

B.4

MOTION ON NOTICE

4. Vancouver Response to Recommendations of the Special Committee on Local Election Expense Limits

MOVER: Councillor Carr

SECONDER: Councillor

WHEREAS

1. The Final Report of British Columbia's Special Committee on Local Elections Expense Limits was released on June 26, 2015, recommending per-capita-based local election expense limits that, based on the most recent census, would have allowed maximum spending of \$2.9 million by an elector organization running a full slate of 27 candidates: an amount higher than the record-breaking 2011 election spending of \$2.2 million by VISION Vancouver and \$2.4 million by the NPA that prompted Vancouver City Council's repeated calls for limits to election spending;
2. All the other provinces in Canada referenced in the Special Committee's report that base local election expense limits on a formula use a per elector formula;
3. Using a per elector rather than per capita formula would reduce election spending by an elector organization running a full slate of candidates by close to half a million dollars;
4. The reason given by the Special Committee for using a per capita formula is that "uniform, consistent, and centrally available lists of registered electors do not exist for all local governments in BC" (page 7 of the final report), yet the City of Vancouver has been choosing to use the British Columbia voters' list for its elections;
5. The mandate of the Special Committee on Local Elections Expense Limits failed to include critical public policy questions related to election expense limits that have been raised in motions such as the motion passed on January 22, 2014, entitled "Response to Provincial Government on Municipal Campaign Finance Reform", specifically: limits on individual donations, restrictions on sources of donations including a ban on corporate, union and out-of-country donations and annual reporting of revenues and expenses by elector organizations in non-election years;
6. Approximately \$5.6 million was spent by all elector organizations in the 2014 Vancouver civic election and donations included an individual donation of \$100,000 to one campaign and donations by one corporation totalling \$360,000 to another campaign;
7. Unlike elector organizations in municipal elections, political parties in British Columbia are subject to annual financial report requirements;

8. Other Canadian jurisdictions are permitted to have more restrictive rules for campaign finances than Provincial regulations such as the City of Toronto which limits donations by an individual to a maximum of \$5,000 combined, to all candidates and which also bans corporate and union donations to City Council races by limiting donations to individuals only;
9. The Legislative Assembly of British Columbia has regularly amended the Vancouver Charter, with previous amendments introduced by the 2014 Legislative Session: 2nd Session, 40th Parliament.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT the City of Vancouver verify with the Province of British Columbia that the provincial voters' list which the City uses for its elections is "uniform, consistent, and centrally available".
- B. THAT Council instruct legal staff to draft recommendations to amend the Vancouver Charter to incorporate the following points and to have the City Manager forward these recommendations to the Legislative Assembly of British on behalf of City Council with a request that the changes be made and to take effect as soon as possible:
 1. The following amendments are to apply to the City of Vancouver and the Vancouver School District.
 2. The election spending limit formula as recommended by the Special Committee on Local Elections Expense Limits should be per elector.
 3. Donations shall be banned from corporations or unions to local elections in the City of Vancouver.
 4. Individuals resident in the Province of British Columbia are the only class of contributor to be permitted in Vancouver local elections.
 5. A limit shall be placed on the total amount that can be donated by any one individual to \$5,000 in total to all candidates and elector organizations combined, per year.
 6. Elector organizations shall publicly and annually release income and expense disclosure forms, including donors' lists during the years between elections.
 7. The City of Vancouver shall be enabled to set lower spending limits than those set by the Province of British Columbia for candidates and elector organizations taking part in local elections.

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