

HBM Electoral Ward System Review

Review of the Electoral Ward System in HBM repeatedly comes up for discussion. This indicates the current system is not well accepted. Division of councillor candidates into wards restricts who can vote for them. A candidate's choice of which ward to run in can influence the outcome.

At the All-Candidates Meeting held at the Havelock Lions Center prior to the 2022 election, there was a question from the floor asking whether candidates supported abolishing the current ward system in favor of having the 3 councillors being elected at large. There was unanimous support from all candidates present for adopting at-large elections.

This topic was on HBM Council agenda for the Oct 3, 2023 meeting.

The discussion is at time 1:40 in this meeting and goes for 10 minutes as accessed below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P22-A0ZQhA8>

The October 3rd Council Meeting concluded with the plan to include a survey to go out to the electorate with the next tax bill (late January 2024) for public input, followed by a special council meeting and public meeting(s).

The options suggested were:

- 1) Leave ward boundaries unchanged
- 2) Change ward boundaries so each ward has the same number of eligible voters
- 3) Eliminate ward system completely and allow all councillors to be elected at large.

Having the most qualified candidates represent us in local government is beneficial to us all. With the current ward system we vote for Mayor, Deputy Mayor and only 2 Councillors. Without the ward system everyone would vote for all 3 councillors and all councillor candidates would have the opportunity for support from all voters.

Voting and Representation

2022 Official Results as per HBM website <https://www.hbmtwp.ca/en/township-services/resources/Clerks-Department-/Official-Election-Results---HBM.pdf>

Mayor

Jim Martin (elected)	1,640 votes (74.7%)	
Rolf Joss	494 votes (22.5%)	
Abstain	60 votes	Total votes 2194

Deputy Mayor

Hart Webb	Acclaimed
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Councillor At Large

Kathy Clement (elected)	743 votes (33.9%)	
Shelley Miles	512 votes (23.3%)	
Pascal Hill	454 votes (20.7%)	
Ralph Horton	360 votes (16.4%)	
Abstain	125 votes	Total votes 2194

Township Ward Councillor

Jerry Doherty (elected)	858 votes (46.7%)	
Gregory Clements	830 votes (45.1%)	
Abstain	151 votes	Total votes 1839

Village Ward Councillor

Beverley Flagler (elected)	140 votes (39.4%)	
Paul Wood	128 votes (36.1%)	
Jonathan Prosser	76 votes (21.4%)	
Abstain	11 votes	Total votes 355

2022 Election Turnout

	Ward 1 – Township	Ward 2 – Village	Total
Number of Electors	6531	767	7498
Number of Electors who voted	1839 (28.2%)	355 (46.3%)	2194 (29.3%)

The village (767 electors) is currently represented by the Village Ward Councillor and the Councillor at Large. The township (6531 electors) is currently represented by the Township Ward Councillor and the Councillor at Large.

2018 Unofficial Results (Unable to obtain official results from HBM)

Mayor

Jim Martin (elected)	1,662 votes (57.11%)
Andy Sharpe	1,248 votes (42.89%)

Deputy Mayor

David Gerow (elected)	1,905 votes (69.83%)
Jim Collins	823 votes (30.17%)

Councillor At Large

Hart Webb (elected)	1,426 votes (52.06%)
Amanda O'Rourke	1,313 votes (47.94%)

Township Ward Councillor

Larry Ellis (elected)	1,255 votes (55.04%)
Kelly Fallis	1,025 votes (44.96%)

Village Ward Councillor

Barry Pomeroy (elected)	241 votes (53.32%)
Kathy Clement	111 votes (24.56%)
Jonathan Prosser	100 votes (22.12%)

The 2021 population of HBM (as per Canada census) was 5,083, an increase of 12.2% from 2016.

What happens in other townships?

The Township of Asphodel-Norwood Council is comprised of a Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and three Councillors, all elected at large for a four-year term. The 2021 population was 4,658.

The Municipality of Marmora and Lake has the same composition, all elected at large. The 2021 population was 4,267.

The Municipality of Trent Hills has a seven-member Council comprised of a Mayor and Deputy Mayor, elected at large, and five Ward Councillors, each representing one Ward. There are 3 large population centers in Trent Hills; Campbellford, Hastings and Warkworth. The ward boundaries were re-divided in 2020. The 2021 population was 13,861.

Current Status

Bob Angione, HBM CAO, presented an excellent and thorough report on the issue at the January 16, 2024 Regular HBM Council Meeting. That can be viewed here, pages 309-317:

<https://events.hbmtwp.ca/council/Detail/2024-01-16-0930-Regular-Council-Meeting/7397cc7e-0fc0-4433-9f00-b0f80143ebcf>

The survey which will be mailed to all taxpayers with their next tax bill is on pages 316 & 317. It is very simplistic and does not provide background for the different options.

I urge you to read the above report, be involved and have your say by responding to the survey, attending the public meetings if possible and speaking with your council members.

Regards,
Val Marshall
HBM Resident