

74 candidates running for 7 of 8 councils in Dufferin County

Written By **MIKE PICKFORD**

The nomination deadline has come and gone for those in Dufferin County with political aspirations at the municipal level of government.

A total of 74 individuals in Dufferin's eight local municipalities have put their name forward ahead of the October 22 election. With plenty of candidates to choose from, voters in all but one of the communities can spend the next months deliberating over who they feel would best represent them.

The exception is in East Garafraxa, where Mayor Guy Gardhouse and all the other council members have been returned by acclamation.

In Shelburne, there will be a changing of the guard as current Mayor Ken Bennington announced earlier this summer he would not seek re-election this fall. That means one-term councillor Wade Mills will be acclaimed, as he was the only name on the ballot for the mayor's role in Shelburne.

Residents will have to choose between two familiar names for the deputy mayor position, with councillors Dan Sample and Steve Anderson set to duke it out. At the council level, nine candidates will compete for five councillor seats. As is the case in Orangeville, only one current councillor is seeking re-election, that being Walter Benotto. Elsewhere, Althea Casamento, Lindsay Wegener, Kyle Fegan Mikal Archer, Lynda Buffer, Shane Hall, James Hodder and Len Guchardi are hoping to secure enough votes for an inaugural stint on town council.

Current Deputy Mayor Geoff Dunlop and Coun. Randy Chambers will join Mayor Bennington in political exile for at least the next four years, with neither filing their papers to seek re-election.

In Orangeville, there will be 17 names on the ballot, with three vying for the mayor's seat, two candidates competing for deputy mayor and 12 individuals for the remaining five seats on council.

Incumbent Jeremy Williams signalled his intent to run for a second term as mayor last week, with local realtor Sandy Brown and rehabilitation therapist Darrin Davidson providing the competition.

Retired Orangeville fire chief Andy Macintosh was the first to file his papers for a municipal run way back on May 1. He hopes to land the position of deputy mayor so as to 'make a difference?' at the county level. He will go head-to-head with Nick Garisto, a veteran of the local politician arena, having served three terms as councillor (including this current term) and a previous one as deputy mayor. Current Deputy Mayor Warren Maycock announced he will be retired from municipal politics earlier this week, after more than 20 years of service to the town.

Only Don Kidd will seek re-election as a councillor, with Sylvia Bradley, Scott Wilson and Gail Campbell all set to bow out following the election. The 11 other local residents vying for a seat, in the order of filings, are Grant Peters, Simran Bhamu, Trevor Castiglione, Lisa Post, James Jackson, Joe Andrews, Todd Taylor, Vic Thapar, Kelly Zammit, Robert Duthie and Debbie Sherwood.

Meanwhile, in Mono, a late addition to the mayoral race ensures local residents will have a choice for all council positions. Mayor Laura Ryan signalled her intent to seek re-election early on during the nomination process, but she will now face competition from Stephen Unwin in October's vote, with Mr. Unwin having filed his papers just in time to beat Friday's 2 p.m. deadline.

Mono may see a familiar face return to town hall after John Creelman, a former mayor, announced he was running for the deputy mayor's seat. He will face competition from Elaine Capes, who previously held a seat as councillor and ran unsuccessfully for the deputy mayor's role in 2014. Incumbent Ken McGhee announced his impending retirement last month following 18 years of service.

Five candidates will compete for three seats on council, with incumbents Sharon Martin, Fred Nix and Ralph Manktelow facing competition from Diane Walmsley and Bob McCrea.

The mayoral race in Amaranth will be an interesting one as current mayor Don MacIver is challenged by a former mayor in Bob Currie.

Coun. Chris Gerrits will be acclaimed as the only nominee for the deputy mayor's position, while, as in Mono, a total of five individuals vie for three council seats. Incumbents Heather Foster and Gail Little will hope the public sees fit to grant them another term on council. They will be challenged by Susan Graham and Mark Tijssen.

In Grand Valley, it will be business as usual with current Mayor Steve Soloman the only person to file for the community's top political position. He is set for a second successive term as mayor.

There will be change, however, at the deputy mayor level after incumbent Rick Taylor decided against running for another term, instead looking to step back into a position as councillor. It will be a three-horse race for deputy mayor with councillors John Ince and Phillip Rentsch keen on stepping up the municipal ladder. They will be joined on the ballot by local resident Ross Hutchings.

There will be four others competing with Mr. Taylor for a seat on council, with Elizabeth Taylor, Sam Pringle, Angie Walker and Jason Wolsztyniak all filing nomination papers.

In Mulmur, Dufferin's current warden Paul Mills is seeking a third term as mayor but will face competition from a familiar face in Janet Horner, who is hoping to make the leap from councillor to mayor.

Deputy Mayor Earl Hawkins hopes to continue in his role as Mulmur's right hand man, but will have to do battle with Keith Lowry, another familiar face after serving as councillor this term.

With the majority of its current council embroiled in a fight for the mayor and deputy mayor positions, that opens the door for some new blood at the councillor level. Shirley Boxem, Ken Cufaro, Patricia Clark and Jim deMelo are running to fill three positions.

This election will be something of a lame duck for the residents of Melancthon, with much of the next council already decided by way of acclamation. Mayor Darren White will once again serve as mayor after running unopposed.

There will be a new deputy mayor, with incumbent Janice Elliott not seeking re-election. Instead, current councillor Dave Besley will challenge William Barton for the position. The three council seats will be occupied by Wayne Hannon, David Thwaites and Margaret Mercer, the only candidates who filed.

Meanwhile, East Garafraxa Township is one of only a select few Ontario municipalities where an election will not be required for council and the only competition is for school boards. By the time the nomination deadline had passed, only five individuals had filed their papers, meaning the community's next council has already been decided.

Guy Gardhouse will continue to serve as mayor, John Stirk as deputy mayor and Lenora Banfield, Tom Nevills and Fran Pinkney will be councillors.