



Use of Corporate Resources During an Election Period

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Department: Clerk's Department
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Policy Statement

In accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act*, the *Elections Finances Act* and the *Canadian Elections Act*, municipalities are prohibited from making campaign contributions to municipal, provincial or federal candidates. As a campaign contribution may take the form of money, goods or services, this policy provides a fair and consistent approach on the use of municipal corporate resources by a candidate during an election period.

All provisions contained within this policy shall serve to ensure the protection of freedom of expression while maintaining that:

- Corporate resources shall not be used during an election period to promote or provide an unfair advantage to any candidate or Registered Third Party;
- Members of Council shall not be precluded from performing their duties as an elected official during the election period, nor inhibited from representing the interests of their constituents; and
- Information and communication related to an election shall continue to be open and accessible to the public.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to create rules in the City of Brockville for all candidates and Registered Third Parties during an election period and to establish parameters on the use of corporate resources for election related purposes.

Application/Scope

This policy applies to all candidates, Registered Third Parties, municipal staff and persons or groups supporting or opposing a question on a ballot during an election period.

Definitions

“Campaign Activity” means any action or event by or on behalf of a candidate or Registered Third Party meant to promote, support or oppose a candidate or a question on a ballot in the election period. Campaign related activities do not include the appearance of elected officials acting in their official capacities

“Campaign Contribution” means anything of value given to influence an election and may take the form of money, goods, or services

“Campaign Material” means any material, regardless of format, that promotes or opposes any candidate, or a response to a question on the ballot and includes, but is not limited to, printed literature, electronic communications, banners, posters, pictures, buttons, clothing, signs, magnets, and vehicle decals

“Candidate” means any individual who has filed for nomination for an elected office, including Mayor, Councillor, Member of Provincial Parliament, Member of Parliament, School Board Trustee, or anyone acting on their behalf. It also includes individuals who are deemed to be acclaimed

“City Organized/Hosted Event” means any meeting or event organized and hosted by the City of Brockville

“Corporate Brand” means the unique corporate identity, standards, and images associated with the Corporation of the City of Brockville and is shaped by various elements, including the City’s name, logo, and visual design (including colours)

“Corporate Resources” means facilities, infrastructure, assets, equipment, supplies, services, staff or any resource that belongs to or is funded by the City

“Crest” means the City’s crest which is the ceremonial coat of arms to be used exclusively for official city business

“Election Period” means the specific time during which an election takes place, and includes the timeframe leading up to voting day when candidates or parties actively engage in campaigning to garner support from voters. For a municipal election, in accordance with Section 88.24 of the *Municipal Elections Act*, the election period begins on the day in which nomination papers are filed and ends on December 31 in the case of a regular election. For a by-election, the period commences on the day the election is called and ends on voting day. In the case of a provincial or federal election or by-election, the election period begins on the date the writ is issued until voting day

“Nomination Day” as defined by the *Municipal Elections Act* as being the third Friday in August in the year of a regular election

“Registered Third Party” means an individual, corporation or trade union that promotes, supports or opposes a Candidate or question on the ballot in accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act*

Use of Corporate Resources During an Election Period

1. General

- a) Corporate resources shall not be used by a candidate for campaign activities during an election period.

2. Technology

- a) Candidates shall not use technology provided by the City, including computers, laptops, tablets, printers, scanners, cell phones, email, internet, electronic meeting platforms, web streaming licenses, voice mail system or file storage for any campaign activity.
- b) Web sites or domain names that are funded by the City of Brockville may not be used for campaign activities. Candidates and Registered Third Parties may provide a link to the City’s official election website or webpages in their campaign materials in order for electors to access additional information about the election and voting process. The City’s official election website or webpages will provide candidate contact information, that may include a link to a candidate’s website and social media platforms.

3. Communications

- a) Members of Council may not use photographs funded by the City in campaign materials.
- b) Candidates shall not print or distribute any campaign materials using municipal funds or other corporate resources.
- c) The City Clerk may develop and distribute information through various means for the purpose of advising and educating electors. Candidates are permitted to promote and distribute such election information, provided that such information is not modified in any way.
- d) The City's corporate brand including logo and crest, or any other images or illustrations owned or under the jurisdiction of the City shall not be used in any campaign material.
- e) Distribution lists or contact lists developed using corporate resources shall not be used for campaign activities.
- f) Any member of Council taking part in a regular municipal media opportunity, as arranged by the Communications Coordinator or other staff, shall not engage in actions that could be seen as campaign activities.
- g) Corporate resources that have been published to the City's website or social media such as strategic plans, staff reports, minutes, agendas, or press releases may be linked by candidates and registered third parties' websites but may not be housed there and may not be modified or reproduced for use in any campaign material.

4. Social Media

- a) If a member of Council uses any social media account for campaign activities, such account must not be created or supported by City resources. Social media accounts for campaign activities must utilize personal cell phones, tablets and/or computers.
- b) Members of Council who choose to create or use social media accounts for campaigning must include, for the duration of the election period, a clear statement for each website or social media

account's home page (or profile) indicating that the account is being used for election campaign purposes and is not related to their duties as a Member of Council.

5. City Organized/Hosted Events

- a) Candidates may not participate in campaign activities and/or distribute campaign materials during any City organized/hosted meeting or event, whether on city property or not.
- b) Candidates and Registered Third Parties shall not be invited to deliver formal remarks at a City organized/hosted event in their capacity as a candidate or Registered Third Party.

6. Municipally Owned Facilities and Property

- a) "All Candidates" meetings may be held at City-owned facilities, subject to approval by the Clerk and in accordance with standard booking procedures, applicable fees, and facility availability.
- b) No other campaign activities or the distribution of campaign materials shall be permitted within any City-owned facility, including City Hall.
- c) Campaign signage on municipal property is permitted only in accordance with the City's Sign By-law. For greater certainty, campaign materials are prohibited within any voting place in accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*.

7. City Staff

- a) Employees engaged in political activities must take care to separate those personal activities from their official positions.
- b) Employees shall not canvass or actively work in support of a candidate during normal working hours
- c) Employees shall not canvass or actively work in support of a municipal Candidate or political party while wearing a uniform, badge, logo or any other item identifying them as an employee of the City, or using a vehicle owned or leased by the City.

8. Access to Information

- a) Information provided to one candidate or Registered Third Party that is of a general nature and may provide valuable guidance to all others will be provided to all candidates and Registered Third Parties through email and/or the City's web site to ensure equal access to information.
- b) No Member of Council shall receive preferential access to municipal information, staff support, or resources that are not equally available to all Members.

Limitations

Nothing in this policy shall preclude a member of Council from performing their duties as Mayor or Councillor, nor inhibit them from representing the interests of the constituents who elected them to office.

Enforcement

Any complaints arising regarding the alleged use of corporate resources in contravention of this policy must be made in writing and include the complainant's full name and address. The City Clerk is authorized and directed to take necessary action(s) to give effect to this Policy. This Policy will be reviewed by the Clerk in advance of each regular Municipal Election and will be updated in accordance with legislative requirements.