



Policy: Use of Corporate Resources During an Election

Policy Number: CP11

Effective Date: March 9, 2026

Revised Date:

Policy Statement:

To ensure fair elections and compliance with the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* (the Act) by prohibiting use of municipal corporate resources for election or campaign-related purposes and by providing clear rules, exceptions, and enforcement.

Scope

This policy applies to Members of Council, members of Committees of Council, registered election candidates (including acclaimed candidates), registered third-party advertisers, municipal staff (full-time, part-time, contract), volunteers and agents during a municipal election campaign or municipal by-election.

Definitions

"Act" means the *Municipal Elections Act 1996*, SO 1996 c.32, as amended;

"Candidate" means a person nominated under section 33 of the *Act* and includes a person who has filed a nomination for election to a school board;

"Campaign related activity" means any act intended to influence voting or support/oppose a candidate or third-party advertiser, including fundraising, distribution of campaign materials, public endorsements, campaign events and campaign communications;

"Corporate Resources" means Municipality-owned, -leased, -controlled or -operated real property, goods, services, monetary funds, IT systems, databases, email, social media accounts that are corporate-owned, logos, photographs owned by the Municipality, staff time compensated by the Municipality, equipment (computers, phones, printers, tablets, scanners), and other supplies or intellectual property.

"Members of Council" means members of the Council of The Corporation of the Municipality of Thames Centre;

"Municipality" means The Corporation of the Municipality of Thames Centre;

"Third Party Advertiser" means an individual, corporation, or trade union that is registered under section 88.6 of the Act.

Policy Provisions

1. General Provisions

Effective from the day before Nomination's Open until Voting Day (inclusive) for general municipal elections – and for by-elections, from 60 days before Voting Day until Voting Day (inclusive) the following applies:

- a) The Municipality will not provide corporate resources, staff time, funding, materials, equipment, IT services, or municipal logos/photography for any campaign related activities.
- b) Staff shall not canvass or actively work in support of a candidate or third-party advertiser during paid working hours, unless they are on a leave of absence without pay, lieu time or vacation leave.
- c) Municipal email addresses, internal file storage and municipal issued devices shall not be used for campaign related correspondence or storing campaign materials.
- d) Campaign signage, literature or other campaign materials shall not be displayed in municipally owned indoor facilities or on municipal property except where expressly permitted by the Election Sign By-law 19-2018 and any applicable facility rental rules.

2. Specific Regulations

2.1 Website, Communications and Publications

- a) Official municipal communications and website postings related to Council/Committee activity (e.g. meeting minutes, agendas) remain the Municipality's responsibility but shall not be used to promote or favour any candidate or third-party advertiser.
- b) Public facing council member photos and contact information may remain on the corporate website as set at Council term commencement. Additional promotional content for an individual member shall be removed for the restricted period mentioned in General Provisions.

2.2 Facilities, Rentals and Images

- a) Municipal facilities may be rented at market value and on the same terms to all candidates and third-party advertisers. No preferential treatment is permitted. No municipal facility shall be used for election related activities on Voting Day (including the set up and take down).
- b) Internal photographs or images owned by the Municipality may not be used for campaign purposes; external images of municipal facilities may be used if not implying municipal endorsement.

2.3 Council Member Personal Accounts and Content

- a) Members of Council who maintain personal or member-managed websites or social media accounts must clearly state on the account home page whether the account is used for Council business, campaign purposes or both. This statement must be visible for the duration the account is public.

- b) Corporate accounts remain corporate resources and must not be used for campaign purposes. Mixing corporate communications with campaign messaging on corporate accounts is prohibited.

2.4 Exceptions

- a) Community run, all-candidate meeting held at a municipal facilities are permitted, provided events are organized by independent community groups, all registered candidates in the relevant category are invited and access is available on equitable, published terms. Booking fees and facility use must be consistent with normal rental policies.

3. Staff Conduct and Responsibilities

- 3.1. Staff must act impartially and avoid activities that create a perceived conflict of interest or bias.
- 3.2. Before performing tasks requested by Council members, candidates or third party advertisers that exceed normal duties, staff must consult their direct supervisor.
- 3.3. Staff involvement in federal or provincial campaigns is permitted provided that it does not impede their municipal duties or create conflicts with municipal responsibilities.

4. Enforcement, Complaints and Remedies

- 4.1 The Clerk is authorized to administer this policy.
- 4.2 Complaints alleging contravention of this policy must be submitted in writing to the Clerk. The Clerk shall acknowledge receipt within 5 business days and will review and investigate in a timely manner.
- 4.3 Where a breach is found, the Clerk may recommend remedies including but not limited to corrective action (removal of material), reimbursement to the Municipality, or referral to the appropriate enforcement body.

5. Limitation

Nothing in this Policy shall preclude any member of Council from performing their job as a Councillor, nor inhibit them from representing the interests of the residents of Thames Centre.

Legislative Authority

It is appropriate to establish a policy on the appropriate use of corporate resources during an election period to protect the interests of both the Corporation and the Members of Council and Committees. Section 88.8 of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, prohibits a municipality from making a contribution to a Candidate/Third Party Advertiser. The Act also prohibits a Candidate/Third Party Advertiser, 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 of the Municipality's resources by a Candidate/Third Party Advertiser, including Members of Council or Members of municipal Committees, for his or her election campaign would be viewed as a contribution by the Municipality, which is a violation of the Act.

Policy Review

This Policy shall be reviewed every four (4) years as part of the election cycle.