

Policy Title:

27. Political Participation and Elections

Policy Type	Approval Date	Motion No.	Review Date
Operational	September 2023	013-2023	2026

General Policy

Library staff must act and appear to act in a non-partisan way at all times, but especially during elections, while supporting the democratic process, freedom of expression and informed discussion on political issues. The library must comply with legislation related to elections. These regulations are included in the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* as amended by Bill 181, the *Municipal Elections Modernization Act, 2016*. Specifically, Clause 88.18 *Use of municipal, board resources* states:

Before May 1 in the year of a regular election, municipalities and local boards shall establish rules and procedures with respect to the use of municipal or board resources, as the case may be, during the election campaign period.

This policy applies to library staff in their dealings with candidates and political parties and the use of library resources during the campaign periods for municipal elections, but these rules and procedures will also be used for provincial and federal elections.

In accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act, Section 70(4)*, the *Elections Finances Act, Section 16(1)*, and *Canada Elections Act, Section 404(1)*, the Board may not make a contribution to the campaign of any candidate or political party in the form of money, goods, or services.

Use of Library Resources and Property

1. All candidates and political parties have equal access to publicly available resources and services of the Library.
2. Due to the limited availability of space, the Library will not rent space to a candidate for use as part of the election process and/or part of a specific campaign. All usage of space for political purposes must be in accordance with the Brockville Public Library Facility Policy and City Bylaw.

3. Candidates cannot use equipment, supplies, staff, or other operational resources of the Library nor may they use the Library's logo in any campaign material.
4. All-candidates' meetings can be held at the Library, either as a library program or sponsored by another group, provided that all candidates are invited to attend such meetings.
5. Elected officials are welcome to attend library-organized events or events held on library property and act as ceremonial participants in their capacity as elected officials, including speaking at the event and partaking in ceremonial activities. Once the writ is issued for Provincial and Federal elections, MPs and MPPs are no longer elected officials and therefore shall not be invited to attend library events as such. A candidate cannot be featured or promoted in association with any other regular library program or event.
6. The Library will follow the *Canada Elections Act* section 81.1(1) in respect to access and use of facilities for federal election candidates.
7. During an election, the Library will provide an area where candidates may make available up to 25 copies of their campaign brochure; will promote awareness of the election; and provide general information on elections.
8. No election sign or poster specific to a candidate or political party can be posted on the grounds of the Library or in the library building.

Employee and Volunteer Participation in Election Campaigns

1. Any library employee running as a candidate in the municipal election will comply with the relevant section(s) of the *Municipal Elections Act*.
2. A library employee or volunteer involved in a political campaign must be politically neutral in carrying out their library duties and must not participate in campaign activities during their working hours.
3. Promoting awareness of, or providing general information on, elections is acceptable, such as teaching members of the public how to become a candidate or register to vote, as long as no one particular candidate is promoted or endorsed. Promoting awareness may include activities or events sponsored or not sponsored by the Library, in which all candidates are invited to attend.

Library Board Members as Candidates

1. Board members may continue their Board responsibilities when they are running for office.
2. During an election period, Board members who are candidates will be identified by title only in media releases and library materials that describe activities in their capacity as a Board member.

Requests for information about the library

1. The CEO will coordinate requests for information about the Library received from candidates or political parties.
2. Information that is provided by the Library to one candidate or political party will be provided to all other candidates and political parties upon request during an election.
3. Any candidate or political party may request a meeting with the CEO or tour of the Library where resources and time permits. If a meeting or tour is organized for one candidate, the Library commits to offering a similar meeting or tour to all other candidates.
4. The Board Chair is the official spokesperson to outside parties in announcing Board-stated positions and in stating Chair decisions (from Board Bylaws). The CEO speaks on behalf of the Library in matters relating to the operation and procedures of the Library and may speak on behalf of the Board in cooperation with the Chair of the Board.

Policy History

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May 26, 2018	014-2018
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