Katja Awender

From: Cayla Nelson
Sent: February 4, 2026 12:51 PM
To: Council Members
Cc: Senior Staff; Clerk's Department
Subject: Question Period Submissions - February 4, 2026
Attachments: John Spring - Question Period Submission 2026-01-21.pdf

Good afternoon,

Please see the below question period submissions for this evening's meeting:

[redacted] **(will be speaking in-person at the meeting)** **Roll over from Jan. 21 meeting**

[redacted] submission is attached as a PDF to this email.

[redacted] **(Requested the Clerk to read)** **Roll over from Jan. 21 meeting**

"Since being granted strong mayors' powers by Premier Ford, Township of Springwater mayor Jennifer Coughlin has used them extensively. With the support of councillors Thompson and Garwood, she gave away thousands of acres Township land to the city of Barrie. During that process they generated a lot of false information and created a lack of transparency. While a criminal investigation has not commenced, many of these actions are consistent with a "breach of trust" offence.

Mayor Coughlin has used strong mayors' powers too veto approved council motions, terminate the Township lawyer's who challenged the legality of her actions. She has recently used strong mayor's powers to create and pass a budget with a approximate 11.42 % property tax increase.

Mayor Coughlin has received legal notice alleging that she made slanderous statements about a reputable developer. The lawyer's later alleges that she has made statements at Simcoe County and Township of Springwater claiming that Geranium is Mafia, are experiencing financial difficulties and that organized crime has infiltrated the Township.

These very serious slanderous comments could generate major civil suits. Mayor Coughlin is not entitled to and, should be prevented from using strong mayor powers to pay for a lawyer and/or any civil suit judgement with tax dollars.

Question: Will the majority of council protect the taxpayers in the anticipated law suites by voting to stop the use of strong mayor's powers to pay for a lawyer and/or any civil suit judgement with tax dollars."

[redacted] **(In-person)**

Did not provide question period submission

[redacted] **(Clerk to read)**

In the 2022 municipal election, the Township of Springwater provided three voting methods, remote internet voting, telephone voting, and in-person electronic voting at Voter Help Centres, giving residents multiple ways to participate.

The Township operated five in-person Voter Help Centre sessions at three locations - 75.5 hours available to electors for in-person assistance: the Administration Centre, the Minesing Community Centre, and the Elmvale Arena. However, none of these locations were in Wards 2 or 5, meaning electors in those areas, along with the majority of Ward 4 had to travel considerable distances to access in-person voting or assistance.

As Council reviews voting options for the election, how will it ensure fair and equitable access to in-person support across all wards while maintaining the accessibility of online and telephone voting? Continuing to offer both methods represents a fair and balanced compromise, allowing residents to vote online if they wish, or in person with support.

[redacted] **(Clerk to read)**

Council, the Township's own costing shows that in-person electronic plus remote internet/telephone voting is the most cost-effective and accessible option at $4.61 per elector. Traditional paper ballot with tabulators costs more at $5.02 per elector, while vote-by-mail with tabulators is $4.75 per elector. Why would Council choose to pay more per elector for less convenient options that move Springwater backward, when remote internet and telephone voting deliver the best value and broadest access for voters?

[redacted] **(Clerk to read)**

With Springwater Township spanning over 523 square kilometres many seniors and not-so-senior residents with mobility or just simple transportation challenges rely on electronic and telephone voting to cast their ballots safely privately and independently from home school or work.

Given the typical low vote counts and even the small handful of residents who physically visited the 3 open house sessions regarding this topic……Will Council commit to preserving these convenient & accessible voting options rather than making it more cumbersome to participate in the democratic process?

[redacted] **(Clerk to Read)**

Accessibility and security are not opposing goals, any responsible, modern voting system must deliver both.

Will Council reject the false choice between them and request staff to implement electronic and telephone voting options that are proven secure while expanding voter access, rather than using "security" as an excuse to limit participation? Concerns about voter information letters (VILs) being stolen from mailboxes can be addressed through straightforward safeguards. For example, as

outlined in a report dated September 3, 2025 titled 2026 Municipal and School Board Election – Alternative Voting Methods, written by the Township Clerk, electors could enter their date of birth before using the unique code on their Voter Information Letter, or sending an additional one-time password via mail, email or text, would significantly enhance security and protect against misuse.

Given these practical and effective solutions, will Council commit to advancing secure, accessible voting rather than restricting voter choice under the guise of security?

[redacted] – If this Council is truly committed to increasing voter turnout and meaningful public participation, convenience and accessibility must be treated as essential. During Council's recent discussions on this matter, it was noted that nearly 90% of Springwater ballots were cast either electronically or by phone in the 2022 election. I have also reviewed the results of the 2026 voting method survey, in which 74% of respondents identified these options as their preferred voting method. Additionally, while there was low voter participation in the survey overall; only 11 residents in total attended the 3 open house events. While I understand that weather may have contributed to the low in-person turnout, there were approximately 200 surveys submitted. These results also show that more than 90% of participants chose to engage by electronic means.

Given these very clear indicators, will Council affirm, on the record, that retaining electronic and telephone voting is vital to ensuring all residents have a fair opportunity to shape how Springwater is governed?

We also received the following email communications;

[redacted] – I am totally in favour of electronic ballots. In my humble opinion it will raise the total vote which is ultimately what any democracy wants.

[redacted] – Many Springwater residents, particularly students and young adults like myself who are away for school or work but maintain a permanent residence here in Springwater, are simply unable to be in the township during the voting period. Will Council recognize this reality and ensure that these residents can still easily and effectively exercise their democratic right by maintaining electronic and telephone voting? It's 2026, let's not move backwards, but instead meet people where they are.

Please note the Clerk is willing to read the above two, however; we have reached our maximum question period submissions as per the Procedure By-law.

Kindly,

Cayla Nelson, Dipl. M.A, A.M.P
Deputy Clerk
Township of Springwater
2231 Nursery Road
Minesing, ON L9X 1A8
P. 705-728-4784 Ext. 2095

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