SECTION:	MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT
DEPARTMENT/DIVISION:	CITY MANAGER / OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
SUBJECT:	**USE OF CORPORATE RESOURCES: MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS**

POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the City of Thunder Bay that no candidates in a Municipal Election or By-election shall utilize any resource of the Corporation of the City of Thunder Bay in support of an election campaign.

This policy sets out provisions for the use of City facilities, resources and infrastructure during an election period. This is a requirement of the *Municipal Elections Act*, 1996 ("Act") and is in order to preserve the integrity of the elections process. This policy allows the City to balance the need for freedom of expression and assembly of candidates and its legal responsibility to ensure that no candidate, registered third party advertiser or political party is provided with an unfair advantage.

This policy recognizes that members of City Council hold their offices until the end of the term and supports members in fulfilling their responsibilities as publicly elected representatives. Nothing in this policy shall preclude a Member of Council from performing their duty as an elected official, nor inhibit them from representing the interests of their constituents.

PURPOSE

It is the purpose of this policy to set out restrictions on the use of Corporate Resources by candidates in a Municipal Election and any By-elections so that no advantage exists for one candidate over another. The Act requires municipalities to establish rules and procedures for the use of municipal resources during the election period (section 88.18). The Act also prescribes that the City cannot make a contribution (including money, goods and services) to any candidate, registered third party advertiser or political party during an election (sections 88.8(4) and 88.12(4)). The *Election Finances Act* and the *Canada Elections Act* enact restrictions for contributions for both provincial and federal election campaigns.

RESPONSIBLITIES:

The City Clerk or their designate, as the Returning Officer for Municipal Elections is responsible for the co-ordination and management of this policy.

DEFINITIONS

Candidate: Any individual who has submitted their nomination form under section 33 of the Act whether they be an incumbent member of Council or a member of the public.

Corporate Resource: Any service, equipment or financial aid provided by the Corporation of the City of Thunder Bay. Including but not limited to Administrative Staff of the municipality, communication devices and supporting technology, telephone lines and associated numbers and municipal budgets.

Election: Includes any and all general Municipal Election or By-election that may be conducted to fill seats on the City Council.

Administrative Staff: Includes any and all persons employed by the City of Thunder Bay, be they full time, part time or seasonal employees.

Social Media: Websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking, including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, Snapchat, and TikTok.

USE OF CORPORATE RESOURCES

Corporate Email Addresses: Email addresses issued to members of City Council by the City of Thunder Bay in the format **firstname.lastname@thunderbay.ca** or **firstinitallastname@thunderbay.ca** shall not be advertised or promoted as a means of contacting a member of Council as a candidate in an election. If contacted through a corporate email address candidates shall respond only through their personal or election campaign addresses.

Telephone Numbers: The advertisement or promotion of all telephone numbers provided by the City of Thunder Bay, be they for a land line or cellular telephone, as a point of contact for a candidate's election campaign is prohibited. Telephone calls received on those numbers may be completed, however voice mail messages must be returned using a number supplied by the candidate, personally or through their election campaign.

Ward/Townhall Meeting: No member of Council shall conduct a Ward/Townhall meeting beyond June 30th in an election year. Promotion of Ward/Townhall meetings from January to June in an election year shall be limited to a single boosted advertisement, regardless of social media platform, the cost of which to be charged to the member's Corporate Budget. Advertisements of Ward/Townhall meetings in print or other media will be limited to a single ad, run once, with costs charged to the member's Corporate Budget.

Corporate Budgets: No members of Council shall use any portion of any budget to which they have access to in support of the election campaign activities of any candidate.

Administrative Resources: At no time shall a candidate solicit the support of any member of the Administrative Staff of the City of Thunder Bay for any activity in support of their election campaign (this includes requesting election signs be posted at personal or professional addresses, wearing of campaign promotional material or assisting with campaign events). Staff of the City of Thunder Bay are expressly prohibited from engaging in, promoting or participating in the campaign of any candidate in an election and shall not perform any work that might do so. This may include, but not limited to use of photocopiers, review of advertising, support from

Corporate Communications & Community Engagement, and use of City indoor or outdoor facilities.

Media Releases/Public Messaging: The City's media releases or materials will not reference the name of a Member of Council. Where the City would typically name a specific Member of Council or the Mayor in its communications or media materials during an election period, it will make reference to the generic term "Councillor Ward XX" or "Mayor of Thunder Bay" without naming the specific Member of Council. This practice will be used for all City programs, events, announcements and to ensure effective communications with residents and businesses with respect to operational requirements, impacts or emergency situations.

Advertising:

- The City's logo, crest, slogans, etc., may not be printed, posted or distributed on any election-related campaign materials or included on any election-related website, except to link to the City's website to obtain information about the municipal election.
- Advertising/promotional materials (video, photographs, web ads) created by City employees or with City resources may not be used for any election purpose or in campaign materials.
- Candidates may not post photographs of themselves with City employees in uniform.

Social Media: Members should hold separate social media accounts for two purposes. The first for the purpose of connecting with constituents as a publicly elected member of council. The second should be the candidate page/link/account which shares only candidate information, statements on behalf of the candidate and campaign advertising/promotional material.

Acting Mayor Assignments: The protocol for Acting Mayor assignments will continue as per By-law BL 69/2021. The member assigned as Acting Mayor for each month will be called on first to fill the role of Mayor should the Mayor be unavailable. When the Acting Mayor is unavailable, the process will follow chronological order of assignment based on availability. There should be no request to Administration to attend specific events as Acting Mayor in an effort to promote candidacy. While fulfilling the role of Acting Mayor there may be no campaigning while in attendance. No election signs may be posted and no campaign materials may be disseminated at City events.

Attendance at Public Events: Elected officials are permitted to attend City-organized events or events held at City facilities and act as ceremonial participants in their capacity as elected officials. No member may campaign while in attendance. No election signs may be posted and no campaign materials may be disseminated at City events.

The provisions in this Policy may also be subject to additional City by-laws and policies.

REFERENCE

Municipal Elections Act, 1996, Section 88.18

Report No. R 34/2022 (City Manager's Office - Office of the City Clerk)

APPROVED BY:	City Council	***Date:***	June 4, 2022
Replacing/Amending:			
Originating Department:	City Manager		
Contact:	City Clerk		
Departmental Procedural Manual:	Yes		
Affected Departments:	All		