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Town of Aurora  
**Use of Corporate Resources for Election  
Campaign Purposes**  
Legislative Services

Contact: Town Clerk, Corporate Services

Approval Authority: Council

Effective: March 1, 2022

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## Background

In order to preserve the public trust and comply with the provisions of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended it is essential that Members of Town Council, all election candidates, and all Town employees maintain the highest standards of ethical conduct. This Policy reflects both provincial legislation and the conduct necessary to set a leading example in meeting the objectives of the Town's Strategic Plan for being well equipped and managed through decision-making processes that reflect sound governance and accountability.

## Objective

- Ensure compliance of Town of Aurora staff, municipal election candidates, third party advertisers, and Members of Council with the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*
- Ensure that municipal election candidates, third party advertisers, and Members of Council are treated fairly and consistently within the municipality
- Ensure integrity, transparency, and accountability of election processes/practices
- Ensure that Town operations, events, and facilities are used for non-partisan purposes and not for election campaign related purposes/activities

## Scope

This Policy applies to all Town Staff, all municipal election Candidates (whether for Council or for school trustee), Third Party Advertisers, any Acclaimed Candidate, and Members of Council (including a Member not seeking re-election).

## Definitions

**"Act"** means the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, S.O. 1996, c. 32, as amended.

**"Campaigning"** means a municipal 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, advertising, display of signage, etc.

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

**“Clerk”** means the Clerk of the Town or his/her designate.

**“Council”** means the Council of the Town.

**“Member”** means a member of the Council of the Town, and includes the Mayor of the Town.

**“Nomination Day”** means the date in a regular Election or a By-Election (as defined in Municipal, Provincial, or Federal legislation) where nominations close.

**“Staff”** means all full-time and part-time persons hired by the Town, including but not limited to the Chief Administrative Officer, Directors, Managers, Supervisors, Coordinators, salaried employees, union employees, administrative staff, and contract, temporary, student, secondment, and co-operative placement staff.

**“Third Party Advertisers”** means those that incur a cost to support, promote or oppose a candidate, or support, promote or oppose a “yes” or “no” question on the ballot.

**“Town”** means The Corporation of the Town of Aurora.

**“Town resources”** means real property, goods and/or services owned, controlled, leased, acquired, or operated by the Town including but not limited to: facilities, parks, materials, equipment, monetary funds, technology, Town IT systems and resources, databases, intellectual property, and supplies.

**“Voting Day”** means, in the case of a regular election, the fourth Monday in October in the year of the election -or- in the case of a by-election, the 45<sup>th</sup> day after Nomination Day, as noted in the Act.

## **Policy**

### **1. Campaigning – General**

- 1.1 No person shall use Town resources for Campaigning.
- 1.2 Notwithstanding subsection 1.1, “All-Candidates” meetings may be held in a Town facility at the discretion of the Clerk, subject to the usual rental charges and permit procedures for such use and provided that subsection 1.4 is adhered to.

- 1.3 Notwithstanding subsection 1.1, Campaigning on public walkways, thoroughfares, and rights-of-way are permitted, provided that all Campaigning is in compliance with Town by-laws.
- 1.4 No Campaigning signs or material may be displayed in any Town owned or operated facilities.
- 1.5 Campaigning shall not be permitted at any Town-operated events, e.g., Concerts in the Park, Ribfest, Canada Day celebrations, etc.
- 1.6 Candidates and third parties may not rent any Town facilities for campaigning purposes.
- 1.7 No person shall use the services of Staff for Campaigning during normal working hours of such Staff, unless such Staff are on a leave of absence without pay, lieu time, float day, maternity/parental leave, or vacation leave.
- 1.8 In any material printed, distributed, or paid for by the Town, a Candidate is not permitted to:
  - a. illustrate that an individual is a Candidate;
  - b. identify where they or any other individual will be running for office; or
  - c. profile or make reference to a Candidate.
- 1.9 Websites or domain names that are funded, owned, or operated by the Town shall not include any Campaigning, other than non-partisan election information material that is required for the proper administration of the election under the Act and basic contact information for Candidates.
- 1.10 The Town's voicemail system shall not be used to record Campaigning messages, and the Town resources comprising the computer network, e-mail, and related IT systems and software subscriptions shall not be used for Campaigning.
- 1.11 The Town's logo, crest, coat of arms, slogan, brand, other marks, chain of office, etc. shall not be used in any Campaigning or included on any Campaigning related website, social media, or electronic publication.
- 1.12 Photographs and videos produced for and owned by the Town may not be used for Campaigning.
- 1.13 Candidates are permitted to use meeting videos from the Town's YouTube Channel in their campaign material.
- 1.14 As provided for in the Act, the Clerk is responsible for conducting elections within the Town. Accordingly, any decision regarding the conduct of an

election, including the interpretation and application of this Policy, shall fall under the authority of the Clerk.

## **2. Limitations**

- 2.1 Nothing in this Policy shall prohibit a Member of Council from performing his/her job as a Member of Council, nor impede them from representing the interests of his/her constituents.
- 2.2 Nothing in this Policy shall preclude a Staff member from exercising his/her civic right and duty to participate in the municipal election process as a private citizen.
- 2.3 Nothing in this Policy shall prevent Staff from conducting an election in accordance with the Act, or providing non-partisan election information material on behalf of the Town so as to inform the public about the election and the election process.

## **Responsibilities**

### **All Staff**

1. Staff shall not use any Town resources for Campaigning.
2. Staff shall neither canvass nor actively work in support of a Candidate during normal working hours, unless such Staff is on a leave of absence without pay, lieu time, float day, maternity/parental leave, or vacation leave.
3. Staff shall neither canvass nor actively work in support of a Candidate while wearing a Town uniform, badge, crest or other item identifying them as a member of Town Staff, or while using a Town owned or leased vehicle.
4. Staff working directly for a Member of Council (i.e., Executive and Administrative Assistants), shall not be assigned to work as Voting Clerks, Returning Officers, Deputy Returning Officers, or in any part of the voting process.
5. Staff who are also relatives of any Member of Council or Candidate shall not be assigned to work as Voting Clerks, Returning Officers, Deputy Returning Officers, or in any part of the voting process. Staff will be required to declare that they are not relatives to any Member of Council or Candidate during the recruitment process.
6. Staff shall not use their official authority or influence for the purpose of interfering with or affecting the result of a municipal election or a question on the

ballot, nor use their official title while participating in otherwise permissible political activities.

7. Staff are advised to be especially mindful of public perception during municipal elections, and to ensure that their activities neither conflict with nor adversely affect their duties as members of Town Staff. Moreover, Staff have a responsibility to ensure that public resources are not used for Campaigning by any person.
8. Any member of Staff who considers being a Candidate in a municipal election should familiarize themselves with the rules set out in the Act and the *Education Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.2, as amended.

### **Legislative Services**

- ☒ The Town Clerk or their designate shall communicate this policy to staff, candidates, third party advertisers, and Members of Town Council.

### **Members of Council and Candidates**

1. A Member of Council is responsible for ensuring that the content of any communication material that is printed, sponsored, hosted, or distributed by the Town at the request of such Member of Council is not for Campaigning.
2. A Member of Council shall not print or distribute Campaigning material using Town resources and/or paid for by Town funds.
3. Office furnishings, office/desk locations, stationary, and other supplies normally provided for Members of Council will remain status quo from Nomination Day until the end of the Council term. However, none of these Town resources may be used for Campaigning.
4. Social media accounts hosted by members of Council are not sponsored by the Town. In addition, any website activity such as a blog account for a member of Council will be deactivated and their page will be removed. Any election related social media activity using Town resources is prohibited.
5. In an Election Period, Mayor and Council biographies will remain static, and no changes to these pages will be allowed.
6. Candidates, Third Party Advertisers and members of Council shall not use Corporate Resources, for any election-related purposes, including computers, cell/smart phones, tablets, printers, scanners, corporate Zoom and Microsoft Teams accounts, or other services such as email, Internet, and file storage.

7. A Member of Council who is also a candidate shall continue to comply with the provisions in the Council Code of Conduct throughout the Campaign period, including but not limited to Rule No. 6: Election Campaigns.

## **Monitoring and Compliance**

1. Administration of the Policy will be at the discretion of the Clerk or designate. Procedures may be defined, and amended from time to time, by the Clerk to address specific implementation of this Policy. Legislative requirements, business practices, and changing Town needs may also merit a review.
2. Should a complaint arise regarding the alleged Use of Corporate Resources in contravention of this Policy, the Clerk or their designate shall have the authority to investigate and resolve the complaint. All complaints shall be submitted to the Clerk in writing.
3. Complaints against a Member of Council alleging contravention of Rule 6: Election Campaigns of the Council Code of Conduct will be directed to the Integrity Commissioner.

## **Relevant Codes and References**

- ☒ [Town of Aurora Council Code of Conduct](#)
- ☒ [Employee Code of Conduct](#)
- ☒ [Elections Signs By-Law 6058-2018](#)
- ☒ [Council-Staff Relations Policy](#)
- ☒ [Municipal Elections Act, 1996](#)
- ☒ [Election Finance Act, R.S.O. 1990. c.E.7](#)
- ☒ [Canada Elections Act, S. C. 2000, c.9](#)

## **Review Timeline**

This policy will be reviewed by May 1, 2026.

**January 2022:** Policy updated for 2022 Municipal Election.

- ☒ Simplified definitions to reduce revisions due to legislative changes;
- ☒ Removed direct references to sections of the Municipal Elections Act;
- ☒ Added wording to clarify section 5 of Responsibilities - All Staff, and 1.6 of Campaigning - General;
- ☒ Added wording to include reference to the Council Code of Conduct; and
- ☒ Added additional rules to capture changes in technology.