

Policy

Policy Name: Use of Corporate and Communication Resources during an Election Year
Policy Owner: **Corporate and Financial Services - Director, Council Support Services/Town Clerk**
Approved by: Council
Effective Date: January 1, 2014
Date of Last Revision: March 26, 2012
Review Date: In the year immediately preceding a regular election year
Policy Status: Revision

Purpose:

Pursuant to the provision of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* (the "Act"), as amended, a municipality is prohibited from contributing to any person for his or her election campaign.

The purpose of this policy is to clarify the goods and services that, if provided to an/or used by any person for his or her election campaign, would be considered a contribution by the Town to an election campaign in contravention of the Act.

Policy Principles:

This policy is intended to provide clear direction for staff, candidates and members in order to provide for a fair and transparent electoral process.

Definitions:

"Acclaimed" means a candidate elected by acclamation pursuant to section 37 of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*.

"Act" means the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, S.O. 1996, C. 32.

"Candidate" means a person who has filed a nomination for an office pursuant to section 33 of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* and any candidate in a provincial or federal election.

"Clerk" means the Clerk of the Town of Richmond Hill or his/her designate.

"Council" means the Council of the Town of Richmond Hill.

"Member" means a member of the Council of the Town of Richmond Hill.

“Nomination Day” in the case of a regular election, means the second Friday in September in the year of the election -or- in the case of a by-election, means the 45th day prior to voting day and as noted in section 31 and section 65(4) of the Act.

“Office” means the authority and duties attached to the position of being an elected member of Council.

“Policy” means the Use of Corporate and Communication Resources during and Election Year Policy of the Town of Richmond Hill.

“Staff” means all full-time and part-time persons hired by the Town including the Chief Administrative Officer; Commissioners; Directors; Managers; Supervisors; Coordinators; Salaried Employees’ Association staff; members of CUPE Local 905; members of the Richmond Hill Professional Fire Fighters Association, Local 1957; Administrative staff; and, contract, temporary, student, secondment, and co-operative placement staff.

“Town” means the Corporation of the Town of Richmond Hill.

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

“Voting Day” in the case of a regular election, means the fourth Monday in October in the year of the election -or- in the case of a by-election, means the 45th day after nomination day and as noted in section 5 and section 65(4) of the Act.

Scope

This policy applies to all candidates, including members, an acclaimed member or a member not seeking re-election.

Policy

With the exception of Section 5 contained herein, the following policies apply during an election year:

1. Town resources may not be used by candidates for any election related purposes.
2. Candidates may only undertake campaign related activities on Town owned and/or operated facilities provided they have paid full-market rental fees and rates for use of such facilities.
3. No candidate shall use the services of persons during hours in which those persons receive any compensation from the Town. Political involvement and activity by staff is governed by the Town’s Employee Code of Conduct and reference to this Code should be made when determining the appropriateness of any political involvement and activity by staff.
4. Neither campaign related signs nor any other election related candidate material will be displayed in any Town owned and/or operated facilities.

5. The Town shall cease providing members with the following services starting the day prior to Nomination Day up to the day following Voting Day:
 - a. All forms of advertising, including in municipal publications;
 - b. All printing, high speed photocopying and distribution, including printing and general distribution of newsletters and new resident letters unless so directed and approved by Council; and,
 - c. The ordering and use of stationary.
6. Members may not:
 - a. Print or distribute any material using Town resources that illustrates that a member or any other individual is registered in any election or where they will be running for office;
 - b. Profile (name or photograph), or make reference to, in any material created using Town resources, any candidate; and,
 - c. Print or distribute any material using Town resources that refers to, contains the names or photographs, or identifies candidates for municipal elections.
7. Members are responsible for ensuring that the content of any communication material, printed, sponsored or distributed by the Town, is not election related.
8. In any material printed or distributed by the Town, candidates are not permitted to:
 - a. Illustrate that a person is a candidate registered in any election;
 - b. Identify where a person will be running for office; or,
 - c. Profile or refer to candidates in any election.
9. Websites or domain names that are funded by the Town may not include any election related campaign material.
10. The Town's voice mail system may not be used to record election related message and the computer network and related IT systems (including the Town's e-mail system) may not be used to distribute election related correspondence.
11. The Town's logo, crest, coat of arms, slogan, brand, etc. may not be printed or distributed on any election materials or included on any election campaign related website, except in the case of a link to the Town's website to obtain information about the municipal election.
12. Photographs produced for and owned by the Town may not be used for any election purposes.

Nothing in this policy shall prohibit a member from performing their job as a member of Council, nor impede them from representing the interests of their constituents.

Related Documents

- *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, as amended.
- Town of Richmond Hill Council Code of Conduct
- Town of Richmond Hill Employee Code of Conduct