, resources, and workplace culture. ✓ Continue to deliver strong core municipal services. <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure Amherstburg is an inclusive accessible and welcoming community committed to reconciliation. 	<p style="text-align: center;">PILLAR 3 Encourage Local Economic Prosperity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Encourage development of commercial and industrial lands. <input type="checkbox"/> Continue to promote local tourism industry, especially overnight accommodation. <input type="checkbox"/> Continue to facilitate downtown development for residents and visitors. ✓ Continue to leverage partnership opportunities with other provincial, federal, and local governments, agencies, and organizations.
<p style="text-align: center;">PILLAR 2 Invest in Community Amenities and Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Maintain safe, reliable and accessible municipal infrastructure and facilities. <input type="checkbox"/> Increase access to recreation opportunities for all ages. <input type="checkbox"/> Finalize and execute plans for town-owned lands (e.g. Duffy’s site, Belle Vue) <input type="checkbox"/> Create public access to water and waterfront <input type="checkbox"/> Prioritize opportunities to reduce environmental impacts of Town operations and increase Town resilience to climate change. 	<p style="text-align: center;">PILLAR 4 Shape Growth Aligned with Local Identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Define and communicate a vision for the Town’s future and identity. <input type="checkbox"/> Promote and plan for green and “climate change ready” development. <input type="checkbox"/> Review and implement policies that promote greater access to diverse housing. <input type="checkbox"/> Protect the Town’s historic sites and heritage. <input type="checkbox"/> Preserve the Town’s greenspaces, agricultural lands, and natural environment.

9. CONCLUSION:

Establishing a Joint Election Compliance Audit Committee prior to October 1st, 2026 will ensure the Town is compliant with applicable legislation while enhancing efficiencies and strengthening partnerships with local municipalities



Kevin Fox
Municipal Clerk / Risk Manager



Selena Scebba
Policy and Committee Coordinator

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	2026 Election Compliance Audit Committee.docx
Attachments:	- 2026-018 - Establish a Joint Election Compliance Audit Committee RM.pdf - Joint Election Compliance Audit Committee Terms of Reference RM.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Apr 1, 2026

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

No Signature - Task assigned to Tracy Prince was completed by delegate Yufang Du

Tracy Prince



Melissa Osborne



Valerie Critchley



Kevin Fox