



The Corporation of the Town of Kingsville

To: Mayor and Members of Council

Prepared By: Angela Toole, Manager of Municipal Governance/Clerk

Department: Finance and Corporate Services - Municipal Governance

Date of Meeting: April 20, 2026

Subject: Proposal to Establish a Joint Election Compliance Audit Committee with Local Municipalities

Recommended Action

That a Joint Election Compliance Audit Committee **be established** for the 2026-2030 Term of Council;

And that the Terms of Reference for the Joint Election Compliance Audit Committee, attached hereto as Schedule A, **be adopted**;

And that By-law 30-2026 being a By-law to Establish a Joint Election Compliance Audit Committee **be adopted** during the By-law stage of this Agenda.

Background

The *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* ("MEA") requires municipalities to establish an Election Compliance Audit Committee (hereafter, "Committee") prior to October 1st in the year of an election 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 request, then the Committee is required by the MEA to appoint an Auditor to conduct a compliance audit of the Candidate or Registered Third Party's election campaign finances. The Auditor is then required to audit the election campaign finances, subject of the granted request, to determine whether they have complied with the provisions of the MEA respecting campaign finances. At the conclusion of the audit, the Auditor provides a report to the Committee stating their findings.

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. As such, it is necessary to establish and 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:

1. Employees or Officers of the municipality or local board;
2. Members of Council or a local board;
3. Any persons who are Candidates in the election for which the Committee is established; or,
4. Any persons who are Registered Third Parties in the municipality in the election for which the Committee is established.

An increasingly common practice across Ontario municipalities is to establish Joint Election Compliance Audit Committees. These Joint Committees are comprised of several municipalities which are geographically located in upper-tier municipalities. 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 Election Compliance Audit Committees in past elections, and will continue to engage in this practice for the 2026 Municipal Elections.

The benefits to establishing a Joint Election Compliance Audit Committee can be summarized below:

- Shared membership allows municipalities to access a broader pool of qualified applicants from across Essex County;
- Representation from multiple municipalities promotes balanced decision-making and shared responsibility;
- Members from outside the municipality enhance objectivity and impartiality, reducing real or perceived bias;
- Compliance audit requests are rare, with none received in the most recent election; and,
- A joint approach is therefore cost-effective and minimizes administrative duplication while maintaining readiness.

Administration is recommending that Council establish a Joint Election Compliance Audit Committee together 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 30-2026. The Committee will be composed of five (5) members, and one (1) alternate. 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:

1. Demonstrated knowledge and understanding of municipal election campaign financing rules;
2. Proven analytical and decision-making skills;
3. Experience working on a committee, task force, or similar setting;
4. Availability and willingness to attend meetings; and,
5. Excellent oral and written communication skills.

Recruitment will begin once the Councils of each member municipality have adopted the requisite establishing By-law and Terms of Reference.

At the time of this Report, the Councils of the Town of Amherstburg, Town of LaSalle, and Town of Tecumseh, have all adopted By-laws authorizing the establishment of a Joint Election Compliance Audit Committee.

Financial Considerations

In accordance with 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 and choice of the Auditor for any audit that takes place; and,
- Cost and choice of external legal counsel for the Committee, if necessary.

Administration has surveyed other municipalities and determined that the average compensation is \$150.00 per member, per meeting, plus mileage based on current Canada Revenue Agency rates. These costs will be shared amongst all Member Municipalities.

The responding Member Municipality shall pay all other costs related to a respective Application, including the retention of an Auditor or external legal counsel, if necessary, in accordance with Section 88.37(7) of the Act.

Environmental Considerations

None.

Consultations

Natalie Sharp, Supervisor of Municipal Governance/Deputy Clerk

Prepared By:

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Manager of Municipal Governance/Clerk

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Joint Election Compliance Audit Committee.docx
Attachments:	xx-2026 Establish a Joint Election Compliance Audit Committee.dotx.docx Joint Election Compliance Audit Committee Terms of Reference_draft.docx
Final Approval Date:	April 15, 2026

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



Angela Toole, Manager of Municipal Governance/Clerk

No Signature - Task assigned to Ryan McLeod, Director of Finance and Corporate Services/Treasurer was completed by Meeting Administrator Natalie Sharp, Supervisor of Municipal Governance/Deputy Clerk

Ryan McLeod, Director of Finance and Corporate Services/Treasurer



John Norton, Chief Administrative Officer