



SUBJECT: **Use of Corporate Resources For Municipal Election Purposes Policy**

DEPARTMENT: Corporate Services

EFFECTIVE: April 23, 2018 REVISED: March 28, 2022

APPROVED BY: Township Council (Resolution Number C-176-18)
Amended by Resolution C-106-22

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 Provide guidance to Township staff, Members of Council, registered third parties, candidates and members of the public regarding the use of Corporate resources, Township facilities, resources for campaigning and campaign-related activities with respect to municipal, provincial and federal elections.
- 1.2 Ensure a balance between political expression and the right to unobstructed use, operation and enjoyment of Township facilities for recreational or non-political purposes.
- 1.3 Ensure fair and equal campaigning for all candidates and registered third parties.

2.0 Legislative Authority

- 2.1 The *Municipal Elections Act* as amended provides the following mandatory authority to municipalities:

“Use of municipal, board resources

88.18 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.”

3.0 Definitions

For the purposes of this Policy:

“Campaigning” means any activity by, or on behalf of a Candidate, political party, constituency association, Registered Third Party, or question on a ballot meant to

elicit support during the Election Period. This does not include the appearance of elected officials, other candidates or their supporters, or registrants at an event in their personal capacity without the display of any signage or graphics which identify the individual as a candidate or registrant without the solicitation of votes.

“Election Period” means the official Campaign period of an election for:

- A municipal or school board election; the Election Period commences on the first day prescribed for the filing of nominations in accordance with the Municipal Elections Act and ends on voting day.
- A provincial or federal election; the Election Period commences the day the writ for the election is issued and ends on voting day.
- A nomination for a political party, the Election Period is the nomination contesting period as determined by the Party.
- A question on the ballot; the period commences the day Council passes a by-law to put a question to the electorate and ends on voting day.
- A municipal or school board by-election; the period commences on the first day nominations may be filed and ends on voting day.

Candidate means any individual running for an elected office, including Mayor, Councillor, School Board Trustee, Member of Provincial Parliament and/or Member of Parliament or anyone acting on their behalf.

“Township” means the Township of North Dumfries.

“Township Administration Office” means the North Dumfries Community Complex, located at 2958 Greenfield Road, Ayr.

“Township facility” means any building or facility owned or operated by the Township of North Dumfries.

“Corporate Resources” means items, staff, services, or resources which are the property of the Township of North Dumfries, including, but not limited to: materials, equipment, vehicles, facilities, land, technology (computers, smartphones, tablets, etc.), intellectual property, images, logos, and supplies. Working hours, the time where the Township pays its employees to complete certain duties or tasks, is also considered to be a Corporate Resource.

“Election sign” means a sign produced by a candidate or registered third party advertising any person or political party participating in an election for public office or a sign advertising a position on a plebiscite or municipal question.

Registered Third Party or Third-Party Advertiser means an individual, corporation or trade union that promotes, supports or opposes a candidate or a

“yes” or “no” vote related to a question on the ballot in accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act*.

4.0 Procedures

4.1 Scope

4.1.1 This policy applies to campaigning in relation to school board, municipal (both upper and lower tier offices), provincial and federal elections.

4.1.2 This policy is applicable to all candidates, registered third parties, and all members of Township Council, including acclaimed members of Council and members of Council who have not yet filed nomination papers. This policy is also applicable to all staff of the Township of North Dumfries.

4.1.3 This Policy also applies to an acclaimed Member or a Member not seeking re-election.

4.1.4 The Municipal Clerk is authorized, and directed to take the necessary action, to give effect to this Policy.

4.1.5 Nothing in these guidelines shall preclude Members of Council from performing their jobs as current Members of Council, nor inhibit them from representing the interests of the constituents who elected them.

4.1.6 Individuals who have questions about this Policy are encouraged to contact the Municipal Clerk to obtain further clarification.

4.2 Technology & Communications

4.2.1 Candidates, registered third parties and members of Council shall not use Corporate Resources, for any election-related purposes, including Township-issued devices and accounts (e.g. computers, cell/smart phones, cameras, tablets, printers, scanners, Township issued email address).

4.2.2 The Township website and/or domain names that are funded by the Township of North Dumfries may not include any election-related campaign material. The Township’s website election page will advise the public of registered candidates and third parties and provide contact information such as a phone number, email addresses, website address to contact candidates, for the purposes of providing election related information, but shall in no way endorse any candidate or registered third party.

Notwithstanding, a Candidate or Third Party Advertiser may provide a link to the Township's official election website in their campaign materials for electors to access additional information about the election and the voting process.

- 4.2.3** As of May 1st in an election year, any links to Twitter, Facebook, and other social media accounts, as well as links to personal external website(s) will be removed from all Township webpages for Members of Council. This does not apply to the candidates list on the Township website.
- 4.2.4** The Corporation's computer network and voicemail systems shall not be used to record or disseminate campaign-related messages, nor shall the computer network, including the email system, be used to distribute campaign-related correspondence.
- 4.2.1** Members of Council are responsible for ensuring the content of any communication material, printed, hosted or distributed by the Township does not contain election-related messaging/content.
- 4.2.2** Candidates, registered third parties and sitting Members of Council shall not use Corporate Resources to endorse any candidate or registered third party.
- 4.2.3** Candidates and registered third parties shall not print or distribute any election-related material using Township funds, or Township print equipment and/or related supplies.
- 4.2.4** The Township of North Dumfries logo, crest, coat of arms, slogan, Chain of Office, Township Administration Office, and Council Chambers of the municipality to which the office relates shall not be printed or distributed on any election materials or included on any election campaign-related website.
- Notwithstanding the foregoing, Candidates or Registered Third Parties may capture their own photos of Municipal property for use in Campaign Material, provided the photo is taken from a publicly accessible area, and does not contain a Municipal sign, logo, crest, coat of arms or slogan in the background
- 4.2.5** Photographs produced for, owned, or funded by the Township of North Dumfries shall not be used for any election purposes.
- 4.2.6** Photos taken utilizing municipal cameras or sent through municipal e-mail accounts shall not be used for election purposes.
- 4.2.7** Distribution lists or contact lists developed utilizing Corporate resources or through contact in a member of Council's role shall not be utilized for election purposes.

4.2.8 Candidates or Registered Third Parties may not print, distribute, or make reference to any of the Township’s email addresses, telephone numbers, or facility addresses on any Campaign Materials.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, Candidates or Registered Third Parties may provide the election telephone number, election email address, or a link to the Township’s official election in Campaign Materials for electors to access additional information about the election and the voting process

4.2.9 Messages posted to the Municipal social media accounts (including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, etc) may be shared in the case of Facebook or re-tweeted on Twitter by a candidate to their personal or campaign social media accounts using social media official channels and not partially reproduced

4.3 Township Facility

4.3.1 Candidates, registered third parties and Members of Council shall not use any Township facilities for any election–related purposes, except as noted below under “4.3.6 Exceptions for the use of Township facilities”. Neither campaign related signs, nor any other election-related material will be displayed in any Township facilities.

4.3.2 Candidates and registered third parties may not campaign and/or distribute campaign literature during any function/event being hosted or sponsored, in whole or in part by the municipality, whether on municipal property or not.

4.3.3 Campaigning and the distribution or display of campaign material is not permitted in any municipal or local board facility, or on municipal land.

4.3.4 Notwithstanding the ability to campaign outside of Township facilities, under no circumstances is such campaigning to take place outside of, or within, the Township Administration Office. This on the basis that the Township Administration Office is the seat of government and its use for campaign purposes could directly or indirectly suggest endorsement of a particular candidate or political party.

4.3.5 Exceptions for the Use of Township Facilities:

- i) ‘All candidate debates’ are permitted at any rentable Township facility, such debates being those to which every registered candidate for the respective race has been invited, though not all may attend. The sponsor of the debate would be required to sign a declaration indicating they have sent invitations to all registered candidates, and in addition, would be responsible for any setup or takedown.

- ii) Individual registered candidates and registered third parties are not permitted to book rooms and related resources for campaign purposes.
- iii) Full rental charges do not apply in the case of all-candidate debates organized as described in this policy.
- iv) Any bookings by political organizations outside of an Election period established by law are regulated by the normal booking policies of the Township owned facility.

4.3.6 Any Candidate may attend any public meeting of Council, or Advisory Committee meeting; however, they shall not use this forum to speak on, or address, any matter relating to their Campaign.

4.3.7 Candidates or Registered Third Parties are prohibited from renting space (e.g., a booth) as part of a Municipally organized event.

4.3.8 Candidates and registered third parties shall not purchase rental space on arena boards and lobby monitors, or any other municipal social media site.

4.4 Township Staff

4.4.1 Staff may not canvass or actively work in support of a municipal candidate, registered third party or political party during normal working hours unless they are on an approved leave of absence without pay, lieu time, flex day, or vacation leave.

4.4.2 Employees shall not canvass or actively work in support of a municipal candidate, registered third party or political party while wearing a uniform, badge, logo or any other item identifying them as an employee of the Township of North Dumfries, or using a vehicle owned or leased by the Township of North Dumfries.

4.4.3 Staff may not use Corporate Resources on behalf of candidates, registered third parties or political parties.

4.4.4 Photographs, contact information and biographies of sitting Members of Council shall remain static on the municipal website.

4.5 Integrity Commissioner

4.5.1 The Township's appointed Integrity Commissioner is considered to be a Corporate Resource, under contract with the Municipality and may receive, from time to time, compensation from the Municipality in accordance with services provided.

4.5.2 Members of Council shall not use the services of the Township's Integrity Commissioner during the Election Period for the purposes of seeking advice related to their Campaign.

Any requests for exemption from this policy must be made to the Clerk in writing.