



2020 Municipal By-Election

Guidelines for Corporate Resources during an Election Period

This guide is prepared for information purposes only. Reference should always be made to the relevant legislation and regulation.

[Municipal Elections Act, 1996](#)

General Guidelines Statement

The *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, (MEA) outlines the administrative structure and requirements of the municipal election process in Ontario. In this process, Municipal Clerks are responsible for conducting the Election.

These guidelines are applicable to all candidates, including existing members of City Council in order to establish parameters on the appropriate use of corporate resources during an election period to protect the interests of both Members of Council and the Corporation.

The Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended, prohibits a municipality from making a contribution to a candidate or a registered third party advertiser. The Act also prohibits a candidate, or someone acting on the candidate's behalf, from accepting a contribution from a person who is not entitled to make a contribution.

As a contribution may take the form of money, goods or services, any use by a Member of Council of the Corporation's resources for his or her election campaign would be viewed as a contribution by the City to the Member, which is a violation of the Act.

Purpose

The purpose of these guidelines is to clarify that all election candidates, including members of City Council are required to follow the provisions of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*.

Scope

The following guidelines apply to all Members of Council and also apply to an acclaimed Member or a Member not seeking re-election.

Nothing in these guidelines shall preclude a Member of Council from performing their job as a Councillor, nor inhibit them from representing the interests of the constituents who elected them.

Guidelines

Use of Supplies and Services

No candidate shall use the equipment, supplies, services, staff or other resources of the City, including but not limited to Councillor newsletters, for any election campaign or campaign-related activity.

Candidates are permitted to rent rooms in a city owned facility for a fee, and all-candidates meetings can be held at a city facility. City facilities may not be booked for campaign activities on a date where there is voting taking place at that facility. Corporate resources, assets and funding may not be used for any election related purposes.

Campaigning on City-Owned Property

No candidate shall undertake campaign-related activities on any City-owned property that is used for election or polling purposes.

Respect for Municipal Staff

No candidate shall use the services of persons during hours in which those persons receive any compensation from the City of Cambridge.

Municipal staff may not be called upon to canvass or actively work in support of a municipal candidate or party during normal working hours, unless they are on a leave of absence without pay, lieu time, float day or vacation leave.

Content of Communications

Members of Council may not deliver any unsolicited material outside of their existing ward where the printing and/or distribution costs are paid by the municipality. Care should be taken to ensure that the mailing of newsletters, etc., be restricted to the member's ward only.

In accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, and the Council Code of Conduct, Members of Council may not:

- a) Print or distribute any material paid by municipal funds that illustrates that the Member of Council or any other individual is registered in any election or where they will be running for office;
- b) Profile (name or photograph), or make reference to, in any material paid by municipal funds, any individual who is registered as a candidate in any election; and
- c) Print or distribute any material using municipal funds that makes reference to, or contains the names or photographs, or identifies registered candidates for municipal elections; and that the minutes of municipal Council and Committee meetings be exempt from this policy.

Members of Council are responsible for ensuring that the content of any communication material, printed, hosted or distributed by the City of Cambridge at the request of the Member of Council is not for campaigning.

Candidates may not print or distribute any election related material using municipal funds.

In any material printed or distributed by the City of Cambridge, candidates are not permitted to:

- a) Image or illustrate that an individual (either a Member of Council or any other individual) is a candidate registered in any election;
- b) Identify where they or any other individual will be running for office; or
- c) Profile or make reference to candidates in any election.

The municipality's voice mail system may not be used to record election related messages, unless authorized by the City Clerk for the purposes of informing residents of the election process and the registered candidates running for office. The City's computer network (including the City's email system), may not be used to distribute election related correspondence.

Online Material

Web sites, domain names and social media accounts that are funded by the City of Cambridge may not include any election related campaign material. Members may not re-designate City-funded social media accounts, domain names and web sites for campaign purposes.

The City website election page will advise the public of registered candidates and provide one of: a candidate's official website or a social media link of the candidate's choosing, for the purposes of providing election information to eligible voters only, but shall in no way endorse any candidate.

Corporate Identity

The City's logo, crest, coat of arms or slogans may not be printed or distributed on any election materials or included on any election campaign related website, except in the case of a link to the City's web site to obtain information about the municipal election.

Photographs produced for and owned by the City of Cambridge may not be used for any election purposes.

Responsibilities

The City Clerk and their authorized designate or designates are responsible for the administration of these guidelines.