



The Corporation of the Township of North Huron

Use of Corporate Resources During an
Election Policy

1. Policy Statement

The Township of North Huron acknowledges that it is responsible for providing good government for the community in an accountable, transparent and private manner.

Accountability, transparency and privacy are standards of good government that enhance public trust. They are achieved by adopting measures that ensure the Township of North Huron's processes and services are open and accessible to the public.

2. Purpose and Objective

The objective of this policy is to establish guidelines on the appropriate use of corporate resources during election periods, to protect the interests of Council Members, the Township and the public.

Section 88.18 of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* states that before May 1 in the year of a regular election, municipalities and local boards shall establish rules and procedures with respect to the use of municipal or board resources, as the case may be, during the election campaign period. Therefore, the purpose of this policy is to clarify that Candidates and sitting members of Council are required to follow the provisions of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*, the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Privacy Act*, the *Criminal Code*, the Council Code of Conduct and all applicable corporate policies regarding the use of corporate resources by Candidates and sitting members of Council and that:

- No Candidate shall use the facilities, equipment, supplies, services, Staff or other resources of the Township (including Council newsletters and Council budgets) for any election campaign purpose or campaign related activities;
- No Candidate shall undertake any election campaign or campaign related activities on Township property during regular working hours or during meetings;
- No sitting member of Council shall use any equipment provided by the Township for any election campaign purpose or campaign related activities; and
- No Candidate or sitting member of Council shall use the services of Staff during hours in which those Staff received any compensation from the Township, for any election campaign purpose or campaign related activities.

This Policy is applicable to all Council Members whether or not the Member is seeking re-election.

3. Review

This policy shall be reviewed every four years and in consistency with each Municipal Election. This policy will apply to each Municipal Election moving forward and may need to be changed from time to time depending on legislation changes.

4. Policy Guidelines

The reference to a Candidate applies to all current sitting members of Council, School Board Trustees, acclaimed Councillors, outgoing Councillors, any individual running in a Municipal Election and any registered Third-Party Advertiser.

Nothing in this Policy shall preclude Council Members from performing their job as elected officials of the Township, nor inhibit them from representing the interests of the constituents who elected them.

In accordance with the provisions of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, the following are guidelines established by the Township:

- a) Corporate resources and assets, including equipment, facilities, supplies, staff and funding, shall not be used by candidates for any election-related purpose or campaign related activities;
- b) Staff shall not canvass or actively work in support of a candidate or party during normal working hours unless they are on a leave of absence without pay, lieu time or vacation leave;
- c) Candidates shall not use the services of staff during hours in which those staff received any compensation from the Township, for any election related purpose or campaign-related activities;
- d) Candidates shall not use Town Hall, municipal facilities, or municipally-provided facilities for any election campaign purpose or campaign related activities including but not limited to the display of any campaign or election related materials or signs in the window or on the premises. All Candidates shall adhere to any current or future by-laws relating to election signage;
 - The *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* states in Section 88.1 that no person who is in control of an apartment building, condominium building, non-profit housing cooperative or gated community may prevent a candidate from campaigning between 9am and 9pm at the doors to the apartments, units or houses, as the case may be;
 - Section 88.2 of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* states that no landlord or person acting on a landlord's behalf may prohibit a tenant from displaying signs in relation to an election on the premises to which the lease relates;

- Municipally-owned buildings which are used as rental properties would fall under this exception to section d) of this Use of Corporate Resources During an Election Policy;
- e) Candidates shall not:
- Print or distribute material paid by municipal funds that illustrates that an individual is registered in any election or where they will be running for office;
 - Profile (name or photograph or image) or make reference to, in material paid by municipal funds, any individual who is registered as a candidate in any election;
 - Print or distribute material using municipal funds that make reference to, or contains the names or photographs or images or identifies registered candidates for municipal elections;
- f) Websites, domain names, and any/all social media platforms that are funded by the Township shall not include any election-related campaign material:
- Effective Nomination Day, individual Councillor biographical information and links to personal websites and/or social media sites shall be removed from the Township's website or any communication channel;
 - The online Candidate Election List is the only area of the Township's website where a single link to an election campaign website, or social media site, will be posted during an election period;
- g) Candidates are responsible for ensuring that the content of any communication material funded or resourced by the Township does not contain or allude to any election-related material including the name, photograph or identity of a registered candidate;
- h) Council Members shall not use corporate information technology assets, infrastructure or data (ie. computers, wireless devices, corporate email, webpages, social media pages or telephones) to communicate election-related messages;
- It is suggested that Council Members include an auto-reply email message and voicemail message such as "As a sitting Council Member, I must ensure that my actions as a candidate are kept separate from any actions related to the upcoming municipal election. As such, I will not be reading or responding to any campaign-related communications from you to this email address. Election campaign inquiries should be directed to my personal/campaign email and voicemail.";

- i) No photographic or video material created or funded by the Township shall be used in campaign-related materials; and
- j) Candidates are prohibited from using the Township's crest, logo, Coat of Arms, brand or slogan for any election related purpose an in campaign-related material (either printed, social media or on a campaign website/social media site).