

# Council Policy

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Policy Number: [PLY\_GOV\_Election\_Campaigns]

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## *Election Campaigns*

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Date Approved by Council : December 8, 2020

Resolution No.: 585/20

Mayor: Original Signed – Alanna Hnatiw

County Commissioner: Original Signed – Reagan McCullough

### 1. Purpose

To instill public confidence in the County's election process by clearly defining parameters for the use of County Facilities and County Resources during election campaigns. These parameters will assist to ensure that all Candidates have access to the same information, and that all members of the Administration remain neutral throughout an election campaign period.

### 2. Revision History

<i>Approval Date</i>	<i>Revision Number</i>	<i>Modification</i>
<i>August 22, 2017</i>	<i>1.0</i>	<i>New Document</i>
<i>December 8, 2020</i>	<i>2.0</i>	<i>Amendment</i>

### 3. Persons/Areas Affected

*Administration*

*Candidates*

*Councillors*

### 4. Policy Statement

In accordance with the *Local Authorities Election Act*, RSA 2000, c. L-21 ("LAEA") and the *Municipal Government Act*, RSA 2000, c.M-26 ("MGA"), it is stated that an elected official serves in that capacity until such time as a newly elected Council is sworn in.

In an election year, it is important that there be a clear and concise delineation between the role of a Councillor and the role of a Candidate. This Policy sets out guidelines respecting the use of County Resources for election-related purposes to promote public confidence in local government elections and to protect incumbent Candidates from allegations of benefit or privilege or inappropriate use of County Resources by taxpayers or other Candidates.

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## 5. Definitions

*Administration* - any member of staff employed by Sturgeon County.

*Candidate* - an individual nominated as a candidate for election under the LAEA.

*County* - the municipality of Sturgeon County.

*County Facilities* - any County-owned or County-leased building, office, structure or parking lot and any property developed or used by the County as a public park, sports field, playground or recreational area.

*County Commissioner* - the Chief Administrative Officer of the County.

*County Resources* - resources (including human resources) paid for or acquired with County funds, and includes but is not limited to, staff time, equipment, technology, financial assets and nonfinancial assets (for example, vehicles, material, paper or electronic documents, tools, electronic equipment, (ie: fax machines, photocopiers, printers, computers, cell phones, telephones, and phone numbers), County funds, promotional material, Internet services (including e-mail and social media), and intellectual property, such as County logos, crests, or slogans.

*Council* - the Council of Sturgeon County.

*Councillor* – a Councillor of Sturgeon County, including the Mayor.

*Election* – a municipal election, by-election, or vote on a question, held in accordance with the LAEA.

*Election Day* - the date of voting for the County's municipal election or by-election.

*Social Media* - freely accessible, third-party hosted, interactive technologies used to produce, post and interact through text, images, or video to inform, share, promote, collaborate, or network.

## 6. Responsibilities

- The County shall balance the need for freedom of expression and assembly of Candidates with its legal responsibility to ensure no unfair advantage exists for any Candidate or a supporter of a question on a ballot during an election.
- This Policy is applicable for all municipal elections and by-elections, as well as a vote on a municipal bylaw or question.

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- While applicable legislation may include provisions regulating the conduct of Candidates and Administration, there is opportunity for the County to ensure documentation is in place to further ensure that its election practices reflect fairness, accountability and transparency.
- The County Commissioner is responsible for administrative compliance with this Policy, and Council is responsible for compliance by its members.

## 7. Procedures

### **Candidates & Councillors:**

- a. Once nomination papers are filed with the Returning Officer, responses to Candidate campaign requests or for general information shall be distributed to all Candidates via email communication. This is to ensure that all Candidates have access to and are provided with the same information at the same time.
- b. This Policy shall not limit a Councillor who is also a Candidate from performing his or her duties as prescribed by the *Municipal Government Act*, nor impede him or her from representing the interests of their constituents.
- c. No Candidate is permitted to create a link to the County's website or devices to any campaign-related material or websites. County content, graphics, logos or other branding, shall not be used for any campaign related material.
- d. Councillors shall not use County devices for campaign or campaign-related purposes. Any social media accounts used for campaign purposes must be set up on personal devices.
- e. No Councillor shall use County funds to cover campaign expenses.
- f. No County Facilities or County Resources shall be used for any election campaign or campaign-related activities, except on the same basis that would normally be made available to members of the public, and in accordance with a valid rental contract, if applicable.
- g. Campaigning and posting or distributing of campaign material in or on a County facility is prohibited for individual Candidates. The only exception may be an all Candidates Forum.

### **Administration:**

- h. The County Commissioner shall not participate in any municipal campaigns.

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- i. Members of the Leadership Team and Legislative Services Department staff shall not participate in County municipal campaigns. These positions are required to maintain an impartial relationship with all Candidates.
- j. Administration shall not participate in or conduct any work in support of a Candidate or a campaign while being compensated for work by the County. However, Administration may participate in Candidate campaigns on their own time.
- k. Under no circumstances can Administration working on a campaign portray themselves as acting on behalf of the County.
- l. No member of Administration shall use or attempt to use their position at the County to influence other members of Administration to affect the outcome of an election or a vote on a question to the public.
- m. All members of Administration shall treat all Candidates in the same manner throughout the election campaign period, including providing equal access to public information. All members of Administration shall remain neutral while being compensated by the County, and ensure that the County conducts its election without influence.

## 8. Cross Reference

*Local Authorities Election Act, RSA 2000, c.L-21*