

Gabriola Fire Protection Improvement District (GFPID)
 BOARD OF TRUSTEES
 Submitted by GFPID Returning Officer Cheryl Hannebauer

Election Report May 2026

Results of the GFPID Election 2026

Final Ballot Counts and Standings

Candidate (by votes)	Votes Received	Term Granted
Rankin, John	562	3-year term
Tzotzos, Dimitri	554	3-year term
Wallinger, Liz	548	3-year term
Dow, Matt	482	1-year term
Moher, Diana	169	/
Johnson, Erik	143	/

Ballots Cast: 685

Spoiled: 2

Rejected: 2

Advance Vote Day: May 2, 2026 – Ballots Cast: 277 (Polls open: 11 a.m. – 7 p.m)

Candidate (Alphabetically)	Votes Received
Dow	211
Johnson	55
Moher	61
Rankin	248
Tzotzos	228
Wallinger	225

General Election Day: May 6, 2026 – Ballots Cast: 408 (Polls open: 11 a.m. – 7 p.m)

Candidate (Alphabetically)	Votes Received
Dow	271
Johnson	88
Moher	108
Rankin	314
Tzotzos	326
Wallinger	323

Any challenges made to the ballot count by a candidate must be made within 14 days of the election, in which time candidates are able to request a recount. No challenges were made.

After 60 days, all election materials are destroyed by the Returning Officer and the Corporate Officer.

Advance Voting Day

In the final election report of 2025, I made a recommendation that the Board of Trustees consider holding an advance vote, as the public had requested. I proposed that this be done for a 2-year cycle, followed by a review of all costs to the public conducted by the board. This was discussed and a motion was made to have the trial session last three election cycles, as it then aligns with a full term cycle. The Corporate Officer and I then drafted the necessary changes to election policy 24-09 and the Board of Trustees approved and adopted the updated policy in November 2025 at the monthly Board of Trustees meeting. The Advance Vote recommendation was passed for a 3-year cycle of 3 elections to then be reviewed by the GFPID Board of Trustees.

Here listed is the procedure followed to secure the advance poll ballot box. After the advance poll closed and the advance ballot box was sealed, I allowed the board designate to take photos of the box. Then, 2 scrutineers and a poll clerk also took

photos. As per the process passed by the board, the Corporate Officer took photos of the advance ballot box as well as photos of the safe when it was closed.

At the advance vote, we asked the poll clerks to ask the voters the following question: **If there had been NO advance vote, would you have come out to vote on the General election day of May 6th?** 178 voters responded yes (i.e. they would have voted on the general election day), 92 voters responded no. Note: not all voters answered the question.

We received a few challenges and concerns from members of the public on the Advance Election Day that I, as the Returning Officer, dealt with. We had a few members of the public who did come in to vote, but who were not landowners. The poll clerks referred them to the registration table to speak with myself or the Corporate Officer. (see form list) Additionally, there was a letter from a landowner, as well as some verbal concerns raised by members of the public concerning the actions of the scrutineers. In response to these concerns, we rearranged the room on the day of the General Election and the day went smoothly. Only a few other concerns were made known to myself or the Corporate Officer by members of the public, all of which we addressed.

Regarding security issues/concerns from Advance Voting Day, we did have one voter ask us about advance ballot security. He said that he had been hearing stories that there was a security issue with the ballots. I explained the process that we would be following to him. I then offered to show him the safe, but he declined and said he was happy with what he had learned about the process we would be following.

General Election Day

The General Election Day went smoothly. There was one concern presented by the scrutineers, who could not see the ballot box from where they were sitting when there were line-ups of voters. In response, we moved them across the room for ease of viewing and I also had a discussion with poll clerks and the scrutineers on appropriate interactions with the public as we prepared to open the polls.

Another concern brought forth was the location of the scrutineers when they stood outside the rear exit for a break. It was perceived that they could be “watching” the public mark their ballots behind the voting screens from this position. I addressed this issue by asking the scrutineers to stay over by the kitchen area windows when going outside for a breath of fresh air.

On the day of the General Election, polls closed at 7 p.m. and all election materials were moved to the main office for the count. A poll clerk guarded the general ballot box in the voting area until it was moved into the office. Then the Corporate Officer and myself went to retrieve the advance ballot box from the safe. The scrutineer who witnessed the box go into the safe observed its removal from the safe. The board designate was also present for this and asked to take photos. I refused this request on the grounds that it was now 7:15 p.m. and I had to start the count, as I had 2 scrutineers and other staff waiting in the main office for myself and the Corporate Officer. The board designate was allowed to observe the box in the safe and to watch as I transported it from the safe into the office. I asked the Corporate Officer's Assistant to watch it as I went to ask the other scrutineer to come to the office for the ballot count.

Once in the counting area, we asked the scrutineer who was present for the sealing of the Advance Ballot box to check the box for any issues. None were found. All the scrutineers present were asked if they would like to run a tally sheet for their candidates. All chose to do so. Thank you to the Corporate Officer for the revision of the tally sheets. This year's count went smoother than last year's as a result of this revision. I informed the scrutineers that the official tally would come from the Corporate Officer, the Corporate Officer's Assistant, and a member of the public.

The advance ballots were counted first. When the corresponding tally sheets were completed, I moved on to count the General Election Ballots. The count concluded at approximately 10:10 p.m. The tally sheets for the Advance and General ballot counts were totaled and official consensus was acknowledged by all present. I then informed the Corporate Officer, the Corporate Officer's Assistant, the member of the public, and the scrutineers that they were to remain in the office area while I presented the results. No cellphone usage or transmission of the results was permitted at this time.

At approx. 10:40 p.m., I went into the AGM to inform the Board of Trustees, Candidates and members of the public the election results. Once that was done, I returned to the office and told the scrutineers they were free to exit the office, but that all their tally materials were to remain in the office area. Clean up of materials was completed and the ballots were secured in the safe in case of a challenge to the results. We exited the office to allow the Corporate Officer and the Corporate Officer's Assistant to lock up.

Statistics

Below I have listed some of the forms we are required to fill out at the registration table as well as some facts about voters. These forms are completed when a voter is referred to the Corporate Officer and myself at the registration table by a poll clerk in order to resolve an issue.

Statutory Voter Declaration forms/information

Type of Form	Advance Voting - May 2nd	General Election - May 6th	Total
Addition to title / lawyer letter provided	1	/	1
Name change (maiden vs. married name)	2	2	4
Change of address (Different to ID provided)	1	9	10
Limited Company vote	1	/	1
Non-Landowners	2	2	4
Not on BCA Roll	/	6	6
Property Owners living off island	/	2	2
Passport used for ID / no driver's license	/	1	1
Digital ID / driver's license (not able to vote)	/	1	1
Had to return home for ID	/	2	2

For the first time in my 40+ years of working elections, one of the ballots had to be rejected as the voter chose not to vote for any of the candidates.

Budget

		Unit	Cost	Budget	Actual
Advertising	3 "Call for Nominations"	3	\$ 250	\$ 750	\$ 937.20
	3 "Candidates/AGM"	3	\$ 250	\$ 750	\$ 766.80
Supplies	Boxes, tape			\$ 100	\$ 186.99
Returning Officer	Preparation	40	\$ 40	\$ 1,600	\$2,640.00
	Advanced Polls	9	\$ 40	\$ 360	
	Election Day	16	\$ 40	\$ 640	
	Report	2	\$ 40	\$ 80	
Assistant to the C/O	Preparation	8	\$ 25	\$ 200	\$756.25
	Advanced Polls	8	\$ 25	\$ 200	
	Election Day	16	\$ 25	\$ 400	
Poll clerks	Advanced Polls (8 ppl)	64	\$ 25	\$ 1,600	\$1,200.00
	Election Day (8 ppl)	64	\$ 25	\$ 1,600	\$1,300.00
	Counting of ballots	10	\$ 25	\$ 250	\$ 112.50
Safe		1	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 962.98

TOTAL \$ 9,530 \$8,862.72

Recommendations

Recommendation 1 – Poll Hours

The GFPID Board consider changing General Election Day polling hours from **11:00 a.m.–7:00 p.m.** to **11:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m.** This would allow election officials sufficient time to complete ballot counting and announce results during the Annual General Meeting without extending the process late into the evening. Should this recommendation be adopted, the revised hours should be clearly communicated in all election advertising.

Consider changing the advanced polling hours to **9:00 am – 4:00 pm** (as there was not much voting traffic after 4 pm).

Recommendation 2 – Deputy Returning Officer

That the Board establish the position of Deputy Returning Officer for future elections to provide succession planning, continuity of knowledge, and transparency in election administration. The Deputy would have the opportunity to shadow the Returning Officer throughout the election process and become familiar with the election procedures and reference binder developed for GFPID by the 2025-2026 Returning Officer, in consultation with the Corporate Officer & Web Designer.

Recommendations #3 - Social Media

That the Board review whether guidance or expectations regarding candidates' use of social media during election periods should be incorporated into future election policies, taking into consideration Elections BC guidance and best practices.

Conclusion

The 2026 GFPID Trustee Election successfully introduced Advance Voting for the first time under the Board-approved three-election trial period. The election was conducted in accordance with GFPID election procedures, with appropriate safeguards in place to protect ballot security and maintain transparency throughout the process. Operational observations from both voting days have been documented to assist the Board in evaluating future improvements. I appreciate the cooperation of election staff, scrutineers, candidates, and members of the public in contributing to a successful election.

Trustee Designate Role

To ensure a fair and impartial process, the Chair, if (potentially) running for another term, must completely step away from all election-related duties. The Board then appoints a Trustee representative to serve as the sole official representative instead of the Chair. This individual functions as the primary liaison between the Board, the Corporate Officer, and the Returning Officer, ensuring that responsibilities are clearly understood from the outset and that the election is conducted in a highly structured, organized manner.

Once the election date is officially selected by a Board motion, the Trustee representative enters the planning and setup phase. This involves meeting directly with the Corporate Officer and the Returning Officer to map out the comprehensive election calendar and timeline, establishing a clear blueprint for all key deadlines. Ongoing coordination and strict communication protocols are vital to keeping the election on track and preventing organizational issues like triangulation, where individuals become caught between mixed messages or partial data. The representative maintains regular contact with staff and fields general questions from both the public and fellow Trustees. However, the guide establishes a strict rule for complex or highly specific inquiries: all detailed, technical questions must be routed directly to the Returning Officer or Corporate Officer, who are best positioned to provide definitive guidance.

Finally, the representative ensures that public-facing website materials remain accurate, accessible, and up to date to minimize repetitive inquiries and maintain total transparency for voters. (refer to manual-Trustee rep booklet)

Once the election has officially started the board as whole (including the designate) steps back and allows the Returning Officer to follow the process voted on by the board and previously publicly presented. Any interference by the board could be seen as undue influence to disrupt or manipulate outcomes and lead to challenges by candidates or members of the public through the court system.

Thank Yous

A special thank you to the Corporate Officer, Marjorie, and the Corporate Officer's Assistant, Amelia, who helped make the first GFPID Advance vote a success, as well as the General Election Day of May 6th. I would also like to thank the poll clerks who came out to help us and went with the flow, especially when the schedule had to be changed a few times due to family matters or emerging commitments and cancellations. Thank you as well to the scrutineers for their observation and participation in the election process. And thank you to the members of the public who came out to exercise their right to vote.

Thank you to Erik Johnson, Diana Moher, Ray Appel and John Moeller for their contributions as members of the GFPID Board of Trustees over the years and welcome to the 4 newest GFPID Board Members: Matt Dow, John Rankin, Dimitri Tzotzos & Liz Wallinger.