

081 - USE OF CORPORATE RESOURCES FOR ELECTION PURPOSES

Policy #	081
Effective Date	March 10, 2026
Status	DRAFT.
Final Approver	Council.

1.0 Interpretation

1.1 In this policy, unless the context requires otherwise:

"Canada Elections Act" means the *Canada Elections Act*, S.C. 2000, c. 9;

"candidate" means a person who is running or has expressed an intention to run in a municipal, provincial, or federal election, and includes an acclaimed *candidate* and a *council member* who meets the definition of *candidate*;

"City" means The Corporation of the City of Kingston;

"clerk" means the City Clerk or their designate;

"City employee" means a person who performs work or supplies services directly to the *City* for monetary compensation under an employment contract but does not include *council members*;

"CMT member" means a member of the *City's* corporate management team and includes the person appointed chief administrative officer by the *City*, the person appointed treasurer by the *City*, the person appointed city solicitor by the *City*, and a commissioner responsible for the leadership and operation of a portfolio of *City* departments;

"corporate resources" include *City employees*, and events, information, supplies, services, facilities, assets, and infrastructure that are owned by the *City*;

"council member" means a person elected to office on the council of the *City*;

"director" means the director of a *City* department;

"Election Finances Act" means the *Election Finances Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c.E.7;

"election year" means January 1 through to *voting day* during a regular municipal election year;

"**manager**" means a *City employee* who reports directly to a *director*;

"**Municipal Elections Act, 1996**" means the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, S.O. 1996, c. 32, Sched.;

"**nomination day**" means, in the case of a regular municipal election, the third Friday in August in the year of the election, and in the case of a by-election, the date established in accordance with section 65 of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*;

"**supervisor**" means a *City employee* who reports directly to a *manager*;

"**third-party advertiser**" means any individual, corporation or trade union registered in accordance with subsection 88.6 of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, subsection 37.5 of the *Election Finances Act*, or subsection 353 of the *Canada Elections Act*; and

"**voting day**" means the day on which the final vote is to be taken in an election.

- 1.2 In this policy, "include", "includes" and "including" indicate that the subsequent list is not exhaustive.
- 1.3 A reference to any legislation, regulation, by-law, rule, policy or provision thereof includes a reference to any legislation, regulation, by-law, rule or provision thereof enacted in substitution thereof or amendment thereof.
- 1.4 A reference to legislation includes all of the regulations made thereunder.
- 1.5 A reference to the position or title of any *City employee* includes a reference to any position or title created in substitution thereof.

2.0 Application & Purpose

- 2.1 This policy applies to all *City employees, council members, candidates, third-party advertisers* and any individual acting on behalf of a *council member, candidate or third-party advertiser*.
- 2.2 The purpose of this policy is to:
 - (a) satisfy the *City's* obligations under the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, the *Election Finances Act*, and the *Canada Elections Act* to establish requirements and restrictions related to campaign finances, the use of *corporate resources* during an election campaign period, and municipal contributions to election campaigns; and

(b) provide direction regarding the use of *corporate resources* during an election campaign period.

2.3 All restrictions noted in this policy are effective as of 2:01 p.m. on *nomination day* and apply throughout the campaign periods defined in subsections 3.1 through 3.4 of this policy.

3.0 Campaign Period

3.1 For municipal elections, in the case of a regular election, the campaign period commences on the date a *candidate* or *third-party advertiser* files their nomination or registers with the *clerk* and ends on December 31 of the same year, unless the campaign period is extended pursuant to the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*.

3.2 For municipal elections, in the case of a by-election, the campaign period commences on the date a *candidate* or *third-party advertiser* files their nomination or registers with the *clerk* and ends 45 days after *voting day*, unless the campaign period is extended pursuant to the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*.

3.3 Despite subsections 3.1 and 3.2 of this policy, the campaign period is deemed to end: on the day a nomination is withdrawn; on *nomination day*, if the nomination is rejected; or on the day the *candidate* or *third-party advertiser* files their financial statement pursuant to the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*.

3.4 For federal and provincial elections, the campaign period commences upon the issuance of the writ of election and ends on *voting day*.

4.0 Technology Related Provisions

4.1 *Candidates* and *third-party advertisers* must not use *corporate resources*, including computers, cell phones, tablets, printers, scanners, or other services such as email, internet, video conferencing, cloud-based software and file storage, for any election-related purposes.

4.2 Websites and social media accounts that are managed by the *City* must not include any election-related campaign material, with the exception of the *candidate* list on the *City* website, where links to *candidate* campaign websites will be posted during the campaign period defined in subsections 3.1 and 3.2 of this policy.

4.3 Any links to *council member* social media accounts will be removed from *City* websites within two business days of a *council member* filing their nomination. Any election-related social media activity using *corporate resources* is prohibited.

4.4 In an *election year*, *council member* biographies on the *City* website will remain static.

- 4.5 If a *council member* is a *candidate* in a provincial or federal election, their biography on the *City* website will remain static for the campaign period.
- 4.6 The *City* voicemail system must not be used to record election-related campaign messages and the *City* computer network, including the *City* email system, must not be used to distribute election-related campaign correspondence.
- 4.7 Where an incumbent *council member* has filed their nomination to be a *candidate* and subsequently receives election-related communications (for example, phone calls or emails) through their *City* email address or phone number, the *council member* must provide the individual with campaign-related contact information without embellishment.

5.0 Facility Related Provisions

- 5.1 *Candidates* and *third-party advertisers* must not campaign and/or distribute campaign literature during any event being hosted by the *City*, regardless of location.
- 5.2 *Candidates* and *third-party advertisers* must not use any *City* owned facilities for any election-related purposes unless the *candidate* or *third-party advertiser* has rented the facility in accordance with the *City's* standard facility rental procedures.
- 5.3 All *candidates* and *third-party advertisers* must comply with *City of Kingston By-Law Number 2019-100, Election Sign By-law*, regarding the display of campaign signs and other election related material in *City* facilities.
- 5.4 *Candidates* and *third-party advertisers* must not engage *City employees* in campaigning activities during the *City employees'* working hours.

6.0 Communications Related Provisions

- 6.1 *Council members* must not use the content of any communication material printed, hosted, or distributed by the *City* on the *council member's* behalf for election campaign related purposes.
- 6.2 *Candidates* and *third-party advertisers* must not print or distribute any election campaign related material using municipal funds.
- 6.3 *Candidates* and *third-party advertisers* must not use the logo, crest, coat of arms, letterhead, flag or slogan of the *City*, or any photographs produced for and owned by the *City* on any campaign materials, whether electronic or printed. Other images or text that suggest endorsement by the *City* are also prohibited. This prohibition does not apply to the use or display of links to the *City's* election website provided by the *clerk*.

- 6.4 No advertising or communications material issued by the *City* may contain the name of a *council member*, other than within the context of their duty as an elected official.
- 6.5 From the day after *nomination day* up to and including *voting day* in an *election year*, *council members* must not use *corporate resources* or individual *council member* budgets to sponsor any advertisements, events, flyers, newsletters, or householders.
- 6.6 *Candidates* and *third-party advertisers* may purchase advertising on *corporate resources* or in *City* facilities in accordance with the *City's Advertising and Revenue Generation Policy*.

7.0 City Employee Provisions

- 7.1 *City employees* must not use *corporate resources* in the production of materials in support of a *candidate* or *third-party advertiser*.
- 7.2 Subject to subsection 6.6 of this policy, *City employees* must not display in *City* facilities notices, posters, or similar material in support of a particular *candidate*, or *third-party advertiser*.
- 7.3 *City employees* must not canvass or actively work in support of a *candidate* or *third-party advertiser* during their working hours.
- 7.4 *City employees* may canvass or actively work in support of a *candidate* or *third-party advertiser* during non-working hours or by using approved leave time, such as absence without pay, lieu time, flex day, or vacation leave.
- 7.5 *City employees* must not canvass or actively work in support of a *candidate* or *third-party advertiser* while wearing a uniform, badge, logo, or any other item identifying them as a *City employee* or using a vehicle owned or leased by the *City*.
- 7.6 *City employees* must not use their job title or position with the *City* in any campaign materials in which the *City employee* appears.
- 7.7 *City employees* may accommodate requests from *candidates* for meetings with senior *City employees* and for tours of *City* facilities, based on *City employee* and facility availability. If a request is accommodated, *City employees* must make a similar opportunity available to all *candidates*.
- 7.8 In observing and applying this policy, *City employees* must also comply with the *Employee Code of Conduct Policy* and other relevant policies.

8.0 Limitations

- 8.1 Nothing in this policy will preclude a *council member* from performing their duties as an elected representative or from representing the interests of their constituents.
- 8.2 Nothing in this policy will preclude the *clerk* from performing their statutory duties or restrict *the clerk* from distributing information respecting election activities or undertaking actions that assist electors in exercising their right to vote.

9.0 Administration

- 9.1 *CMT members, directors, managers and supervisors* must take reasonable steps within their authority to direct compliance with this policy.
- 9.2 The *clerk* is responsible for:
 - (a) communicating this policy to *candidates and third-party advertisers*;
 - (b) directing *candidate and third-party advertiser* compliance with this policy; and
 - (c) resolving any issues or conflicts relating to this policy.
- 9.3 A *City employee* who breaches this policy may be subject to discipline up to and including dismissal.
- 9.4 This policy must be reviewed once during each term of council. A revised policy will be established prior to May 1 in an *election year*.

10.0 Advice from Integrity Commissioner

- 10.1 *Council members* may seek advice from the *City's Integrity Commissioner* with respect to this policy.

11.0 Approval Authority

Role	Position	Date Approved
Quality Review	Deputy City Clerk	December 30, 2025
Subject Matter Expert	City Clerk	January 12, 2026
Legal Review	City Solicitor	January XX, 2026
Management Review	City Solicitor	January XX, 2026

Final Approval	Council	
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12.0 Revision History

Effective Date	Revision	Description of Change
Date of the change		describe the sections that have been changed, added or deleted