



Policy Type: **Operational**

Policy Number:

Policy Title: **The Library and Political Elections**

Policy Approval Date: May 5th, 2018

Policy Review Date: May 5th, 2021

Objective

The Library 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.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a consistent and clear approach on how Library resources can and cannot be used during governmental and/or political elections.

Scope

This policy applies to Board members, employees and volunteers of the Library in their dealings with candidates, political parties and electors, and the use of Library resources during the campaign periods for municipal, provincial and federal elections.

Fundamental Principles

St. Marys Public Library stands by and supports intellectual freedom—the dissemination of information and ideas without fear of persecution. The Library strives to engage and encourage discussions that impact civil, social, economic or political issues in an equitable, neutral and just manner for those seeking elected office. The Library will balance the freedom of expressions and assembly, and will not provide any unfair advantage to any candidate.

Section 1: Campaign Contributions

1. 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.

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Section 2: 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. Meeting rooms may be rented in accordance with the St. Marys Public Library Circulation Services 6.6 Meeting Room Policy.
3. Candidates cannot use equipment, supplies, staff or other operational resources of the Library outside of typical user services (ie. Photocopying, faxing, computer usage), nor may they use the Library's logo, slogan, or other similarly branded Library resources or property in any campaign material including printed literature, signage and websites.
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. A candidate cannot be featured or promoted in association with any other regular Library program or event.
5. Candidates and political parties are permitted to distribute campaign materials on public street sides and sidewalks around the Library, unless prohibited by a municipal by-law or election policy.
6. Library resources may not be used to support, endorse, or otherwise provide unfair and unequal advantages to candidates or supporters of candidates
7. In accordance with the *Canada Elections Act* section 81.1(1) federal election candidates or their representatives are allowed to campaign in facilities that are available for free to the public. During municipal and provincial elections candidates will be granted the same right to campaign in the Library.
8. No election sign, poster specific to a candidate or political party, brochures or any advertising can be posted on the grounds of the Library or in the Library building.

Section 3: Employee and Volunteer Participation in Election Campaigns

1. Any employee working in the Library who is running as a candidate in the municipal election will comply with Section 30 of the *Municipal Elections Act*.
2. A Library employee or volunteer involved in a political campaign must be politically neutral in carrying out his or her Library duties and must not participate in campaign activities during his or her working hours. Furthermore, they will comply with the following:
 - i. Will not campaign or actively work in support of an election, candidates or political endeavours during working hours unless they are on a leave of absence without pay, lieu time, float day or vacation leave
 - ii. Employees may engage in election related activities as long as those activities are separate from their official positions and duties. Political activities must not have an impact (perceived or actual conflicts of interest) on an employee's day-to-day work.
 - iii. Employees and volunteers will not use resources owned by the Library
 - iv. Library volunteers will not participate in election campaigns during hours which have been agreed upon as volunteer services to the Library

Section 4: Library Board Members as Candidates

1. Board members may continue their Library board responsibilities when they are running for office.

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Section 5: 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.

Related Documents

St. Marys Public Library Circulation Services 6.6 Meeting Room Policy

Relevant Legislation

Federal:

Canada Elections Act

Provincial:

Election Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.6

Election Finances Act

Municipal:

Municipal Elections Act, 1996, S.O. 1996, c. 32, Sched.