

Corporate Policy

Council, Boards, Committees

Use of Corporate Resources during an Election

Approved by Council on:

Report Number: CL-17-17

Effective: January 1, 2018

Reviewed on: October 30, 2017

Next Review: October 2021

This policy provides guidance for the appropriate use of corporate resources and/or funding during a municipal election period.

Policy Statement:

The purpose of this policy is to clarify that all election candidates, including members of City Council are required to follow the provisions of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 and that during *a campaign period*:

- 1) No candidate shall use the facilities, equipment, supplies, services, staff or other resources of the City for any election campaign or campaign related activities, this includes City registered trademarks or City branding such as the logo or crest.
- 2) No candidate shall undertake campaign related activities on city property.
- 3) No candidate shall use the services of persons during hours in which those persons receive any compensation from the city *for election related purposes*.

Scope:

This policy applies to all candidates in a municipal election.

Objectives:

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The objective of this policy is to ensure that all candidates in a municipal election have equal access to resources during their election campaign.

Principles:

- Corporate resources, assets and funding shall not be used for any election-related purposes, this includes use of City registered trademarks or City branding such as the logo or crest.
- Staff 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 without pay, flex time or vacation.
- Candidates shall not use any municipally provided facilities for any election-related purposes. Neither campaign related signs nor any other election related material will be displayed in any municipally-provided facilities.
- The municipality's voice mail systems shall not be used to record election related messages or the computer network (including the City's e-mail system) to distribute election related correspondence.
- The municipality's logo, crest, coat of arms, slogan etc. shall 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 City's website to obtain information about the municipal election.
- Photographs produced for and owned by the City of Burlington shall not be used for any election purposes.
- Distribution lists or contact lists developed utilizing corporate resources or through contact in a Member of Council's role shall not be utilized for election purposes.
- Photos/images of external city facilities are permitted. Photos/images of internal city facilities are not permitted.
- Corporate facilities/properties *can only be* used for any election related purpose ***if there is a*** rental fee established corporately and the rental is available to all candidates and third parties. No facility/property shall be rented or used for any municipal election related purpose during any day that voting is taking place on the property including set-up, hosting or take-down activities.

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- The budgets for Members of Council for the period of January 1 to election day in a municipal election year will be restricted to 11/12ths of the approved annual budget amount with the provision that subsequent to election day:
 - i. New members of council be allocated a budget equal to 1/12th of the approved budget amount for the month of December; and
 - ii. Re-elected members of council have available to them the balance of funds remaining as of Election Day.

From May 1 of a municipal election year until Election Day inclusive:

- Staff are expected to take extra care to ensure that they behave in a manner that residents, members of the existing City Council and potential candidates for election see as impartial, fair and unbiased.
- Staff are to consult with their Manager prior to agreeing to attend a ward meeting or similar function within any ward or combination of wards.
- Links to all social media, blogs and external websites will be removed from Council member pages.
- City Talk issues will not include information or messages from any member of council nor photographs of any member of council.
- Council communications expenditures will not be approved. Advertising of ward meetings and drop in sessions will be at the council member's/candidate's cost, not advertised in the City's update column within the Burlington Post. Printing and distribution of newsletters for members of council will be discontinued, unless approved by Council. Photographs of members of Burlington City Council will not appear in advertising placed by or paid for by the City of Burlington.
Communication expenditures will be permitted with the approval of the City Clerk in the case of emergency situations, as part of a pre-approved communications plan or an urgent neighbourhood issue that requires a timely response.
- Council's biographies, speeches by members of council, ward meetings, links and 'news from your ward councillor' will be removed from the Mayor and Council web pages of the city's web site, leaving only the name and photo of the elected representative, their contact information including staff support, their ward map, and a list of their current representation on local boards and citizen committees.

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- If staff are hosting a public meeting of any kind, all municipal council members and candidates (who have submitted nomination forms for that municipal election) present at the meeting will be introduced. All candidates must advise the organizer/host of the event of their presence in order to ensure they are recognized.
- Assistants to Councillors will not attend ward advisory or ward open house meetings.
- Expenditures for gifts and donations from council members will be limited to those boards, projects and committees that the council member was appointed to by council.
- Ordering of office furniture and furnishings, except those of an emergency nature, will be discontinued for the Councillors Office and Mayor's Office.

Community Event Funding in Councillor's Budget

- ***Each year five thousand dollars is allocated per ward for support of community events, during an election year this funding will be administered by the Manager of Community Development in the Parks & Recreation Department. In non-election years, the funds will once again be administered by the Ward Councillors. In both election and non-election years the expenses will be reported on annually as part of the council expense reporting.***

Work of a Political Nature

To avoid any perceived conflict of interest, staff are discouraged from assisting with municipal election campaigns in Burlington, including posting election signs on their property, phone and e-mail solicitation, distribution of brochures and wearing candidate buttons.

Public Information

Election information will be available through the local media and on the City's web site at www.burlington.ca. The names of candidates will be posted as soon as possible following receipt in the Clerks office of the required fees and paperwork.

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Special Events

Staff will continue to invite all members of Council to the City's special events throughout an election year. The City Clerk will ensure that the dates, locations and times of major public special events known to the City Clerk are also communicated to all candidates.

References:

Municipal Elections Act, 1996

Roles:

Accountable:

City Clerk

Responsible:

City Clerk