



# Policy

Department/Section <b>Administration</b> <b>Corporate Communications</b>	Policy # <b>POL-ADM-20</b>
Subject <b>Corporate Communications</b> <b>During an Election Year</b>	Enacted by Council: December 15, 2010 December 13, 2017
	Motion # Motion No. C101215-5 Motion No. C171213-18

## Purpose

The *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* regulates the conduct of municipal and school board elections in Ontario, and sets out roles for municipal Clerks and Councils. Pursuant to the provisions of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* a municipality is prohibited from contributing to any person for his or her election campaign.

The purpose of this policy is to establish appropriate communications behavior during a Municipal Election to ensure all candidates receive equal opportunity to campaign while adhering to the Act and Legislation, and to the recent changes to Bill 181, Municipal Elections Modernization Act, 2016 and Bill 68, Modernizing Ontario's Municipal Legislation Act, 2016.

**This policy shall not preclude a Member of Council from performing their job as an elected official, nor impede them from representing the interests of their constituents.**

This policy does not replace or override the Use of Corporate Resources for Election Purposes Policy POL-ADM-11, enacted by Council on January 13, 2010.

## Scope

This policy applies specifically to employees whose role requires them to interact with elected representatives, candidates and/or the media.

## Definitions

<b>Township/Corporate</b>	Refers to the Township of Oro-Medonte
<b>Corporate Services/ Corporate Communications</b>	Refers to Corporate Services and/or Corporate Communications staff members.

<b>Senior Management Team</b>	A team of individuals comprised of the head of each department. Specifically, the following positions: <i>Chief Administrative Officer; Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer; Director, Operations and Community Services; Director, Corporate Services; Director, Development Services; Director, Fire &amp; Emergency Services; Manager, Health &amp; Safety and Human Resources.</i>
<b>Candidate</b>	Person nominated for an office by filing nomination papers with the Clerk's office, in person or by an agent, as per specified Act and legislation.
<b>Township Resources</b>	Refers to all Township equipment, supplies, services, including internet access, cellular telephone accounts. Resources also refers to Township staff, social media accounts, website, letterhead, business cards, logo and crest, photos taken which are the property of the Township, as well as email accounts, notebook computers, and telephone lines.
<b>Interview Requests</b>	Requests made to the Township from members of the media, for information or quotations on a topic(s) related to Township events, incidents, or issues.
<b>All Candidates Meeting</b>	Meeting(s) organized by a group not affiliated with any particular candidate(s) to which all candidates running in the Municipal Election are invited to participate.

The purpose of defining **Campaign Period** is to ensure that existing Council members running for another term do not use their role as an elected official to the benefit of their campaign. It will also allow them to concentrate on their campaign while still representing their constituents in an impartial manner.

**Campaign Period** The period of time from which nominations can be filed to the end of the campaign as outlined in the *Municipal Elections Act*, and in the Election Calendar as part of the recent changes in the Municipal Elections Modernization Act, 2016. The first day that nominations can be filed for a regular election will be **May 1st**. As per section 88.24, "(1) For the purposes of this Act, a candidate's election campaign period for an office shall be determined in accordance with the following rules:

1. The election campaign period begins on the day on which he or she files a nomination for the office under section 33.
2. The election campaign period **ends on December 31 in the case of a regular election and 45 days after voting day in the case of a by-election.**"

## **Policy**

Candidates may not use the services of any Township staff to assist with any communication activity associated with the preparation or distribution of campaign related materials or events. Nor shall the candidates distribute media releases, newsletters or other correspondence materials using Township resources, including electronic communications with the support or assistance from the Township's Corporate Communications staff or other departmental staff.

Commencing at the start of the Campaign Period (May 1<sup>st</sup>), interview requests and inquiries received by the Township will be directed to Corporate Communications and arranged with the respective Senior Manager.

During the Campaign Period, no member of Council shall act as the Township's corporate spokesperson on any matter. Corporate Communications **will not** arrange media interviews for candidates or existing Members of Council. Further, any media representatives wishing to interview existing Council members will be requested to contact the respective candidate personally.

During the Campaign Period, requests for meetings with elected officials that are deemed by the Director, Corporate Services and/or Chief Administrative Officer to relate to a personal political campaign will not be supported by Township resources.

During the Campaign Period, Township advertising material related to the Municipal Election will remain factual with no references to content promoting a particular candidate or campaign platform.

## **Procedure**

1. Municipal Election related media and advertising requests must be submitted to Corporate Communications for approval by the Director, Corporate Services and/or Clerk and/or Chief Administrative Officer prior to publication or release.
2. Director, Corporate Services and/or Clerk and/or Chief Administrative Officer shall have the final approval of all election related information, made on behalf of the Township, for publication. It is the responsibility of the person(s) making the request to ensure the information has been submitted correctly and has been approved for publication.

## **Responsibilities**

The Corporate Services Department has overall responsibility to manage and monitor compliance with this policy through ongoing liaison and approval by the Director, Corporate Services, and/or Clerk as the Returning Officer administering the municipal election.

This policy may be reviewed prior to and/or following an election period and updated as required.