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# Lac La Ronge Indian Band

## **ELECTRONIC VOTING – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **1. What is electronic voting?**

Electronic voting, also referred to as online voting in these FAQs, refers to the electronic means of both casting a vote, as well as tabulating and counting ballots. Electronic voting may be done on computers or devices (like a cell phone or tablet) connected to the internet.

### **2. Have other First Nations relied on electronic voting?**

Many First Nations have amended their laws to provide for electronic voting and used electronic voting in ratification of laws and referendums on questions of importance to the community, like settlements (e.g., Tsuut'ina Nation, 2018; Lil'wat First Nation, 2021; Big Grassy, 2022). Though electronic voting is used at the provincial and municipal level in many ways in Canada (not federally), First Nations governments are at the forefront of experience in utilizing electronic voting in support of their governance and legislative processes. LLRIB has relied on electronic voting in ratifying its Land Code. Some other select examples include the use of electronic voting as part of ratifying:

- a Constitution (Nipissing First Nation, 2014);
- a Land Code (Wasauksing First Nation, 2014; Shawanaga First Nation, 2015; Wasauksing First Nation, 2016);
- a Matrimonial Real Property Law (Whitefish River First Nation, 2015); and
- an Electoral/Election Code (Tsuut'ina Nation, 2016; Atikameksheng Anishnawbek First Nation, 2020; Dokis First Nation, 2022).

Some recent examples of First Nations using electronic voting as an option in their elections and byelections for Chief and Council include Tla'amin Nation (2022), Kwakiutl Band Council (2022), Long Plain First Nation (2022), Little Shuswap Lake (2021).

### 3. Why is online voting being recommended for future LLRIB elections?

The Election Tribunal and Council have recommended adding electronic voting as an *additional* option for voting, alongside traditional in-person paper voting at polling places. Practically, this would allow for people to vote remotely from devices with internet connection in a period before the in-person voting at polling places opens.

Online voting is being adapted across different jurisdictions and by many First Nations because it speeds up the election process, improves accessibility to more members, minimizes human intervention (decreasing chance of manual/human error), and removes opportunities for malpractices (e.g., paper votes may be lost, stolen, tampered with or damaged). It has numerous benefits, including that it:

- commonly improves voter turnout,
- increases convenience, flexibility, and actual accessibility for members, and reduces barriers to accessible voting because of physical ability, location, bad weather, lack of transport etc., and
- requires less labor and resources.

### 4. Is online voting secure?

As with most online applications, the electronic voting process includes multiple layers of security and includes digital security measures personalized to protect you and your vote. They include:

- Each voter is assigned a **unique** Voter Authorization token (VA token) or unique Personal Identification Number (PIN). Each VA token/PIN ensures **only one submission** and can be re-issued and audited, as necessary. PINs are not linked to submitted votes at any time. The ballot database is fully encrypted (i.e., data is converted into a unique code to prevent unauthorized access) and remains anonymous.
- Generally, any change in email associated with a PIN needs to be verified before the change takes place, including signing into the email account.
- The specific **process for issuing VA tokens/PINs** depends on the third-party software and administration system that is chosen by the Election Tribunal. This can include any combination or all of: unique codes given in-person, sent to email addresses, cell numbers, or mailing addresses, signature verification, photos of ID and selfie (before and after e-vote is cast), IP address geolocation, and time-based one-time passwords.

## **5. What do I need to cast an online vote?**

You generally need: an **email account** accessed by a secure password, your **Treaty number**, and access to an internet-backed computer/tablet/mobile device.

## **6. How will the online voting process work?**

The Electoral Officers will create a time-specific window for voting electronically, which will not overlap on the in-person voting period during an Election. The process will generally be initiated via email: the email will provide information, and, after identity verification, a link to receive your VA token or PIN. You will be given instructions on how to access the voting website, where you can cast your vote using your unique VA token/PIN.

## **7. How will I know what my VA token / PIN is?**

Typically, you will receive your PIN through a link provided to your provided email.

## **8. What if I lose my VA token / PIN?**

The external election provider will be equipped to handle reissuing of a PIN in these rare circumstances.

## **9. Who do I contact if I have trouble logging into the electronic voting site?**

You will be provided with the chosen external election provider's contact details to help you during the online polling period.

## **10. I am a LLRIB member residing outside of the six communities/19 reserves: can I vote online?**

Yes, you can - from anywhere on earth!

## **11. How do I vote if I have no access to the internet?**

If you have limited or no access to the internet or a device, there are some options available:

- LLRIB plans to provide a computer with internet access for voting purposes at administration offices during the electronic voting period.
- Libraries typically have computers for visitors to use.
- You could also consider using a friend or relative's computer or smartphone; but remember, you have the right to cast your secret ballot, so if you ask a friend or relative to help you in the voting process, please keep your ballot secret.

## **12. Can someone help me if I want to vote online, but don't know how to do it?**

Yes. Like getting assistance at the polling station, you can ask an electoral official or a trusted friend or relative to help you set up your access to vote online. You can also ask for help from the provider of the online voting platform. If you choose to ask for help, you are consenting to someone else knowing some of your personal information.

## **13. I don't know how to use the internet well: what measures will be put in place to assist me?**

If you are not confident online and you do not feel comfortable asking for assistance, you can still cast your vote on a paper ballot at the in-person polling places.

## **14. Do I have a choice between online voting and paper ballots?**

The electronic voting system is being proposed to ensure maximum number of LLRIB members exercise their right to vote. Each eligible Band member will have the option to choose voting online or in person.

## **15. Can I vote online, then in person?**

No. Once someone votes online, they cannot vote in person, as voters only get one vote each. The election officials will receive reports from the external service provider before in-person voting commences, which list out the Band members who have voted online already. Based on the list, in-person voting will be open ONLY for those who have not yet voted.

## **16. Can I modify a vote already cast before the closing of the online voting session?**

No. As with paper ballots, once a vote is cast, it will be considered final and cannot be modified.

## **17. What do I do if my internet gets disconnected while I'm trying to vote?**

Some members reported technical glitches during previous electronic voting experiences (such as slow interface, interrupted sessions, or the links not opening). Some of these temporary issues may have been attributable to internet connectivity issues or a need to reboot the device before voting, but also may have been design-driven and may have caused frustration or confusion for voters using the electronic voting platform. To minimize this, LLRIB is on the lookout for an external election provider that:

- (1) is available for on-demand, accessible and tailored help when requested by voters; and
- (2) provides a clear confirmation that a vote has gone through after a person has voted.

**18. Where does my vote go after I hit “submit”?**

Typically, the way that online voting services are structured is that the voting system is housed on the external service provider’s secure server or e-ballot box. When you select ‘submit,’ the data remains encrypted on the server or e-ballot until the end of voting period. At that time, the service provider will decrypt the data and share the final results with LLRIB election officials.

**19. How is my vote authenticated?**

In the event of an audit or appeal, election officials and the external service provider can demonstrate, through digital footprints, authentication, and verification procedures that you cast your ballot electronically. All ballots cast electronically are accounted for, same as in a physical polling station.

**20. Who can I contact with general questions regarding online voting?**

Please contact Milt Burns at [milt.burns@hotmail.com](mailto:milt.burns@hotmail.com) or 306 222 1478 for general questions regarding electronic voting.