

Council Policy No.:	CP2026-001
Council Policy Name:	Use of Corporate Resources for Election Purposes
Date Approved by Council:	January 27, 2026 CR2026-008
Date revision approved by Council:	
Related SOP, Management Directive, Council Policy, Forms	

### Policy Statement and Rationale:

The purpose of this policy is to clarify the use of corporate resources by members of Council or members of Committees of Council as required by the provisions of the Municipal Election Act, 1996, as amended.

It is necessary to establish guidelines on the appropriate use of corporate resources during an election period to protect the interest of the current and future members of Council and members of Committees of Council, staff and the Corporation of the City of Kawartha Lakes. The Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended, prohibits a municipality from making a contribution to a candidate. 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 or Committee of Council, of the Corporation's resources for his or her election campaign would be viewed as a contribution by the municipality to the Member, which is a violation of the Act.

### Scope:

This policy is applicable to all members of Council, members of Committees of Council, all registered candidates, election campaign staff and municipal staff. Nothing in this policy shall preclude a member of Council or Committee of Council from performing their job as a councillor or member of the Committee, nor inhibit them from representing

the interests of the constituents who elected them. This policy applies during any election campaign.

## **Definitions:**

**“Act”** means the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended.

**“Candidate”** means any person who has filed the prescribed nomination form to run in a Municipal, Regional, Provincial or Federal Election, or political party, or by-election.

**“Campaigning”** means any election-related activity for the purpose of supporting or opposing the election of a Candidate or a question on the ballot, and includes, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the distribution of materials (paper and electronic), advertising (including any form of electronic advertising), any form of promotion (including by means of social media), display of signage, etc.

**“City”**, “City of Kawartha Lakes”, “Kawartha Lakes” or “Corporation” means The Corporation of the City of Kawartha Lakes.

**“City Clerk”** means the person appointed by Council to carry out the duties of the clerk described in section 228 of the Municipal Act, 2001, 5.0 2001 c.25.

**“City Staff”** means an individual who is hired on a temporary, part-time, contract, consulting, or permanent basis by the City, and receives financial payment from the City for their employment.

**“Council”** means the Council of the City of Kawartha Lakes.

**“Councillor”** means a member of the Council of the City of Kawartha Lakes. For the purposes of clarity, this definition also includes the Head of Council.

**“Discretionary Expense”** is an expense that is incurred by choice of an individual councillor and is charged to the individual Councillor’s discretionary account. The responsibility for determining the appropriateness of a Discretionary Expense rests with the individual Councillor.

**“Election”** means an election or by-election at the Municipal, School Board, Regional, Provincial, Federal level of government, political party election or the submission of a question or by-law to electors.

**“Election Related”** means anything that relates directly to an election as defined above.

**“Election Period”** means the official campaign period of a municipal, regional, provincial or federal election, by-election or political party contest.

**“Harvesting”** means is the collection, gathering and submitting of documentation, rather than by submission by voters themselves directly to election staff, or to Canada Post for mailing.

**"Municipal Property"** means all city property including any buildings or other structures on the land or parking areas that are on the same property as buildings or other structures, including but not limited to City Hall, Municipal Service Centres, Libraries and Arenas. Unless otherwise specified, municipal property does not include travelled roads and sidewalks owned by the municipality.

**“Newsletter”** means a printed publication produced and distributed by or on behalf of a Member, using any City Resources, to provide information to residents.

**“Nomination Day”** is the date in a regular election year or by-election year as defined in Municipal, Provincial or Federal legislation, typically defined as the last day a person can register as a candidate in the election.

**“Registered Third Party”** means an individual or corporation as defined Municipal, Provincial or Federal legislation.

**“Social Media”** means web-based applications that allow users to interact, share and publish content such as text, links, photos, audio and video using media platforms including be not limited to Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, YouTube, wikis, blogs, and other similar applications and websites.

## **Policy:**

### **1. General Policy**

- 1.1 Pursuant to the Act, the City shall not make a contribution, including money, goods and services, to any Candidate, Registered Third Party or a supporter of a question on the ballot during an Election.
- 1.2 Candidates may not use corporate resources, including City communication, or City social media resources, for Election purposes.
  - 1.2.1 The following corporate resources may be hyperlinked to from a Candidate’s website (not emailed, or circulated via social media), but may not be housed on the Candidate’s website, or modified/reproduced for use in any campaign related material: By-laws, Strategic Plans, Staff Reports, Minutes, Agendas, Budgets, Policies, City produced photographs and videos, Election Guides/Forms, and any City website.

- 1.3 Candidates may not undertake any Election Related activities or Campaigning in the City workplace, municipal property, or other locations in Kawartha Lakes where municipal employees on duty may be present.
- 1.4 Candidates may not undertake any Election Related activities or Campaigning on any municipal property unless a valid rental agreement has been entered into by the candidate or permitted by the City Clerk, or their designate in writing. The City Clerk may establish fees consistent with City facilities rental fees for the use of other municipal property permitted by the City Clerk for Election Related activities or Campaigning.
- 1.5 Links to any personal or Election websites, or social media sites will be removed from any City owned website after a Candidate has filed his or her nomination papers, except where deemed appropriate by the City Clerk for the purpose of promoting awareness of the Election to voters. The City Clerk may remove a link on the website posted for awareness where the link is broken, unsecure, or deemed inconsistent with the principles of the Municipal Election Act.
- 1.6 The online Candidates list shall be the only area of the City of Kawartha Lakes' websites where links to external election campaign websites will be posted during the Campaign Period, if provided by the candidate and consistent with section 1.5 of this policy.
- 1.7 In the event of a public debate hosted by a community service group, a facility on municipal property may be offered as the venue at the discretion of the Facilities Booking Clerk, provided that:
  - 1.7.1 All registered candidates (within the specified office of election for the debate) are invited to attend.
  - 1.7.2 Distribution of campaign literature (such as flyers, brochures, or business cards) at the event is kept at a modest, controlled manner.
  - 1.7.3 Large posters, banners, election signs, buttons, giveaways, and campaign clothing and merchandise sales are not permitted.
  - 1.7.4 Campaign literature shall be permitted only for candidates within the office for which the debate is being held (e.g., a Mayoral candidate may not distribute literature at a Ward 3 debate).
  - 1.7.5 The above limitations apply only where a debate is held at a facility on municipal property; debates held at other venues will be subject to any rules and requirements which may be established by the host.

## **2. Specific Policy – City Staff**

- 2.1 City Staff may not actively work in support of a Candidate during normal working hours or any time they are receiving remuneration from the City, unless they are on a leave of absence without pay, lieu time, float day, or vacation leave.
- 2.2 City Staff may not use corporate resources, including City communication or social media resources, for the purpose of Campaigning for or against, or assisting in the campaign, of a Councillors and/or Candidates.
- 2.3 City Staff may not canvass, or actively work in support of, a Candidate or political party while wearing a City uniform, badge, logo or other item identifying them as City Staff, or while using a City branded vehicle.
- 2.4 City Staff who are regularly on-call and require a City branded vehicle to be parked at their place of residence shall avoid placing election signs on the property of their residence, while the City branded vehicle is present.
- 2.5 City Staff may not display any election related material, clothing, pins, or other election related merchandise on any municipal property during normal working hours, or display it visibly (to other staff or members of the public) during electronic meetings while working remotely.

## **3. Specific Policy – Candidates and Councillors**

- 3.1 Candidates are prohibited from:
  - 3.1.1 Including any active or inactive logo, slogan, tagline, crest, or seal used by City of Kawartha Lakes, or its predecessor municipalities on any Election Related materials, websites, or communications except in the case of a link to the City's website to obtain information about the municipal Election.
  - 3.1.2 Using any photographs or videos produced for and/or owned by the City for any Election Related purposes. Unless permission is granted by the City Clerk or is consistent with Section 1.2.1 of this policy.
  - 3.1.3 Using or misrepresenting imagery of City Hall while Campaigning or on Election Related materials, websites, or communications.
  - 3.1.4 Using City owned or expensed printers and/or photocopiers to produce Election Related material. Once and if a Councillor has filed their nomination paper with the City Clerk their printing and/or photocopying levels shall not exceed the monthly average from the previous year as determined by the City Clerk.

- 3.1.5 Harvesting votes or voter registrations using original or copies of City produced Voter Information Letter, or Voter Registration Forms.
- 3.1.6 Profiling (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.
- 3.2 Councillors are responsible for ensuring that any communication material, including printed materials such as Newsletters, advertising etc. funded by the City do not contain any Election Related content.
- 3.3 Councillors may not use any Councillor Office in a municipal facility for any election-related purposes. This includes displaying any election-related material or in a Councillor's Office in a municipal facility except as outlined in section 1.4.
- 3.4 The budgets for Councillors for the period January 1st to Election Day in a municipal election year shall be restricted to 11/12ths of the approved annual budget amount with the provision that subsequent to election day.
  - 3.4.1 New Councillors will be allocated a budget equal to 1/12th of the approved budget amount for the month of December to cover the cost of items such as new reference material, copies of legislation, subscriptions, and orientation material.
  - 3.4.2 Re-elected Councillors have available to them the balance of funds remaining as of the end of the term of Council.
  - 3.4.3 The budgets for Councillors seeking Provincial or Federal Office will be prorated based on the period the Election occurs.
- 3.5 The following will be discontinued for Councillors from the date nominations open in a year of a Municipal Election until Election Day:
  - 3.5.1 Newsletters or other ward-wide communication, unless specifically authorized by Council by way of a resolution adopted by Council.
  - 3.5.2 All forms of advertising, including municipal publications. Contracts for advertising in an election year shall not permit displays of the advertisements beyond the date Nominations open, where the format of advertising permits (eg: Internet, Radio, TV, Outdoor advertising).
  - 3.5.3 All supplying of City purchased paper or other office supplies to Councillors for home use.
  - 3.5.4 The ordering of stationery, including business cards.

- 3.5.5 All reimbursement of expenses related to ward or community meetings held in accordance with this policy.
  - 3.5.6 The ordering or moving of office furniture and furnishings, except those of an emergency nature.
  - 3.5.7 Holding a Ward or community meeting (Town-Hall Meeting) unless authorized by Council by way of a resolution adopted by Council.
  - 3.5.8 The above policies also apply to an acclaimed Councillor or a Councillor not seeking re-election.
- 3.6 Councillors and Candidates shall not:
- 3.6.1 Print or distribute any material paid for with City funds (or produced with the use of City owned equipment or facilities) that makes reference to any other Councillor or individual that is running for elected office in a school board, municipal, provincial or federal Election, or political party context, or by-election.
  - 3.6.2 Print or distribute any material paid for with City funds (or produced with the use of City owned equipment or facilities) that identifies that they or another individual will be running for elected office.
  - 3.6.3 Print or distribute any material paid by municipal funds that illustrates that a member or any other individual, is registered in any election or where they will be running for office.
  - 3.6.4 Use the City's voice mail system to record Election Related messages.
  - 3.6.5 Include any Election Related material on websites or domain names that are paid for by the City.
  - 3.6.6 Use mobile communication devices, including but not limited to smartphones, cell phones (including Bring Your Own Device and tablets), that are paid for, or reimbursed by the City for any Election Related purpose or Campaigning, unless the City is reimbursed in full. Councillors will not be reimbursed for cell phone or internet expenses if that phone number is or internet data is also being used for campaign purposes (eg: the number is listed on the List of Candidates for the Election).
  - 3.6.7 Use the services of any City Staff to assist in any communication activity related to the preparation or distribution of campaign materials or events or enable a City Staff to undertake any Election Related activities prohibited in this section on behalf of the Councillor or Candidate.

- 3.6.8 Enter into joint ventures (considering any potential pecuniary interest) using municipal funds from Nomination Day to Election Day, in the year of a municipal election, unless specifically approved by Council.
- 3.6.9 Utilize Distribution lists or contact lists that were developed with corporate resources or through contact in a Member of Council's role.
- 3.6.10 The above policies also apply to an acclaimed Councillor or a Councillor not seeking re-election.

#### **4. Administration and Enforcement**

- 4.1 The City Clerk, and their delegates, are authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect to this policy, including notification to the offending individual(s) or their representatives.
- 4.2 The City of Kawartha Lakes focuses on being an open, accessible, inclusive and accountable municipality. The City Clerk or designate shall have the delegated authority to receive and investigate any written complaint with respect to the alleged use of corporate resources in contravention of this policy. The following options are available for complaints related to election candidates, including Members of Council or Members of Council running for re-election:
- i. Submit a written complaint to the City Clerk. Written complaints must set out specific example(s) and corresponding details of how the alleged use of a particular corporate resource may have contravened this policy.
  - ii. File an informal or formal complaint with the City's Integrity Commissioner. No investigation shall be commenced or continued, nor shall the Integrity Commissioner report to Council respecting an investigation, within the election period. An Integrity Commissioner cannot investigate matters regarding Municipal Elections Act related complaints (including third party advertising) or election campaign finances.
  - iii. Contact the Office of the Ontario Ombudsman.
  - iv. Pursue private legal remedies, including court action.

Complaints or concerns related to campaign finances may be addressed through the compliance audit process outlined in the Municipal Elections Act.

Complaints or concerns related to actions or behaviours of an egregious nature or any form of hate crime will be transferred to the the appropriate Police Services.



## 5. Implementation

5.1 This policy shall become effective immediately upon approval by Council.

### Revision History:

Proposed Date of Review:

Revision	Date	Description of Changes	Requested By
1.	August 10, 2021	Initial Release	
2	January 27, 2026	Policy updated, approved by Council and renumbered.	