



Township of Severn

POLICY: Use of Municipal Resources – Municipal Elections

Created By:	Clerk	Approval Date:	05/05/2021
Policy No.:	C-33	Last Revised	

PURPOSE

- 1.1 Section 88.18 of the Municipal Elections Act requires municipalities and local boards to establish rules and procedures with respect to the use of municipal or board resources, as the case may be, during the election campaign period.
- 1.2 Section 88.8(4) of the Act specifies that a municipality shall not make a contribution to a Candidate and Section 88.12(4) specifies that a municipality shall not make a contribution to a Registered Third Party.
- 1.3 The purpose of this policy is to provide a consistent approach and direction regarding the use of Municipal Resources during an election Campaign Period.

This policy is intended to:

1. Ensure compliance with the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* with regards to the prohibition of a municipality making a contribution to a Candidate or a Registered Third Party in the form of money, goods or services;
2. Ensure Candidates and Registered Third Parties are treated fairly and consistently within the municipality;
3. Ensure the integrity of the election process is maintained at all times;
4. Establish the appropriate use of Municipal Resources during an election Campaign Period in order to:
 - protect the interests of Members of Council, Candidates, Registered Third Parties, Town Staff and the Corporation; and
 - ensure accountable and transparent practices.

SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy shall apply to candidates (including acclaimed candidates), third party advertisers and staff. It also includes the Township's local boards and committees as applicable.

POLICY

3.1. General Provisions

- 3.1.1. Municipal Resources shall not be used for any Campaign Purposes.
- 3.1.2. Township funds shall not be used to acquire any resources for Campaign Purposes.
- 3.1.3. Benefitting from the use of any corporate pricing established under the Township Procurement Policy for Campaign Purposes is not permitted.
- 3.1.4. The Township's logos, crest, slogan or branding shall not be used, printed or distributed on any Campaign Materials, or included on any campaign website, except in the case of a link to the Township's website to obtain information about the municipal election.
- 3.1.5. Photographs produced for or owned by the Township shall not be used for Campaign Purposes, including Council photos or headshots produced for Township business. Photographs taken with Township equipment or sent through Township accounts shall not be utilized.
- 3.1.6. The services of any member of Township Staff shall not be used for any election campaign purposes during the hours in which that individual receives any compensation from the Township.
- 3.1.7. Distribution lists or contact lists developed or provided utilizing Municipal Resources shall not be used for Campaign Purposes.
- 3.1.8. Members of Council attending events or meetings as representatives of Township Council are not permitted to campaign while conducting Township business.
- 3.1.9. In any material created, printed or distributed by the Township, Members of Council, Candidates, Third Party Advertisers or Township Staff are not permitted to:
 - indicate that an individual is a Candidate registered in any election;
 - identify that they themselves or any other individual will be running for office; or
 - profile or make reference to Candidates in any election.

3.2. Technology

- 3.2.1. Municipal Resources such as computers, cell/smart phones, telephones, tablets, printers, scanners, copiers, e-mail, voicemail, file storage, or any other equipment or technology owned by the Township shall not be used for Campaign Purposes.
- 3.2.2. Websites and domain names that are operated or funded by the Township shall not include any Campaign Materials or links to any sites which include Campaign Material. The Candidate's List posted on the Township's election webpage may include one link per Candidate to a website which features Campaign Material.
- 3.2.3. Social media accounts such as Facebook and Twitter used for Campaign Purposes shall not be used for Township purposes, be created or supported by Township resources and must not use any Township logos or trademarks. Existing accounts used by Members of Council

for their work as elected officials, shall not be designated as campaign sites. To avoid confusion, Members of Council who choose to use social media accounts for Campaign Purposes must include for the duration of the campaign, a clear statement on each campaign account's homepage indicating that the account is being used for Campaign Purposes.

3.3. Use of Municipal Facilities and Property

- 3.3.1. Candidates and Third Party Advertisers are permitted to use any Township facility that provides for public rentals for Campaign Purposes, providing that all proper processes are followed and applicable fees are paid. Campaign Material is permitted to be displayed in the rented portion of the facility for the duration of the facility rental period. All Campaign Material must be removed once the rental period is over.
- 3.3.2. Candidates and Third Party Advertisers shall not otherwise campaign and/or distribute/display campaign literature or materials on Township owned or leased property.
- 3.3.3. Candidates and Third Party Advertisers shall not campaign and/or distribute/display Campaign Materials during any function/event hosted by the Township, whether on municipal property or not.

3.4. Township Staff

- 3.4.1. Township Staff shall not participate in campaign activities during their normal working hours or anytime they are receiving remuneration from the Township. This includes providing administrative support to Candidates such as photocopying or providing technical assistance.
- 3.4.2. Notices, posters or similar material promoting, supporting or opposing a particular Candidate are not to be produced, displayed or distributed by staff on Township work sites or property.
- 3.4.3. Township Staff may engage in election campaign activities on their own personal time, as long as those activities are separate from their official positions and duties. Township Staff must ensure that their political activities do not create a perceived or actual conflict of interest in their day-to-day work.
- 3.4.4. While engaging in election campaign activities, Township Staff shall not wear any clothing, such as a uniform or badge, which identifies them as a Township of Severn employee.
- 3.4.5. While engaging in election campaign activities, Township staff shall not use any vehicles, equipment, technology, supplies or other resources that are owned, leased or issued by the Township of Severn.

3.5 Limitations

Nothing in this policy shall preclude a Member of Council from performing their duties as an elected official for the Township, nor inhibit them from representing the interests of the constituents who elected them.

3.6 Responsibility

The Clerk or designate is responsible for communicating this policy to Members of Council, Candidates, Third Party Advertisers and Township Staff.

Members of Council, Candidates, Third Party Advertisers and Township Staff are accountable to comply with this policy.

3. **Administration**

The Clerk is delegated the authority to make administrative changes to this policy that may be required from time to time due to legislative changes or if, in the opinion of the Clerk, the amendments do not change the overall intent of the policy.

DEFINITIONS

1. **“Act”** means the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, S.O. 1996, c. 32, as amended.
2. **“Campaign Period”** means the official campaign period of a municipal election, being from May 1st to December 31st in a regular election year or in the case of a by-election, as determined by the Act.
3. **“Campaign Purposes or Campaign Materials”** means any activity in an election that seeks to promote or oppose the candidacy of an individual seeking office, or a “yes” or “no” answer to a question on the ballot, and includes any materials produced for that purpose.
4. **“Candidate”** means a person who has filed a Nomination Form for an office pursuant to Section 33 of the Act or anyone acting on their behalf.
5. **“Clerk”** means the individual appointed as the Township Clerk and includes his or her designate.
6. **“Members of Council”** means the Council of the Township of Severn.
7. **“Municipal Resources”** means real property, goods and services owned, controlled, leased, acquired or operated by the Town including but not limited to: facilities, parks, vehicles, equipment, monetary funds, technology, IT system and resources, social media, logos and supplies.
8. **“Registered Third Party” or “Third Party Advertiser”** means an individual, corporation or trade union that has filed a Notice of Registration with the Clerk in order to promote, support or oppose a Candidate or a “yes” or “no” vote related to a question on the ballot in accordance with the Act.
9. **“Staff”** means all full-time, part-time and contract staff employed by the Township.
10. **“Township”** means The Corporation of the Township of Severn.