



THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF WASAGA BEACH
POLICY MANUAL

SECTION NAME: Council	POLICY NUMBER: 1-5
POLICY: Use of Corporate Resources Policy	REVIEW DATE: February 2030
EFFECTIVE DATE: March 26, 2026	REVISIONS:
ADOPTED BY BY-LAW: By-Law 2026-27	ADMINISTERED BY: Clerk

PURPOSE

The *Municipal Elections Act*, 1996, (MEA) as amended, requires municipalities to establish rules and procedures with respect to the use of municipal resources during an Election Period. Municipalities are prohibited from making campaign contributions to municipal Candidates or Registered Third Parties. As a campaign contribution may take the form of money, goods or services, this procedure provides a fair and consistent approach to how municipal corporate resources can and cannot be used during a municipal election as well as provincial and federal elections.

This Policy recognizes that Members of Council are holders of their office until the end of the term and supports them in continuing to fulfill their responsibilities as Members. Nothing in this procedure shall preclude a Member from performing their duty as an elected official, nor inhibit them from representing the interests of their constituents, even during a municipal election. Members are accountable for their adherence to this Policy. This Policy allows the Town to balance the need for freedom of expression and assembly of Candidates and its legal responsibility to ensure that no Candidate, Registered Third Party or Political Party is provided with an unfair advantage.

This Policy aligns with the Town's Employee Code of Conduct, Town employees are expected to preserve the public trust and confidence in the Town and apply the core values of their code of conduct to their daily work. Town employees are ultimately responsible for conducting themselves in accordance with the Employee Code of Conduct as well as this Policy.

SCOPE

This policy applies, where applicable, to municipal council and school board elections or by-elections, provincial or federal elections or by-elections and referendums.

This policy applies to:

- All Candidates for a municipal election or by-election;
- All Candidates for a provincial or federal election or by-election;
- All elected officials, or Members, of the Town including those not seeking re-election;
- All municipal Staff;
- Registered Third Parties; and members of the public.

LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

This policy is established in accordance with the statutory requirements set out in the *Municipal Elections Act*, 1996, Section 88.18.

Use of municipal, board resources

Before May 1 in the year of a regular election, municipalities and local boards shall establish rules and procedures with respect to the use of municipal or board resources, as the case may be, during the election campaign period. 2016, c.15, s. 56.

The *Municipal Elections Act*, 1996 also prohibits a municipality from contributing to Candidates.

Who cannot contribute

(4) For greater certainty, and without limiting the generality of subsection (3), the following persons and entities shall not make a contribution:

1. A federal political party registered under the *Canada Elections Act* or any federal constituency association or registered Candidate at a federal election endorsed by that party.
2. A provincial political party, constituency association, registered Candidate or leadership contestant registered under the *Election Finances Act*.
3. A corporation that carries on business in Ontario.
4. A trade union that holds bargaining rights for employees in Ontario.
5. The Crown in right of Canada or Ontario, a municipality or a local board. 2016, c. 15, s. 51.

POLICY

1. DEFINITIONS

1.1 “**Campaign(ing)**” means any activity by or on behalf of a Candidate, Political Party, Registered Third Party, or Question on a ballot meant to elicit support during the Election

Period. This does not include the appearance of Members, other Candidates or their supporters, or registrants at an event in their personal capacity without the display of any Campaign Material, signage or graphic which identifies the individual as a Candidate or registrant and without the solicitation of votes.

- 1.2 **“Campaign Materials”** means any materials used to solicit votes for a Candidate(s) 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.
- 1.3 **“Candidate”** means a person who has filed a nomination, and not withdrawn that nomination, for an office pursuant to section 33 of the *Municipal Elections Act*, 1996, and includes a person who has filed a nomination for election to a school board pursuant to the Education Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.E.2, as amended.
- 1.4 **“Clerk”** means the Clerk and Returning Officer for the Corporation of the Town of Wasaga Beach or their delegate.
- 1.5 **“Community Events”** means events staged by external organizations such as community groups and other levels of government. Examples include, but may not be limited to, festivals, fundraisers, other ticketed events, sporting events, community association meetings.
- 1.6 **“Corporate Resource”** means real property, goods and/or services, controlled, leased, acquired, or operated by the Town including but not limited to: facilities, parks, materials, equipment, monetary funds, technology, Town IT system and resources, databases, social media, intellectual property and supplies. Working hours, the time where the Town pays its Staff to complete certain duties or tasks, is also considered to be a corporate resource.
- 1.7 **“Election Period”** means the following:

Regular municipal election (includes regional and school board)	the period commences on the first day nominations may be filed and ending on Voting Day
Municipal by-election (includes regional and school board)	the period commences on the first day nominations may be filed and ending on Voting Day
Provincial or federal election	the election period commences the day the writ for the election is issued and ends on Voting Day
Provincial party leadership contests	the period commences with the date of registration as a Candidate with the Chief Electoral Officer of Ontario

	and ends with the date fixed for the leadership vote as filed with the Chief Electoral Officer of Ontario
Federal party leadership and nomination contests	the period commences when a contestant receives contributions, incurs expenses or borrows money/is deemed to be a contestant as stated in sections 478.2 (2) and 476.2 of the <i>Canada Elections Act</i> and ends with the date of selection

- 1.8 **“MEA”** means the *Municipal Elections Act*, 1996, as amended.
- 1.9 **“Member”** means a Member of the Town of Wasaga Beach Council, including the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.
- 1.10 **“Nomination Day”** has the same meaning as “Nomination Day” under the *Municipal Elections Act*. For a regular municipal election is the third Friday in August in the year of the election, as prescribed by the *Municipal Elections Act*.
- 1.11 **“Political Party”** means a Political Party for a provincial and/or federal election that is registered in accordance with applicable provisions of *Ontario’s Election Finances Act* or the *Canada Elections Act*.
- 1.12 **“Question”** means a question, by-law, or matter that is placed on the ballot for consideration by electors in a municipal or school board election in accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act*.
- 1.13 **“Registered Third Party”** has the same meaning as “Registered Third Party” under the *Municipal Elections Act* or “Third Party” under the *Election Finances Act* and *Canada Elections Act*.
- 1.14 **“Staff”** means an employee of the Corporation of the Town of Wasaga Beach including union and non-union employees, full-time, part-time and contract employees, seconded employees, as well as volunteers while they are acting in an official capacity with the Town.
- 1.15 **“Suppliers”** has the corresponding meaning of Supplier from the Town of Wasaga Beach Procurement policy and includes businesses that fall under the Supplier Code of Conduct.
- 1.16 **“Town”** means The Corporation of The Town of Wasaga Beach.
- 1.17 **“Town Events”** means events funded or organized by the Town of Wasaga Beach including events that may be jointly organized. This may include, but is not limited to: announcements, commemorative or memorial events, consultations and gatherings, facility openings, open houses.

- 1.18 **“Town Facilities”** means buildings, properties, parks, rooms or other parts therein, owned or operated by the Town of Wasaga Beach.
- 1.19 **“Voting Day”** means in a regular municipal election, the fourth Monday in October in the year of the election, or in the case of a by-election, the 45th day after Nomination Day, as noted in section 5 and subsection 65(4) of the *Municipal Elections Act*.
- 1.20 **“Voting Period”** means the period of time which an elector may vote in a municipal election, including advanced voting dates and extended voting in the use of alternate voting methods, and includes Election Day.
- 1.21 **“Voting Place”** means the entire property and all the boundaries associated with it, when such Voting Place is located within a public premise and shall mean all of the common elements when the Voting Place is located on private premises.

2. GENERAL POLICY PRINCIPLES

- 2.1 Nothing contained in this policy shall limit or constrain a Member from exercising their statutory functions.
- 2.2 The Town cannot contribute, including money, goods, services, to any Candidate, Registered Third Party, or in support of or opposition of a Question on the ballot during an Election Period.
- 2.3 Corporate Resources shall not be used by a Member, Registered Third Party or Candidate for Campaigning during the Election Period.
- 2.4 Members, Candidates, and Registered Third Parties shall not use the services of Town Staff for any Campaign activities during regular business hours or while the Town Staff is receiving compensation from the Town with the exception of the leave periods outlined in 3.3 of this policy.
- 2.5 Members, Candidates, and Registered Third Parties shall not use the services of Town Suppliers for any Campaign activities while the Supplier is directly engaged in the delivery of goods or services for which the Supplier is receiving compensation from the Town.

3. STAFF

- 3.1 Staff shall not use Corporate Resources in support of or in opposition to a Candidate, Registered Third Party or Political Party.
- 3.2 Staff are prohibited from Campaigning or working in support of a Candidate's, Registered Third Party's, or Political Party's campaign during their normal working hours or while on-call.
- 3.3 Staff who wish to campaign or work in support of a Candidate or Registered Third Party may do so only by taking a leave of absence without pay, using lieu time, personal time, vacation leave, or parental leave.

- 3.4 Staff may not canvass, or actively work in support of, a Candidate, Registered Third Party, or Political Party, while wearing a Town uniform, badge, logo or other item identifying them as Town Staff or while using a Town branded vehicle.
- 3.5 Town Staff who are on-call and require a Town branded vehicle to be parked at their place of residence shall avoid placing election signs on the property of their residence while the Town branded vehicle is present.
- 3.6 Staff may not display any Campaign Material on any Town Facility during their working hours or display it visibly during electronic meetings while working remotely.
- 3.7 During the Election Period, Staff may not be photographed with Candidates or at Candidate events while in uniform or wearing any clothing or paraphernalia that identifies them as Staff. Photos posted to a social media account or website prior to the Election Period are the exception to this provision.
- 3.8 Staff wishing to run as a Candidate for the Town of Wasaga Beach shall request and obtain a leave of absence without pay and abide by legislation governing such elections.
- 3.9 Uniformed Staff of the Town may not appear in uniform at campaign events or in Campaign Materials if they are running as a Candidate.
- 3.10 Staff working at the direction of a Member(s) shall not be assigned to work as election officers in a municipal election.
- 3.11 Staff who are also relatives of any Member, Candidate, or affiliate of a Registered Third Party, shall not be assigned to work as election officers in a municipal election.
- 3.12 Staff shall not use their official authority or influence for the purpose of interfering with or affecting the result of an election, nor use their official title while participating in Campaigning.
- 3.13 Nothing in this Policy shall preclude Staff from exercising their civic duty to participate in the municipal election process as a private citizen. However, Staff must be aware of public perception while engaging in campaign activities and ensure that their involvement does not create a perceived or actual conflict of interest with their official position.

4. SOCIAL MEDIA

- 4.1 Websites and social media operated by the Town may not be used to support or promote any election campaign.
- 4.2 Any content related to Members on the Town webpage shall become static and biographies shall be removed during the Election Period.
- 4.3 If a Member uses a social media account for Campaigning, such account must not be created or supported by Town resources. Social media accounts used for campaign purposes must utilize personal cell phones, tablets and/or computers, in compliance with subsections 6.4 and 6.5 of this Policy and must not make use of any social media management tool supported or paid for by Town resources.
- 4.4 Members who choose to create or use social media accounts for Campaigning must include, for the duration of the Election Period, a clear statement on each campaign website or social media account's homepage (or profile) indicating that the account is

being used for election campaign purposes and is not related to their duties as a Member of Council.

5. COMMUNICATION AND ADVERTISING

- 5.1 No communication (including social media, website, newsletters, publications etc.) produced, prepared, or distributed by the Town, Staff or Members, shall at any time promote, support or oppose a Candidate's or Political Party's candidacy or campaign using Town resources.
- 5.2 Members, Candidates, Registered Third Parties, and political parties, are prohibited from using photographs and videos produced for and owned by the Town.
- 5.3 Members, Candidates, Registered Third Parties, and political parties, are prohibited from using Member portraits and/or photographs funded by the Town, either as a corporate or Member expense, in Campaign Materials.
- 5.4 Members, Candidates and Registered Third Parties may not print or distribute reference to any of the Town's email addresses, telephone numbers, social media accounts, or facility addresses on any Campaign Materials.
- 5.5 The Clerk may develop and distribute information through various means for the purpose of advising and educating electors. Candidates are permitted to promote and distribute election information provided by the Clerk, provided that such information is not modified in any way.
- 5.6 Use of the Town's logo, brand, slogan, etc. in election Campaign Material, websites or social media is strictly prohibited except when providing a link to the Town's official website provided for election information to the public.
- 5.7 Candidates and Registered Third Parties may not record or capture images or videos, or erect signs, distribute Campaign Materials for campaign purposes on or at Town Facilities, except those spaces which have been permitted, rented and paid for in accordance with this Policy and the Town's Facility Allocation Policy.
- 5.8 Distribution lists or contact lists developed using Corporate Resources and in the custody and control of the Town shall not be used for election purposes.
- 5.9 In the Election Period, any Member taking part in a regular Town media opportunity, as arranged by the Town, must not engage in actions that could be seen as Campaigning and can only discuss the topic of the election to provide general information on processes and procedures but shall not reference candidacy or any campaign-related matters.
- 5.10 Members, Candidates or Registered Third Parties shall not submit any written materials to an agenda or make statements at a Council or Committee or Board meeting which may be construed as supporting the personal or political agenda of a Candidate during the Election Period.

6. TECHNOLOGY AND TOWN FUNDED DEVICES AND PLANS

- 6.1 Town owned or leased technology and software shall not be used for campaign activity whether by Members, Candidates, Registered Third Parties or Staff.
- 6.2 Technology shall mean, but not be limited to, laptops, tablets, mobile phones and devices, computers, printers, scanners, cameras, desktop phones etc.
- 6.3 Software shall mean, but not be limited to, word processing software, email software, document imaging, PDF software, social media and design software, records software, photo editing software, portals, web pages, and any other subscription-based service paid for by the Town.
- 6.4 Mobile phones, smart phones, tablets, and associated service plans, including internet service plans, that are purchased or paid for by the Town are considered Corporate Resources.
- 6.5 Members who have opted to be reimbursed for wireless communication device and internet charge in accordance with the Council Expense Policy will no longer be permitted to claim this expense during the Election Period if they have filed Nomination papers and are Candidates for re-election.

7. TOWN OWNED AND/OR OPERATED FACILITIES

- 7.1 Candidates and Registered Third Parties may not display Campaign Materials or hold/host campaign activities, or solicit outside of rented premises at Town facilities except subject to the following:
 - a. Candidates and Registered Third Parties pay the full market rental fees and rates for the use of such facilities in accordance with the Town's Facility Allocation Policy; and
 - b. Candidates and Registered Third Parties set up and remove all Campaign Materials, including, but not limited to, signs, posters, and other Campaign Material within the allotted rental period; and
 - c. Campaign Materials may only be displayed within the rented area designated within the rental agreement.
- 7.2 Despite subsection 7.1 of this Policy, Candidates and Registered Third Parties shall not use the Town Hall (30 Lewis Street, Wasaga Beach) to display Campaign Material or undertake Campaign activities.
- 7.3 Candidates and Registered Third Parties shall not rent Town facilities for Campaigning or campaign related activities on a date when there is a Voting Place established at that Town Facility.

8. TOWN EVENTS

- 8.1 Members, Candidates, and Registered Third Parties may attend a Town Event during the Election Period but may not display or distribute Campaign Materials or undertake any Campaign activities for themselves, a Political Party, Registered Third Party, or in support of or in opposition to a Question on a ballot.
- 8.2 Where a Member is invited to a Community Event, in the capacity of their elected position, they are not to speak of their candidacy, their intention to run, or any campaign-related matters.

9. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 9.1 The Town Clerk or designate shall be responsible for interpreting and administering this policy.
- 9.2 The Town Clerk is authorized to make such administrative updates as are necessary to maintain compliance and consistency with legislation, while respecting and preserving the intent of this policy.

10. POLICY ADMINISTRATION AND REVIEW

- 10.1 This policy will be reviewed no later than every four (4) years from the date of the most recent review. The Town Clerk will be responsible for initiating the review of this Policy.

11. ENFORCEMENT

- 11.1 The Clerk, or their designate, shall have the authority to investigate complaints and resolve any issues.
- 11.2 To file a complaint against a Member, Candidate or Registered Third Party for an alleged contravention of this Policy, a complainant must submit a formal complaint in writing to the Clerk via email to clerk@wasagabeach.com or by mail to the attention of the Clerk at 30 Lewis Street, Wasaga Beach, Ontario L9Z 1A1.
- 11.3 Written complaints must provide the full name of the complainant, their address and contact information including email, and set out specific examples and corresponding details of how the alleged use of particular Corporate Resources have contravened this Policy.
- 11.4 If an investigation by the Clerk or designate determines that a Staff members has contravened this Policy and/or its procedures, the failure on the part of Staff to comply with this Policy and/or its procedures may result in corrective action as appropriate, including discipline up to an including dismissal, to be conducted in accordance with Human Resources' processes and in alignment with collective agreements and terms and conditions of employment.

12. REFERENCES

Council Code of Conduct
Employee Code of Conduct
Council Expense Policy
Facility Allocation Policy

13. REFERENCES

[Municipal Act, 2001](#)
[Municipal Elections Act, 1996](#)