

# **ELECTION MATTERS**

**A GUIDE TO THE TRUSTEE ELECTION PROCESS**



Gabriola Fire Protection  
Improvement District

# GFPID Election Process Checklist

(Working Reference, Prepared March 2026)

Elections for the GFPID Board of Trustees matter.

Elections are how the community exercises its voice over decisions that directly affect public safety, services, and the responsible use of taxpayer dollars. Every vote represents trust placed in the Board to govern thoughtfully, transparently, and in the best interests of the community.



Because of that, the election process must be clear, consistent, and well understood. It cannot rely on memory, informal practices, or assumptions carried forward from year to year. Turnover on the Board is expected and healthy, but it also means knowledge can be lost if it is not intentionally captured. This document is part of building that institutional memory so that each election is run with the same level of care, fairness, and accountability, regardless of who is involved.

This overview in each section below and the accompanying checklist is designed to provide practical guidance and clarity at each stage of the process, from initial planning through to final results and follow-up. It supports a steady, well-documented approach that reduces uncertainty, strengthens confidence in the process, and helps ensure that elections are conducted in a way that reflects both legal requirements and the expectations of the community.

## Setting Up the Election

The Board confirms the election date and appoints the Returning Officer through formal motions at a public meeting. An initial planning meeting is then held with the Returning Officer, Corporate Officer, and, if needed, a Board designate to establish timelines and the overall calendar.

All required Solemn Declarations are completed at this stage and filed appropriately. The election budget is confirmed, and a detailed breakdown is reviewed.



### Checklist:

- Election date set and Returning Officer appointed
- Planning meeting held and timeline/calendar confirmed
- Declarations completed and filed
- Budget confirmed and reviewed

**Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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## Preparing for the Election

Poll Clerks are recruited and scheduled, with confirmations sent in advance. Materials for polling tables are prepared, including duties, voter check procedures, and confidentiality forms. The voters list is prepared from the BC Assessment roll and organized for use at polling tables, with a master copy available. Ballots are finalized, printed, and organized, with a simple control system in place.



### Checklist:

- Poll Clerks scheduled and confirmed
- Polling materials prepared
- Voters list completed and organized
- Ballots printed and control system ready
- Advertising placed and compliant

**Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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## Nominations and Candidates

Nominations are opened and closed according to the timeline. Candidate eligibility and nominators are verified, and confirmations are sent. Candidates complete their declaration forms, and any scrutineers are properly documented and briefed.



### Checklist:

- Nominations processed and verified
- Candidate confirmations sent
- Declarations completed
- Scrutineers confirmed and Code of Conduct signed

**Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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## Acclamation Process

If there are only enough candidates to fill the open Board of Trustee positions, these candidates will then be acclaimed to the Board & no election will take place and they will be acclaimed at the AGM. **The Returning Officer will draw names for the acclamation process** at the AGM, starting with the longest term and proceeding to the shortest term if the terms have different lengths.



**Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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## Advance Poll

The polling space is set up in advance, and Poll Clerks are signed in and prepared. Voting is conducted during the scheduled hours, with all voters present at closing permitted to vote.

Once the Advance Poll vote has closed, the Ballot box will be sealed with seals, the seals are then signed by the Returning Officer, Corporate Officer & Scrutineers present, a photo is then taken & the tamper proof tape is added to the ballot box. The Advance Witness Form will be signed by all who initialed the ballot box seals.

The Ballot box is then taken into the file room where it is placed into the safe, closed and locked. At this point there has been no combination added to the digital safe, it is a brand new safe & can only be accessed by the keys.

The Returning Officer will then take possession of the two safe keys & will be held in the Returning Officer's possession until the General election day. The Safe will be opened after the General Election is finished & the count of the ballots will begin.

At that point the safe will be opened by the Returning Officer & taken into the counting area, where it will be counted first. The file room access, this is only accessible by the Corporate Officer, The Fire Chief & the Deputy chief. No other person has access to this room.

### Checklist:

- Poll set up and staff ready
- Voting conducted and managed appropriately
- Ballot box sealed, signed, and secured and not opened until the General Election
- Advance poll ballot tally recorded

**Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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## General Election Day

The polling area is set up and the ballot box is confirmed empty before opening. Voting is conducted consistently, with the Returning Officer handling any questions or special cases, including corporate or agent voters.



### Checklist:

- Poll set up and ballot box confirmed empty
- Voting conducted with consistent check-in process
- Special cases reviewed and documented as needed
- Poll closed and all voters accommodated

**Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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## Counting and Results

All materials are moved to the counting area. Advance ballots are counted first, followed by general ballots. The Returning Officer handles ballots while tally sheets are maintained. Totals are verified before results are announced.



### Checklist:

- Ballots counted (advance, then general)
- Spoiled/rejected ballots separated and recorded
- Totals verified and confirmed
- Results announced publicly

**Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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## After the Election

All materials are secured and filed. If needed, the inaugural Board meeting is scheduled following the completion of the count. The Returning Officer will submit a written report to the Board of Trustees at the following meeting after the election process. This report is compiled in consultation with the Corporate Officer.



### Checklist:

- Materials secured and filed
- Inaugural meeting scheduled (if required)

**Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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## General Notes

Keep the process steady, consistent, and well-documented. When questions arise, rely on the Returning Officer and the agreed upon process.

**Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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As a working reference, this document should be reviewed and refined over time. Lessons learned from each election, along with practical feedback, should be incorporated to strengthen clarity, consistency, and overall effectiveness. Maintaining an open line of communication helps ensure the process remains well understood, properly administered, and responsive to the needs of the Board and the community.

Any questions, suggested improvements, or requests for clarification should be directed to the Corporate Officer at [corporateofficer@gabriolafire.ca](mailto:corporateofficer@gabriolafire.ca).