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THE AYR NEWS



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Vol. 125 — No. 45

AYR, ONTARIO, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 23rd, 2022

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OYEZ! OYEZ! - The new municipal councils are now being sworn in. See Brant on page 6 and Blandford-Blenheim on page 8. Above, Town Crier Larry Davis in Brant. Photo by Bob Howes.

New councillor concerned that North Dumfries candidates were left off Cambridge trustee ballot

By Irene Schmidt-Adeney

Newly-elected North Dumfries Councillor Alida Wilms has taken a petition to the City of Cambridge requesting an investigation into the election ballot error for the Cambridge-North Dumfries representative to the Waterloo Catholic School Board (WCDSB).

“When I first heard about the emergency order and that it was because two candidates from North Dumfries weren’t on the ballot, I was shocked,” said Wilms.

“I understand that municipal elections are very complicated, with many positions to vote for, and many candidates for each position. However, a very serious mistake had been made, which resulted in a very unfortunate scenario, and I didn’t think that it could just be swept under the carpet. I wanted to find out why this had happened, what the impact was, and how such an event could be avoided in the future.”

The Ayr News has reached out to the Cambridge Clerk’s office to confirm whose names were left off the ballot, but did not receive a response by press time.

Prior to election day, it was



Alida Wilms

discovered that two of the six trustee candidates’ names were missing from the Cambridge ballot. The Cambridge ballot was suspended by the Cambridge City Clerk, who is the elections officer. The Cambridge ballot had to be redrawn and the voting time extended.

The WCDSB trustee election continued in North Dumfries, which had correct ballots, but its results were withheld and sealed and forwarded to Cambridge, to be announced with the Cambridge results.

Wilms told the Ayr News that she heard “from someone who spoke with the Cambridge city clerk” about the ballot.

“I brought up my request for a third-party, transparent investigation, with the opportunity for public input

and a publicly-available report.”

According to a City of Cambridge spokesperson, the investigation was already underway.

“The City had already decided to engage in an independent third party review. Reviews of the election process are within the authority and responsibility of the City Clerk to assess and take measures to ensure errors don’t occur again. As we work to complete the resumption of the WCDSB election, the scope of the review is still being determined. More details will be provided once the review has been completed,” said spokesperson Allison Jones.

Cambridge extends deadline

Eligible voters in Cambridge for the Waterloo Catholic District School Board (WCDSB) Trustee Election had until November 18 to cast their vote. On November 17, the city announced that the voting deadline was extended to Friday, November 25 at 4:30 p.m.

The city said that the results for both Cambridge and North Dumfries will be released on Friday, November 25 after the close of voting at 4:30 p.m.

Blandford-Blenheim Director of Protective Services retires after 47 years in emergency service

By Irene Schmidt-Adeney

Rick Richardson began as a volunteer firefighter at the Caledonia Fire Station in 1975 and when he retires on December 30, he will have spent a total of 47 years providing emergency services to residents in Haldimand County and Blandford-Blenheim Township.

Before retiring as a Captain with Haldimand County in 2006, he accepted a similar

position with Blandford-Blenheim Township, in 2001.

“My understanding was that I was hired as a Fire Chief and I would help out the Building Department when they got busy and cover for vacation,” said Richardson.

“After being on the job for six months, I was informed that I would be spending 50% of my time as the Fire Chief and 50% as the Building Inspector. This came as a sur-



Rick Richardson

prise.”

On October 6, 2010, Richardson’s position changed to become the Director of Protective Services, overseeing four fire stations that today have 71 firefighters.

“I’m going to miss working with all of our firefighters, township staff and especially the residents of Blandford-Blenheim,” said Richardson.

“The Township of Blandford-Blenheim has been very

supportive and generous to me over the past 21 years.”

Richardson will keep busy in retirement remodelling his home, “again”, spending lots of time with his grandchildren, and in his vegetable garden.

“In the spring and summer, you will catch me in my boat fishing in Lake Erie or Lake Ontario, and in the winter months, lots of ice fishing on Lake Erie,” said Richardson.

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Vol. 125 — No. 46

AYR, ONTARIO, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 30th, 2022

\$50 Per Annum — \$1.00 each

No answers yet on why the WCDSB trustee candidates from North Dumfries initially omitted from Cambridge ballot

By Irene Schmidt-Adeney

The results are in, but residents will have to wait until the new year to find out why an election error caused a trustee election to last a month.

Cambridge suspended its Waterloo Catholic District School Board (WCDSB) trustee election on October 22, two days before the municipal election, when it was discovered that two names were left off the Cambridge ballot. Any ballots cast in Cambridge before this date were voided.

The two names that were missing from the ballot were the candidates from North Dumfries – Jesse Keels, who lives in Roseville and Michael Rattee who lives in Ayr.

“The City has engaged in a third-party review to understand how and why the error occurred and to ensure improvements towards future processes,” said Cambridge Supervisor of Communications Allison Jones. “A report, including costs will be prepared once the review has been completed.”

Jones said the report is expected to be completed in the new year.

North Dumfries Councillor Alida Wilms has also requested a third-party investigation into the error.

To fix the error, Cambridge decided to hold an online only election from November 7 until November 18. Online voting required the voters to have a PIN that was mailed to them through Canada Post.

During this time, Cambridge candidate Marisa Phillips expressed concerns to the Cambridge elections officer af-

ter she heard from supporters who did not receive the PIN.

On day four of the extended election period, “neither myself nor anyone I’ve spoken to had received their voting information card,” said Phillips.

Cambridge then decided to further extend the voting period until November 25.

Phillips also said that there was an error in the spelling of her name on the initial paper ballot.

“With the amount of mistakes being made in this election that we know about, it does make me wonder what other mistakes could have been made that we don’t know about?” said Phillips.

“We need transparency,” she said.

The ballots cast in North Dumfries Township on October 24 had no errors. They were sealed and sent to Cambridge and included with the final results on released on November 25.

Trustee results announced

On Friday, November 25, the Cambridge election officer announced that David Guerin, Marisa Phillips and Robert Sikora were elected as the Cambridge-North Dumfries trustees on the Waterloo Catholic District School Board (WCDSB). The results were: Marisa Phillips (971), David Guerin (685), and Robert Sikora (495), Winston Darryl Francis (470), Jesse Keels (333), Michael Rattee (262).

A press release from the City of Cambridge said 1,144 votes were cast in the extended trustee election, which is a voter turnout of 5.7 percent.



NEW NORTH DUMFRIES COUNCIL SWORN IN – North Dumfries council held its inaugural meeting on November 21. This term’s members are, from left: back - Ward 4 councillor Scott Tilley, Ward 1 councillor Derrick Ostner, Ward 2 councillor Rod Rolleman; front - Ward 3 councillor Alida Wilms, and Mayor Sue Foxtan.

North Dumfries Council holds inaugural meeting

The 2022-2026 term of North Dumfries Council began on Monday, November 21 with a swearing-in ceremony in MacNeil Hall at the North Dumfries Community Complex.

A vocal prelude was performed by Christina Hunke. The new council was processed into the hall by Ayr Pipe Band Pipe Major Kieran McPate, followed by the Call to Order by Clerk Ashley Sage and the singing of O Canada.

An address was provided by Kate Cressman who spoke about the qualities required by a successful councillor. The Oath of Office was administered by Waterloo Region Chair Karen Redman.

The Chain of Office and

gavel was presented to Mayor Sue Foxtan, who is beginning her third term as mayor and 22nd year on council. A gift was presented to each member of council.

Mayor Sue Foxtan delivered an inaugural address, which said in part “Council and myself do not serve for power or gain, we serve because we believe in our community, our township, our people.”

“To my Council, never knowingly lie, it is easier to remember the truth, never make promises but acknowledge what the individual is stating, advise them you will look into it and then respond back to them. Always give a truthful answer even if it is not the outcome they wanted. Our people

deserve to know the truth,” Foxtan said.

The first regular meeting of North Dumfries Council will be held on Monday, December 12.



Resident Kate Cressman spoke about the qualities required to be a successful councillor.

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Kiwaniis Coming to North Dumfries

- A new service club focusing on kids and community -

INFORMATION MEETING - Tuesday, January 31st, 7:00 p.m. - ALL WELCOME!

North Dumfries Community Complex, 2958 Greenfield Rd., Ayr

For more information contact Peter Tudisco peter@buonvino.com or call 519-239-9316

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Vol. 126 — No. 4

AYR, ONTARIO, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 25th, 2023

\$50 Per Annum — \$1.00 each

No timeframe given for the report on Cambridge ballot error

By Irene Schmidt-Adeney

The City of Cambridge is not providing a timeframe for when an explanation will be provided on how the two North Dumfries candidate names were left off the trustee ballot for the Waterloo Catholic District School Board. The trustee election was suspended on October 22, two days before election day, when the error was discovered.

The election was completed over two weeks later on November 18 and a press release from the City of Cambridge spokesperson Allison Jones said that “a report, including costs, is expected in the new year”.

Last week, the Ayr News contacted Jones to ask when the report would be released.

“A specific timeframe is unavailable,” said Jones.

Jones said that the work is “in progress”.

The city launched a “third-party review to understand how and why the error occurred and to ensure improvements towards future processes.”



Opera singer John Fanning (left) with the Ayr-Paris Band Director Merry Schmidt.

JANUARY 25 AT KNOX CHURCH Renowned Canadian baritone will perform at Ayr's Celtic Celebration

By Irene Schmidt-Adeney

John Fanning, who has performed with every major opera company in Canada and the United States, will be accompanied by local pianist Robert Marshall and the Ayr-Paris Band for two selections at this week's Celtic Celebration at Knox United Church in Ayr.

A member of the Order of Canada, Fanning's career focuses on opera, but he has considerable experience in musical theatre, and film. He was a member of the Canadian touring production for Phantom of the Opera in the early 1990s.

“A superb baritone, known for his generosity and kindness, John Fanning has become a premier musical ambassador for Canada,” according to the Order of Canada website.

Fanning's son Nate is the principal trombone with the K-W Symphony Orchestra and also a member of Knox United Church. When approached by Band Director Merry Schmidt

to make the introduction, Nate was glad to help. The event is a fundraiser for Porchlight, the former Cambridge and North Dumfries Family Counselling Centre.

Fanning's voice can be heard in many operatic commercials, he appeared in CBC's *Wind At My Back*, and the feature film *Moonstruck* alongside Cher.

In addition to the Ayr-Paris Band, the concert will feature the Ayr Pipe Band, Dumfries Community Choir, Michele Di Tomasso of the Ayr Community Theatre, and the Cambridge Highland Dance & Company.

A Celtic Celebration is being held on Wednesday, January 25, beginning at 7:00 p.m. at Knox Church in Ayr.

There will be a freewill offering at the door with all proceeds going toward Porchlight. Shuttle bus transportation is available from Kirkwood, Gibson Street, and Bute Apartments.

See poster in the lobby for more information.

**Centennials remain undefeated in 2023
See story on page 9**

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LABOUR DAY WEEKEND



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Vol. 126 — No. 32

AYR, ONTARIO, WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 23rd, 2023

\$50 Per Annum — \$1.00 each

Drumbo is under a Boil Water advisory

Drumbo has been placed under a boil water advisory after an instrumentation failure at the Drumbo Water Supply Facility.

“System pressure dropped for approximately 45 min on Aug 20, 2023,” said Oxford County Public Works Director David Simpson.

According to a press release, “Under the Boil Water Advisory, residents are advised to boil tap water or use bottled water for drinking, making infant formula and juices, cooking, making ice, washing fruits and vegetables, and brushing their teeth until further notice.”

To use boiled water, Southwestern Public Health recommends bringing water to a rolling boil for one minute and then allowing it to cool. The boiled water can then be stored in clean containers.

Princeton was under a Boil Water advisory from August 9 to August 11. It occurred after a municipal watermain was damaged by construction workers and caused a loss of water pressure at the Drumbo Water Supply Facility. The Drumbo-Princeton water system consists of three wells that provide secure groundwater. The wells are connected through the central treatment facility located in Drumbo.

The Princeton Boil Water advisory was rescinded by Southwestern Public Health after two sets of laboratory bacteriological samples confirmed that the water was safe to drink.



PLASKETT PERFORMS IN PARIS - Nova Scotia singer/songwriter Joel Plaskett performed with his band The Emergency at Paris Drinks Fest in Lions Park in Paris on Saturday. Friday night's headliner was The Trews.

Ballot error is before Superior Court

By Irene Schmidt-Adeney

It's been 10 months since the municipal election on October 22, 2022 when the names of the North Dumfries candidates for Waterloo Catholic District School Board (WCDSB) were left off the ballot. Since an announcement was made by the city of Cambridge Clerk that an investigation would be held to determine the cause of the error, no reason has been provided.

The matter is now before the Superior Court of Justice.

“The city has received an application for a controverted election,” said Cambridge spokesperson Allison Jones. “As this matter is currently before the court, the Clerk's 2022 Election Summary and Review will not come before Council until the judicial process takes its course.”

According to the Ontario Municipal Elections Act, an application for a controverted election means it is made by a person to the Superior Court of Justice to determine several factors – whether the election is valid; whether a person's election to an office is not valid, whether another person was validly elected or is entitled to the office; and if an election is

not valid or a person's election to an office is not valid, whether a by-election should be held.

The investigation stems from the discovery two days before the October 22 election that the names of the two North Dumfries candidates for the WCDSB were left off the ballots cast in Cambridge. The North Dumfries ballots had no errors.

To rectify the error, Cambridge held an online-only election from November 7 until November 18. Online voting required the voters to have a PIN that was mailed to them through Canada Post, but delays in receiving the PIN resulted in a second delay until November 25.

The voter turnout for the WCDSB trustee extended election was 5.7% compared to a 32% turnout for all municipal and school board ballots cast on October 22.

David Guerin, Marisa Phillips and Robert Sikora were elected as the Cambridge-North Dumfries trustees.

Unsuccessful candidates included the two North Dumfries candidates whose names were missing from the Cambridge ballot Michael Rattée and Jesse Keels, as well as Winston Darryl Francis of Cambridge.

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