

At large voting meeting date set

By Sarah Sobanski

Hastings Highlands council has set a date to discuss voting at large with its area constituents.

The Wards versus At Large meeting will be held Nov. 23. A presentation will be made to council and the public discussing costs and options for voting at large in municipal elections.

Currently, only the mayor is voted for at large while councillors can only be voted for by constituents within their wards. If councillors were voted for at large, constituents from across Hastings Highlands could vote for them.

At large voting would mean dissolving ward boundaries.

CAO Pat Pilgrim explained council is considering changing the voting system because the wards vary in size. A vote from a constituent in a smaller ward carries more weight than a vote from a constituent in a larger ward.

“Some of the wards are larger than others. Your vote in Bangor, [Wicklow, McClure Ward] wouldn't have as much sway as in Monteagle Ward,” said Pilgrim.

At large voting could see a voter choose who he or she feels are the top six councillors for council on a ballot. Council will hear options and cost comparisons between ward voting and at large voting at the meeting.

At a council meeting Nov. 2, council clerk Robyn Rogers suggested recording public questions, concerns or opinions from the meeting to review at a later date. She said council might not have enough time to review the presentation fully before the meeting.

As such, answering public concerns unanswered by the presentation might be difficult.

Pilgrim encouraged the public to attend. This could be the first meeting in a series of meetings to discuss at large voting.

“I believe it's an important meeting, and I think the public should come,” said Pilgrim.

The meeting will be held at Emond Hall at 1 p.m.