

USE OF CORPORATE RESOURCES FOR ELECTION PURPOSES			
Effective Date	February 10, 2026	Policy Type Policy #	ELECTIONS EL-003
Responsibility	Clerk	Cross-Reference	
Approver	Council	Appendices	
Review Schedule	4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter Prior to Election Year	By-Law No.	2026-11

## 1) DEFINITIONS

**Act** means the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996 S.O. 1996, C.32, as amended*.

**Campaign Period** means the official campaign period of a municipal election, being from May 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup> in a regular election year or in the case of a by-election as determined by the Act.

**Campaign Purpose or Campaign Materials** means any activity undertaken during an election to promote or oppose the candidacy of an individual seeking office, or to advocate for a “yes” or “no” response to a question on the ballot, and includes any materials, in any form, produced or distributed for that purpose.

**Candidate** means a person who has been nominated under *section 33 of the Act*.

**Certified Candidate** means a candidate whose nomination has been certified under *section 35 of the Act*.

**Clerks** means the Clerk of the municipality as per *section 228 of the Municipal Act, 2001 S.O. c.25, as amended*.

**Committee or Board of Council** means a committee, board, or other body established by Council, by by-law or resolution, to provide advice, make recommendations, or carry out functions on behalf of the Town of Cochrane. This includes any committee, board, task force, or similar entity to which Council appoints one or more Members of Council, staff, or members of the public.

**Mayor** means the Mayor of the Town of Cochrane as per *section 228, 226.1 and Part VI.1 of the Municipal Act, 2001 S.O. c.25, as amended*.

**Members of Council** means Council members of the Town of Cochrane as per *section 224 of the Municipal Act, 2001 S.O. c.25, as amended*.

**Municipal Resources** means real property, goods and serviced owned, controlled, leased acquired, or operated by the Town including but not limited to facilities, parks, vehicles, equipment, monetary funds, technology, IT system and resources, social media, logos and supplies.

**Registered Third Party** means in relation to an election in a municipality, an individual, corporation or trade union that is registered under *section 88.6 of the Act*.

**Town Staff** means any union or non-union or casual or part-time or temporary or seasonal or full-time employee of the Town of Cochrane.

**Town** means the Corporation of the Town of Cochrane and may be referred to throughout this policy as “the Town” or “the Corporation.”

## 2) POLICY STATEMENT

This policy establishes provisions respecting the use of the Town of Cochrane’s facilities, resources, infrastructure and personnel for election purposes to maintain the independent and non-partisan functions of municipal government.

This policy also meets the legislative requirements of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996, S.O. C.32, as amended*, to adopt and maintain a policy respecting the use of corporate resources as it relates to municipal elections.

This policy is not intended to limit the ability of the mayor and members of council from discharging their duties as elected officials, or to limit the role of the mayor as the head of council, chief executive officer and responsibilities under *part VI.1 of the Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. C.25, as amended*.

## 3) PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide a consistent approach and clear direction regarding the use of municipal resources during an election campaign period. This policy is established in accordance with *Section 88.18 of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, S.O. 1996, c. 32, as amended*, which requires municipalities and local boards to adopt rules and procedures governing the use of municipal or board resources during an election campaign period. It also reflects the provisions of *Sections 88.8(4) and 88.12(4) of the Act*, which prohibit municipalities from making contributions to candidates or registered third parties in the form of money, goods, or services.

This policy is intended to:

- a) Ensure compliance with the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996, S.O. C.32, as amended*, with regards to the prohibition of a municipality making contribution (s) to a candidate or a registered third party in the form of money, goods or services;
- b) Ensure candidates and registered third parties are treated fairly and consistently within the municipality;
- c) Ensure integrity of the election process is maintained at all times;
- d) Establish the appropriate use of municipal resources during an election campaign period in order to:
  - i) Protect the interest of the mayor, members of council, candidates, registered third parties, town staff and the corporation; and
  - ii) Ensure accountable and transparent practices.

#### 4) APPLICATION

This policy shall apply to the mayor and council members, committees and boards of council, candidates, including certified candidates, third party advertisers, town staff, including volunteers and individuals acting on behalf of the Corporation of the Town of Cochrane.

#### 5) POLICY

##### General Provisions

- 5.1 Municipal resources shall not be used for any campaign purposes.
- 5.2 Town funds shall not be used to acquire any resources for campaign purposes.
- 5.3 Benefitting from the use of any corporate pricing established under the Town's procurement policy for campaign purposes is not permitted.
- 5.4 The Town's logos, crest, slogan or branding shall not be used, printed or distributed on any campaign materials, or included on any campaign website, except in the case of a link to the Town's website to obtain information about the municipal election.
- 5.5 Photographs produced for or owned by the Town shall not be used for campaign purposes, including council photos, or headshots produced for Town business. Photographs taken with Town equipment or sent through the Town's accounts shall not be utilized.
- 5.6 The services of any member of the Town staff shall not be used for any election campaign purposes during the hours in which that individual receives any compensation from the Town.
- 5.7 Distribution lists or contact lists developed or provided utilizing municipal resources shall not be used for campaign purposes. For the purposes of municipal elections, the only authorized list is the voters' list supplied by the Clerk's office, as permitted under *section 23.4 of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996*.
- 5.8 The mayor and members of council attending events or meetings as representatives of the Town are not permitted to campaign while conducting Town business.
- 5.9 In any material created, printed or distributed by the Town, the following individuals are not permitted to include election-related references: the Mayor, members of Council, candidates, certified candidates, third party advertisers or town staff.

Specifically, these materials must not:

- Indicated that an individual is a registered candidate in the election;
- Identify that the author or any other individual will be running for office; or
- Profile, promote, or otherwise make reference to candidates in the election.

## **Technology**

- 5.10 Municipal resources such as computers, cell/smart phones, telephones, tablets, printers, scanners, copiers, e-mail, voicemail, file storage, or any other equipment or technology owned by the Town shall not be used for campaign purposes.
- 5.11 Websites and domain names that are operated or funded by the Town shall not include any campaign materials or links to any sites which include campaign material.
- 5.12 All social media accounts, websites, or other digital profiles created, managed, or paid for by the Town for the Office of the Mayor or members of Council must not be used for election campaigning. This includes any accounts that exist prior to the election.

Candidates seeking election, including incumbent members of Council or the Mayor, must create separate personal accounts for campaign-related activity. These campaign accounts:

- Shall be maintained entirely separate from any official Town accounts;
- Shall not be created, operated, or supported through the use of Town resources; and
- Shall not use any Town logos, trademarks, or other official identifiers.

All campaign-related content must be posted or distributed exclusively through these personal campaign accounts, ensuring a clear separation between official Town communications and election activities.

## **Use of Municipal Facilities and Property**

- 5.13 Candidates and third-party advertisers are not permitted to use any Town facilities available for public rental for campaign purposes.
- 5.14 Candidates and third-party advertisers shall not otherwise campaign and/or distribute/display campaign literature or materials on Town owned or lease properties.
- 5.15 Candidates and third-party advertisers shall not campaign and/or distribute and/or display campaign materials during any function or event hosted by the Town, whether on municipal property or not.

## **Town Staff**

- 5.16 Town staff shall not participate in campaign activities during their normal working hours or anytime they are receiving remuneration from the Town. This includes providing administrative support to candidates such as photocopying or providing technical assistance.
- 5.17 Notices, posters or similar material promoting, supporting or opposing a particular candidate are not to be produced, displayed or distributed by staff on Town work sites or properties.
- 5.18 Town staff may engage in election campaign activities on their own personal time, as long as those activities are separate from their official positions and duties. Town staff must ensure

that their political activities do not create a perceived or actual conflict of interest in their day-to-day work.

- 5.19 While engaging in election campaign activities, Town staff shall not wear any clothing, such as uniform or badge, which identifies them as a Town of Cochrane employee. While engaging in election campaign activities, Town staff shall not use any vehicles, equipment, technology, supplies or other resources that are owned, leased or issued by the Town of Cochrane.

## **6) LIMITATIONS**

Nothing in this policy shall prevent the mayor or members of council from fulfilling their official duties or from representing the interests of the constituents who elected them.

## **7) AUTHORITY**

The Clerk or designate is responsible for communicating this policy to members of council, the mayor, candidates, certified candidates, council committees, council boards, third party advertisers and town staff.