



**CITY OF PORT COLBORNE
2026 MUNICIPAL ELECTION
PROCEDURE MANUAL**

Corporate Use of Resources Policy for Election Purposes

Section: Clerk's Division

Contact: City Clerk

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Primary Backup: Deputy Clerk

Secondary Backup: Election Coordinator

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Policy Statement

The purpose of this policy is to notify all registered candidates, including members of City Council, of the requirement to follow the provisions of the *Municipal Elections Act*, 1996, (MEA) as amended, and that:

- No member/candidate shall use the facilities, equipment, supplies, services, staff, or other resources of the municipality (including City letterhead, City business cards, City e-mail accounts, City computers, tablets, cell phones, and any Councillor budgets) for any election campaign or campaign-related activities;
- No member/candidate shall undertake campaign-related activities on municipal property during regular working hours; and
- No member/candidate shall use the services of persons during hours in which those persons receive any compensation from the municipality.

Purpose

To ensure that members of City Council, registered candidates, and staff adhere to the provisions of the MEA, as amended.

Scope

This policy is applicable to:

- all candidates for a municipal election or by-election;
- all candidates for a provincial or federal election or by-election;
- all elected officials of the town including those not seeking re-election;
- all municipal staff, including individuals employed by the offices of the elected officials;
- Registered third parties.

Definitions

In this policy:

“Blackout Period” is a term which refers to the temporary period from Nomination Day in a municipal election year to and including Voting Day in which certain privileges are discontinued for sitting members of Municipal Council and the Mayor;

“By-election” means an election other than a regular election;

“Candidate” means a person who has filed a nomination to run in a municipal, provincial or federal election, and shall be deemed to include third party advertisers and any 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 MEA;

“City of Port Colborne” means The Corporation of the City of Port Colborne;

“Corporate Resources” includes but is not limited to the City of Port Colborne staff, events, funds, information, and assets;

“Election Period” begins the first day that Candidates may file their nomination, as prescribed by the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, as amended, through to and including Voting Day;

“Municipal Facilities” means any real property owned or under the control of the City of Port Colborne;

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

“Nomination Day” for a regular municipal election is the date prescribed by the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, as amended;

“Staff” includes full-time, part-time, and contract employees, paid by the City of Port Colborne;

“Voting Day” is the day on which the final vote is to be taken in an election as prescribed by the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, as amended.

Policy

1. That in accordance with the provisions of the MEA:
 - a. Corporate resources may not be used for campaign related purposes;
 - b. Staff shall not canvass or actively work in support of a municipal, provincial, or federal candidate or party during normal working hours unless they are on a leave of absence without pay, lieu time, float day, or vacation leave;
 - c. Members of Council, including the Mayor, candidates, and registered third parties shall not use any municipal facilities for any election-related purposes. Campaign-related signs or any other election-related material shall not be displayed in any municipally owned facility;
 - d. Candidates shall not engage in any campaign related activity at a municipally-

sponsored event or festival;

- e. During the Blackout Period, no Member of Council, including the Mayor shall:
 - i. Advertise, including in municipality funded publications;
 - ii. Print, photocopy or distribute any newsletters unless so directed and approved by Council;
 - iii. Order office furniture or furnishings, except those of an emergency nature; and
 - iv. Order any stationery or business cards, except within reason and as needed to carry out their current duties.
- f. Members of Council, including the Mayor, shall not deliver any unsolicited material outside of their existing ward where the printing and/or distribution costs are paid by the municipality. Care should be taken to ensure that the mailing of newsletters be restricted to the member's ward only;
- g. Members of Council shall not:
 - i. Print or distribute any material using municipal funds that make reference to, or contains the names or photographs of, or identifies registered candidates for municipal elections; and that minutes of municipal council and committee meetings be exempt from this policy;
 - ii. Enter into joint ventures using corporate resources outside of their existing wards from Nomination Day to Voting Day, unless specifically approved by Council.
- h. Members of Council are responsible to ensure that the content of any communications material, including printed materials such as newsletters, advertising, etc. funded by the municipality for the operation of each Councillor's office, are not directly election-related;
- i. Websites or domain names that are funded by the municipality may not include any election-related campaign material;
 - i. Candidates are permitted to link to any City document available to the public or on a public City webpage from their campaign website;
 - ii. Candidates are not permitted to incorporate a video or other material

(i.e. photos) for which the City has proprietary rights on the Candidate's own webpage;

- iii. Sitting Members of Council are permitted to place campaign phone numbers, website, and e-mail addresses on the election page of the City's website, which is available and authorized for use by all Municipal Candidates;
 - iv. Sitting Members of Council shall not use the City's IT resources, including individual websites linked through the City's website and social media accounts used for communication, for any election campaign and/or campaign-related activities;
 - v. If a Member of Council uses any social media account for campaigning, such accounts must not be created or supported by corporate resources. Social media accounts used for campaign purposes must utilize personal cell phones, tablets and/or computers; and
 - vi. Sitting Members of Council who choose to create or use social media accounts for campaigning must include, for the duration of the election period, a clear and easily accessible statement on each campaign website or social media account's home page indicating that the account is being used for election campaign purposes and is not related to their duties as a Member of Council.
 - j. Candidates must not, under any circumstances, use a City logo or any variation of it on any campaign material, election signs, social media, or campaign websites;
 - k. A City of Port Colborne e-mail address may not be used for the distribution of campaign related correspondence or include campaign related material;
 - l. Members of Council may not use the municipality's voicemail system and/or cell phones to record election related messages;
 - m. Photographs produced for and owned by the City of Port Colborne may not be used for any election purposes;
 - n. The policies contained herein also apply to an acclaimed member, a member not seeking re-election, or to a registered third party.
2. That the Municipal Clerk be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect to this policy.

Limitation

This policy does not restrict the City Clerk from utilizing municipal resources for the proper conduct of an election in accordance with the requirements of the MEA.

This policy does not preclude a member of Municipal Council or Regional Council from performing their duties as a Councillor or Regional Chair, nor inhibit them from representing the interests of the constituents who elected them.

Implementation

This policy shall become effective immediately upon approval by the Municipal Council.

Rationale and Legislative Authority

It is necessary to establish on the appropriate use of corporate resources during an election period to protect the interests of both members of Council and the City of Port Colborne.

The MEA prohibits a municipality from making any contribution to a candidate. The MEA also prohibits a candidate, or someone acting on the candidate's behalf, from accepting any contribution from a person who is not entitled to contribute.

Any use of the Corporation's resources by a Member of Council for their election campaign would be viewed as a contribution by the municipality to the member, which is a violation of the MEA.