



# Township of Wellesley

<b>Subject:</b> Use of Corporate Resources for Election Purposes	<b>Policy Number:</b> Admin Policy No. 45
<b>Date Approved:</b> April 14, 2026	<b>Approved by:</b> Council
<b>Date of Last Approved Revision:</b>	
<b>This Policy Applies to:</b> Township Staff, Municipal Election Candidates, Acclaimed Candidates, Members of Council, Registered Third Parties and Township of Wellesley Local Boards, as well as anyone acting on their behalf.	
<b>Policy Statement:</b> The Municipal Elections Act (MEA), the Election Finances Act (Ontario), and the Canada Elections Act prohibit the Municipality from making contributions in any form to a Candidate or Registered Third Party.  All provisions contained within this policy shall serve to ensure the protection of freedom of expression while maintaining that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Corporate Resources shall not be used during an Election Period to promote or provide an unfair advantage to any Candidate, political party, constituency association, Registered Third Party, or a person or group supporting or opposing a question on a ballot;</li><li>• Members of Council shall not be precluded from performing their duties as an elected Official, nor be inhibited from representing the interests of their constituents; and,</li><li>• Information and communication related to an election shall continue to be open and accessible to the public with content to be produced, and approved, by the Township of Wellesley.</li></ul>	
<b>Procedure:</b> The purpose of this policy is to create guidelines in the Township of Wellesley for all Candidates running for an elected office and Registered Third Parties during the Campaign Period and to establish parameters on the use of Corporate Resources for election related purposes.	
<b>1. Definitions</b>	

- 1.1. **Act** means the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996, S.O. 1996, c .32, as amended*.
- 1.2. **Campaign Period for a Candidate** is the date on which the nomination is filed until December 31 in the year of a regular election, and 45 days after voting day in the case of a by-election, unless a request for extension of campaign period has been filed. See section 88.24 of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*.
- 1.3. **Campaign Period for a Registered Third Party** is the date on which the registration as a third party advertiser is filed until December 31 in the case of a regular election, and 45 days after voting day in the case of a by-election, unless a request for extension of Campaign period has been filed. See section 88.28 of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*.
- 1.4. **Campaign** 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.
- 1.5. **Campaign Materials** means any materials used to solicit votes for a Candidate or question during the Election Period including, but not limited to, literature, banners, posters, pictures, buttons, clothing, or other paraphernalia. Campaign Materials include materials in all media, for example, print, displays, electronic radio or television, online including websites or social media.
- 1.6. **Candidate** means any person who has filed, and not withdrawn a nomination, for office pursuant to section 33 of the Act, and includes a person who has files a nomination for election to a school board pursuant to the *Education Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.2, as amended*.
- 1.7. **Corporate Resource** means items, staff, services, or resources which are the property of the Township of Wellesley 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.
- 1.8. **Local Board** has the same meaning as found in Section 1 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*.
- 1.9. **Township Facility** means any facility owned or operated by the Township of Wellesley.
- 1.10. **Registered Third Party shall** have the same meaning as “Registered Third Party” as found in section of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* or the

term "Third Party" as defined in section 1 of the *Election Finances Act (Ontario)* and *Canada Elections Act*, as the context requires.

## **2. Responsibilities**

2.1 Candidates and Registered Third Parties to:

- Adhere to the guidelines and parameters established by this policy.

2.2 Municipal Clerk to:

- Administer this policy and provide any related procedures as deemed necessary or desirable for conducting an election.

2.3 Municipal Staff to:

- Ensure that Corporate Resources, as identified by this Policy, are not used for Campaign purposes.

## **3. General Provisions**

In accordance with the spirit and intent of the election related legislation,

- 3.1 Corporate Resources and funding shall not be used by a Candidate or Registered Third Party for their Campaign or election-related purposes.
- 3.2 This Policy also applies to an acclaimed Member or a Member not seeking re-election.
- 3.3 The Municipal Clerk is authorized, and directed to take the necessary action, to give effect to this Policy.
- 3.4 This Policy does not preclude a Member of Council from performing their duties as a Councillor, nor inhibit a Member of Council from representing the interests of their constituents.
- 3.5 Individuals who have questions about this Policy are encouraged to contact the Municipal Clerk to obtain further clarification.

## **4. Corporate Resources – Technology**

Further to Section 3.1 above, the following is provided for greater clarity when considering the use of corporate technology resources:

4.1 Members of Council are provided access to corporate information technology (I.T.) assets to fulfill their duties and responsibilities as an elected official but may not use those assets for Campaigning or the development of Campaign Materials. This includes, but is not limited to, functionality through municipally issued smartphones such as calendar, email, texts, etc.

4.2 Websites or domain names that are funded by the Township of Wellesley may

not be used for Campaign purposes. The Township's official election webpage will provide Candidate contact information but shall in no way endorse any Candidate.

4.3 Once a Member of Council registers to be a Candidate, any links from a Municipal website or social media account to his or her website or social media pages will be removed from the Township's webpages if the Member's website or social media page contains or will contain Campaign Material.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, information contained on the "Consent to Release Personal Information Form -", as part of the nomination process, may be included on the Wellesley Elections webpage(s).

4.4 During the election period, Mayor and Council biographies on the Municipal website shall be reduced to council-related contact information only.

4.5 The Township's voicemail system shall not be used by Candidates to record Campaign-related messages nor shall the computer network, including the email system, be used to distribute Campaign-related correspondence.

## **5. Corporate Resources – Communications**

Further to Section 3.1 above, the following is provided for greater clarity when considering the use of corporate communication resources:

5.1 Members of Council may not use Council portraits funded by the Township, either as a corporate or Member expense, in Campaign Materials.

5.2 Photographs produced for, and owned by, the Township may not be used for any election purposes.

5.3 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 webpages in Campaign Materials for electors to access additional information about the election and the voting process.

5.4 The Clerk may develop and distribute information through various means for the purpose of advising and educating electors. Candidates or Registered Third Parties are permitted to promote and distribute election information provided by the Clerk, provided that such information is not modified in any way.

5.5 The Township's logo, crest, and/or any other images or illustrations or videos owned or under the jurisdiction of the Township, may not be used in any Campaign Materials.

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, and/or crest in the background.

5.6 Distribution lists or contact lists developed utilizing Corporate Resources and in the custody and control of the Township shall not be utilized for election purposes.

5.7 Members of Council may not:

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

5.8 Municipal resources that have been published to the Township website (e.g., strategic plans, staff reports, minutes, agendas, press releases) may be linked on Candidate and Registered Third Parties' websites, but may not be housed on the Candidate website, and may not be taken out of context/modified/reproduced for use in any Campaign related material.

5.9 Messages posted to the Township social media accounts (including Facebook, Instagram and X) may be shared by a Candidate to their personal or Campaign social media accounts using social media official channels and not partially reproduced.

## **6. Corporate Resources – Municipal Facilities**

Further to Section 3.1 above, the following is provided for greater clarity when considering the use of Municipal Facilities, including Township owned or leased lands, as Corporate Resources:

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

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

6.3 All Candidates and Registered Third Parties must adhere to the provisions set out in any other Township Policies pertaining to Township Facilities.

6.4 Members of Council, Registered Third Parties, and Candidates may not use their constituency office, Township office or any Township provided facilities for any election-related purpose, which includes the display of any Campaign-related signs in the window or on the premises, as well as the display of election-related material in the office.

6.5 Campaigning and the distribution or display of Campaign material is not permitted in any township or Local Board facility, on township land, or at township or Local Board events including any township or board meeting.

6.6 Candidates or Registered Third Parties are prohibited from using a Township Facility as a Campaign office.

6.7 The rental, to candidates or Registered Third Parties of advertising space on arena boards and lobby monitors, or any other township social media site, is prohibited.

Notwithstanding,

- Campaigning on public sidewalks and highways is permitted, provided that it is in compliance with prevailing legislation and Municipal by-laws.
- Sections 6.4 and 6.5 do not prohibit a Candidate or external organization or Registered Third Party from renting space within a municipal facility (other than the Municipal Administrative Office, Region of Waterloo Library facilities and the Museum Buildings) for election related purposes. If a municipal facility is rented, Campaigning and the distribution or display of Campaign Materials is only permitted during the rental period and only within the rented area. This exception does not apply to Section 6.6.

## **7. Municipal Staff**

7.1 Municipal Staff are prohibited from using Corporate Resources for the benefit of a Candidate or Campaign.

## **8. Integrity commissioner**

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

8.2 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.

## **9. Limitation**

9.1 Nothing in this Policy shall prohibit a Member of Council from performing their job as a Councillor, nor inhibit them from representing the interests of the constituents who elected them. This policy is subject to the exception of Members'

actions associated with fulfilling their normal and ongoing representative roles as Members of Council (such as attending annual or regular scheduled events, up until the official end of the term they are serving).

**See Also:**