



Corporation of the Town of Hearst Use of Municipal Resources for Elections Purposes

1. Policy Statement

The Municipal Elections Act, 1996, establishes the election campaign finance rules for Candidates running in a municipal election. Public funds are not to be used for any election related purposes, including the promotion of, or opposition to, the candidacy of a person for elected office.

This policy does not preclude members of Council from performing their duties as Councillor, nor inhibit them from representing the interests of their constituents.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a consistent approach and direction regarding the use of municipal resources during the election campaign period in accordance with the Municipal Elections Act, 1996.

This policy also outlines the Town of Hearst's expectations of all election candidates and municipal employees during municipal, provincial or federal election campaigns.

3. Application

This policy is applicable to all Candidates and all members of Municipal Council, including any acclaimed member of Council or member of Council who is not seeking re-election. This policy is also applicable to all staff of the Town of Hearst.

Effective Nomination Day at 2:01 p.m., all restrictions noted in this policy will be applied to all Candidates, all members of Council, including acclaimed Candidates and those members of Council not seeking re-election.

Individuals who have questions about this policy are encouraged to contact the Clerk's Department to obtain further clarification.

4. Definitions

"Campaign Period" begins the date a Candidate files his/her nomination through to voting day in a municipal election year. For federal and provincial elections, the campaign period begins with the issuance of the writ through to voting day.

“Candidate” means a person who is running or has expressed an intention to run in a municipal, provincial or federal election, and shall be deemed to include a person seeking to influence other persons to vote for or against any candidate or any question or by-law submitted to the electors under section 8 of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996.

“Election Year” or “Election Period” means May 1st through to Voting Day during a regular municipal election year.

“Employees” or “Staff” includes full-time, part-time, and contract employees, paid by the Town of Hearst.

“Nomination Day” for a regular municipal election is the fourth Friday in July in the year of the election.

“The Act” means the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended from time to time, and includes any regulation made thereunder.

“The Town of Hearst” means The Corporation of the Town of Hearst.

5. Technology Related Provisions

- Candidates and members of Council shall not use Municipal Resources, for any election-related purposes, including computers, cell/smart phones, tablets, printers, scanners, or other services such as email, internet, and file storage.
- Web sites or domain names that are funded by the Town of Hearst shall not include any election-related campaign material or links to sites that feature election-related campaign material.
- The online list of candidates shall be the only area of the Town of Hearst’s website where links to external election campaign websites will be posted during the Election Period.
- Once a member of Council registers to be a Candidate, Facebook links and other social media accounts, as well as links to personal external website(s) will be removed from all Town of Hearst webpages and/or any social media platform.
- In addition, any website activity such as a blog page for a member of Council, will be deactivated and the page will be removed. In an Election Year, Mayor and Council biographies will remain static, and no changes to these pages will be allowed.

- The Town of Hearst's voice mail system shall not be used to record election related messages nor shall the computer network, including the Town of Hearst's e-mail system, be used to distribute election related correspondence.

6. Facilities Related Provisions

- Candidates may not campaign and/or distribute campaign literature during any function being hosted by the Town of Hearst, whether on municipal property or not.
- Candidates shall not use any municipally provided facilities for any election-related purposes, unless rented in accordance with the Town of Hearst rental procedures.
- Candidates shall abide to the Municipal Sign By-law No. 5-99 for the posting of signs and notices. In addition, no campaign related signs nor any other election-related material shall be displayed on any municipally owned or leased building where municipal offices are located (Educatôt Hub, water filtration plant, Claude Larose Recreation Centre, Heritage Sawmill Marketplace, Gilles Gagnon Welcome Centre, Town Hall, Public Works Garage, Foyer des pionniers, René Fontaine Municipal Airport, Public Library, Fire Hall).

7. Communications Related Provisions

- Members of Council are responsible for ensuring that the content of any communication material, printed, hosted or distributed by the Town of Hearst, is not election campaign related.
- Candidates shall not print or distribute any election campaign related material using municipal funds.
- The Town of Hearst will not distribute material, through electronic or non-electronic means, which it determines is election campaign related. The Town of Hearst's logo, crest, coat or arms, slogan, etc. shall not be printed or distributed on any election materials or included on any election campaign related website, website platforms, except in the case of a link to the Town's website to obtain information about the municipal elections.
- Photographs produced for and owned by the Town of Hearst shall not be used by Candidates for any election purposes.
- No advertising paid for by the Town of Hearst shall contain the name of a Councillor or the Mayor unless consistent with their duties as an elected official.

- In a municipal election year, Town of Hearst resources' budgets shall not be used to sponsor any advertisements, flyers, newsletters or householders from the day after Nomination Day up to and including final voting day.

8. Employee Provisions

- Employees engaged in political activities must take care to separate those personal activities from their official positions. Employees may participate in political activity at the federal, provincial and municipal levels, providing that such activity does not take place during work hours or use corporate assets or resources, or property. Notices, posters or similar material in support of a particular candidate or political party are not to be produced, displayed or distributed by employees on Town of Hearst work sites.
- Employees shall not canvass or actively work in support of a municipal candidate or party during normal working hours, unless they are on a leave of absence with or without pay or vacation leave.
- Employees shall not canvass or actively work in support of a municipal candidate or political party while wearing a uniform, badge, logo or any other item identifying them as an employee of The Corporation, or using a vehicle owned or leased by The Corporation.

9. Administration of the Policy

The Town Clerk is delegated the authority to make administrative changes to this policy that may be required from time to time due to legislative changes or if, in the opinion of the Town Clerk, the amendments do not change the intent of the policy.

Should a written complaint be received alleging contravention of this policy, the Town Clerk or her designate, shall have the delegated authority to investigate it. If a breach of this policy is confirmed, the person may be required to personally repay any of the costs associated with the breach and/or issue a public letter of apology to Council.

10. Review Period

This policy shall be reviewed the third year of the four year term of Council and will be revised to reflect the evolving nature of how technology is used or in light of any changes in legislation.

Adopted by Council on May 15, 2018

