



**Corporate Services
Department**

Sub Department: Administration

Policy Name: Use of Corporate Resources for Election Purposes

Developed by: Mary Ellen Truelove, Clerk

Date: March 15, 2026

Reviewed by: Committee of the Whole

Date: March 23, 2026

Approved by: Council

Date: April 7, 2026

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Effective: April 7, 2026

1) PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to clarify that all municipal election Candidates, Members of Council, Registered Third Parties, and Staff are required to follow the provisions of the Act about the use of Corporate Resources for election purposes.

This policy also ensures that the Township's operations, events, and facilities are used for non-partisan purposes and are not used for election campaign related purposes/activities.

2) POLICY STATEMENT

The Corporation of the Township of Rideau Lakes, its local Boards and Committees are committed to ensuring accountable and transparent election practices relating to the use of Corporate Resources. The *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, establishes the election campaign finance rules for Candidates running for municipal election. Public funds are not to be used for any election-related purposes, including the promotion of, or opposition to, the candidacy of a person for elected office. The *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, prohibits a municipality from making contributions in any form, which includes its assets, resources, and employees.

3) SCOPE

This policy applies to Members of Council, the Township, Staff, Candidates (including Acclaimed Candidates), and Registered Third Parties (all as defined herein).

Under the **Municipal Elections Act (MEA)** in Ontario, a **registered third party** is an individual, corporation, or group that conducts election advertising during a municipal election but is not a candidate or a political party.

4) PRINCIPLES

In accordance with the *Act*:

- a) Corporate Resources and funding may not be used for any election-related purposes;
- b) Staff may not canvass or actively work in support of a Candidate or Registered Third Party during working hours;
- c) Corporate Resources may not be used for any election-related purposes, which includes Campaigning or the displaying of any Campaign-Related Materials on Township premises unless all Candidates are afforded the same opportunity.

5) PROCEDURE

The following, if supplied by the Township, shall be discontinued for all Members throughout the period from May 1st of the election year until Voting Day, inclusive, or, in the case of a municipal by-election, for the period of 60 days prior to and inclusive of Voting Day:

- a) All forms of advertising, including advertising in Township publications;
- b) All printing, photocopying and distribution, including printing and general distribution and display of newsletters;
- c) The ordering of any stationery or office supplies or furnishings;
- d) Links to Member-related web sites or social media links;
- e) The porting of information relating to the activities of Council or any Member on the Township website, excluding the minutes of Council and Committee meetings (only the photos and contact phone and/or email posted for each Member at the commencement of each term shall remain on the corporate website).

To avoid any confusion with any website or social media accounts used for Council work, Members who choose to create or use their own websites or social media accounts shall, throughout the period from May 1st of the election year until Voting Day, inclusive, or, in the case of a municipal by-election, for the period of 60 days prior to and including of Voting Day:

- a) Include a clear statement, easily found and readable, on each website or social media account's home page, indicating the account is being used either solely for Council work, for both Council work and election campaign purposes, or solely for election campaign purposes;
- b) Include a statement described in clause a) for as long as the website or account is accessible to the public.

Members, Candidates, and members of the public shall not:

- Create, print or distribute any material paid for by Township funds that illustrate that a Member or Council or any other individual is registered in any municipal election or where they will be running for office;
- Profile (name or photograph), or refer to, in any material paid for by Township funds, any individual who is a Candidate in any municipal election;
- Create, print or distribute any Campaign-Related Materials using Township funds, including any materials that refer to, or contain the names, photographs, or identifies registered Candidates for municipal elections;
- Use the Township website, logo, domain names and/or other social media sites that are funded, owned or operated by the Township for campaigning/advertising or as a substitute to distributing newsletters or flyers from Nomination Day up to and including Voting Day;
- Use the Township's voicemail system to record municipal election-related messages;
- Use the Township's computer network (including the email system) for municipal election-related correspondence;
- Use Township-issued devices, such as cell phones, computers or ipads, for municipal election-related purposes unless it is impractical to do so, in which case the Member shall report election-related usage to the Clerk and reimburse the Township for such use.
- Use any photographs produced for and owned by the Township or any photos taken utilizing Township equipment for any election-related purposes;
- Use Corporate Resources or Staff in any campaign photos or images unless all Candidates are afforded the same opportunity (for clarity: photos/images of outdoor publicly accessible spaces and facilities are permitted; photos/images of interior spaces and spaces not accessible to the public are not permitted);
- Use any Township facility/property/venue for any election related purpose unless the applicable rental fee, as established by the Township, is paid and the opportunity to rent such facility/property/venue is available to all Candidates and Registered Third Parties (Note: no facility/property/venue shall be rented or used for any municipal election-related purpose by Members, Candidates, Registered Third Parties, or the public during any day that voting is taking place at the facility/property/venue, including set-up, hosting, or take-down activities); or
- Benefit from the use of any Township pricing established under the Township's purchasing policy.

Staff Involvement:

Due to the potential for perceived conflict of interest, Staff should consider the impact of being involved in Campaigning, including displaying election signs on their property, participating in phone and/or e-mail solicitations, signing nomination papers, distributing brochures or Campaign-Related Materials, and/or wearing Candidate buttons.

Staff, shall:

- a) Behave in a manner that is impartial, fair and unbiased toward all Candidates and Registered Third Parties;
- b) Consult with their direct Supervisor prior to agreeing to perform any task requested by a Member, Candidate, or Registered Third Party that exceeds their normal duties or could be construed as contributing to an election campaign as Staff or otherwise on behalf of the Town;
- c) Not rent any Township facility/property/venue for any municipal election-related purpose to Members, Candidates, Registered Third Parties or the public during any day that voting is taking place anywhere on the property at which the facility/venue is located, including set-up, hosting, or take-down activities;
- d) Ensure separation between their personal activities and their official positions;
- e) Not participate in Campaigning or canvas or actively work in support of a Candidate or Registered Third Party during working hours (Note: this does not apply to personal time, such as during an approved leave of absence without pay, lieu time, float day, or vacation leave);
- f) Request and obtain a leave of absence without pay should they wish to run for Federal, Provincial, or Municipal office and abide by the applicable legislation governing such elections; and
- g) Be permitted to be involved in Provincial and/or Federal campaigns provided that such involvement does not affect the objectivity with which they must discharge their duties as a representative of the Township.

Nothing in this policy shall preclude a Member from performing their duties as a Councillor, nor inhibit them from representing their constituents.

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 intent of the policy during an election period.