

**THE CORPORATION OF
THE TOWNSHIP OF BONNECHERE VALLEY
BY-LAW NO. 2026-024**

Being a By-law to adopt a Use of Corporate Resources for Election Purposes Policy

Whereas Section 88.18 of the Municipal Elections Act 1996 and amendments thereto requires that before May 1 in the year of a regular election, municipalities shall establish rules and procedures with respect to the use of municipal resources during the election campaign period;

And Whereas 88.15 (1) of the Municipal Elections Act 1996 states that money, goods and services given to and accepted by a person for his or her election campaign, or given to and accepted by another person who is acting under the person's direction, are contributions;

And Whereas 88.8 (4) 5 of the Municipal Elections Act 1996 states that a Township or local board shall not make a contribution to an election campaign;

And Whereas the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Bonnechere Valley deems it necessary to adopt a policy for use of corporate Resources for Election Purposes;

Now Therefore the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Bonnechere Valley hereby enacts as follows:

1. That the attached policy attached hereto in respect to the Use of Corporate Resources for Election Purposes be hereby adopted; and
2. That said policy form part of this By-Law.

Read a First and Second time this 21st day of April 2026.

Read a Third Time and Passed this 21st day of April 2026.

Jennifer Murphy, Mayor

Annette Gilchrist, CAO

POLICY TITLE: Use of Corporate Resources for Election Purposes

APPROVED BY: Council

EFFECTIVE DATE: April 21, 2026

APPLICABLE TO: All Employees, Candidates, Registered Third Parties, Council and Local Boards

Policy Statement

The *Municipal Elections Act* (MEA), the *Election Finances Act* (Ontario), and the *Canada Elections Act* prohibit the Township from making contributions in any form to a Candidate or Registered Third Party.

All provisions contained within this policy shall serve to ensure the protection of freedom of expression while maintaining that:

- Corporate Resources shall not be used during an Election Period to promote or provide an unfair advantage to any Candidate, political party, constituency association, Registered Third Party, or a person or group supporting or opposing a question on a ballot;
- Members of Council shall not be precluded from performing their duties as an elected Official, nor inhibited from representing the interests of their constituents; and,
- Information and communication related to an election shall continue to be open and accessible to the public with content to be produced, and approved, by the CAO/Clerk

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to create guidelines in the Township of Bonnechere Valley for all Candidates running for an elected office and Registered Third Parties during the Election Period and to establish parameters on the use of Corporate Resources for election related purposes

Scope

This policy applies to all employees of the Township, Candidates, political parties, constituency associations, Registered Third Parties, and persons or groups supporting or opposing a question on a ballot, as well as anyone acting on their behalf.

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1 Definitions

1.1 Campaign(ing) means any activity by, or on behalf of a Candidate, political party, constituency association, Registered Third Party, or question on a ballot meant to elicit support during the Election Period. This does not include the appearance of elected officials, other candidates or their supporters, or registrants at an event in their personal capacity without the display of any signage or graphics which identify the individual as a candidate or registrant without the solicitation of votes.

1.2 Campaign Materials means any materials used to solicit votes for a Candidate(s) or question during the Election Period including, but not limited to, literature, banners, posters, pictures, buttons, clothing, or other paraphernalia. Campaign Materials include materials in all media, for example, print, displays, electronic radio or television, online including websites or social media.

1.3 Candidate means any person who has filed, and not withdrawn a nomination, in a municipal, school board, provincial or federal election or by-election, or a candidate seeking nomination for a political party. Where referred to in this Policy, the term Candidate can also be substituted to read political party, constituency association, Registered Third Party, or a person or group supporting or opposing a question on a ballot.

1.4 Corporate Resource means items, staff, services, or resources which are the property of the Township of Bonnechere Valley including, but not limited to: materials, equipment, vehicles, facilities, land, technology (computers, smartphones, tablets, etc.), intellectual property, images, logos, and supplies. Working hours, the time where the Township pays its employees to complete certain duties or tasks, is also considered to be a Corporate Resource

1.5 Election Period means the official Campaign period of an election for:

- A municipal or school board election; the Election Period commences on the first day prescribed for the filing of nominations in accordance with the MEA and ends on voting day.
- A provincial or federal election; the Election Period commences the day the writ for the election is issued and ends on voting day.
- A nomination for a political party, the Election Period is the nomination contesting period as determined by the Party.
- A question on the ballot; the period commences the day Council passes a by-law to put a question to the electorate and ends on voting day.
- A municipal or school board by-election; the period commences on the first day nominations may be filed and ends on voting day.

1.6 Local Board has the same meaning as found in Section 1 of the Municipal Act, 2001.

1.7 MEA means the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended, S.O. 1996, c. 32, Sched.

1.8 Municipal Facility/Building means any building or facility owned or operated by the Township of Bonnechere Valley or Bonnechere Valley local board.

1.9 Registered Third Party shall have the same meaning as “Registered Third Party” as found in section of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 or the term “Third Party” as defined in section 1 of the Election Finances Act (Ontario) and Canada Elections Act, as the context requires.

2 Responsibilities

2.1 Candidates and Registered Third Parties to:

- Adhere to the guidelines and parameters established by this policy.

2.2 Municipal Clerk to:

- Administer this policy and provide any related procedures as deemed necessary or desirable for conducting an election.

2.3 Municipal Staff to:

- Ensure that Corporate Resources, as identified by this Policy, are not used for campaigning.

3 General Provisions

In accordance with the spirit and intent of the election related legislation,

3.1 Corporate Resources and funding shall not be used by a Candidate or Registered Third Party for Campaigning or election-related purposes.

3.2 This Policy also applies to an acclaimed Member or a Member not seeking reelection.

3.3 The Municipal Clerk is authorized, and directed to take the necessary action, to give effect to this Policy.

3.4 This Policy does not preclude a Member of Council from performing their duties as a Councillor, nor inhibit a Member of Council from representing the interests of their constituents.

3.5 Individuals who have questions about this Policy are encouraged to contact the Municipal Clerk to obtain further clarification.

4 Corporate Resources – Technology

Further to Section 3.1 above, the following is provided for greater clarity when considering the use of corporate technology resources:

4.1 Members of Council are provided access to corporate information technology (I.T.) assets to fulfill their duties and responsibilities as an elected official but may not use those assets for Campaigning or the development of Campaign Materials.

4.2 Municipal resources that have been published to the Municipal website (e.g., strategic plans, staff reports, minutes, agendas, press releases) may be linked on Candidate and Registered Third Parties' websites, but must not be housed on the candidate website, and must not be taken out of context/modified/reproduced for use in any campaign related material.

4.3 Once a Member of Council registers to be a Candidate, any links from a Municipal website or social media account to his or her website or social media pages will be removed from the Township's webpages if the Member's website or social media page contains or will contain Campaign Material.

5 Corporate Resources – Communications

Further to Section 3.1 above, the following is provided for greater clarity when considering the use of corporate communication resources:

5.1 Candidates or Registered Third Parties may not print, distribute, or make reference to any of the Township's email addresses, telephone numbers, or facility addresses on any Campaign Materials **EXCEPT** to provide the election telephone number, election email address, or a link to the Township's official election website or webpages in Campaign Materials for electors to access additional information about the election and the voting process.

5.2 The Clerk may develop and distribute information through various means for the purpose of advising and educating electors. Candidates or Registered Third Parties are permitted to promote and distribute election information provided by the Clerk, provided that such information is not modified in any way.

5.3 The Township's logo, crest, coat of arms, and slogans, or any other images or illustrations or videos owned or under the jurisdiction of the Township, may not be used in any Campaign Materials. **Notwithstanding the foregoing, Candidates or Registered Third Parties may** capture their own photos of Municipal property for use in Campaign Material, provided the photo is taken from a publicly accessible area.

5.4 Distribution lists or contact lists developed utilizing Corporate Resources and in the custody and control of the Township shall not be utilized for election purposes.

5.5 Messages posted to the Municipal social media may be shared by a candidate to their personal or campaign social media accounts using social media official channels but must not be taken out of context/modified/reproduced.

6 Corporate Resources - Township Facilities/Buildings

Further to Section 3.1 above, the following is provided for greater clarity when considering the use of Municipal Facilities/Buildings, including Township owned or leased lands, as Corporate Resources:

6.1 Any Candidate may attend any public Standing Committee, Advisory Committee or Council meeting; however, they shall not use this forum to speak on, or address, any matter relating to their Campaign.

6.2 Candidates or Registered Third Parties are prohibited from renting space (e.g., a booth) as part of a Municipally organized event.

6.3 All Candidates and Registered Third Parties must adhere to the provisions set out in any other Municipal Policies pertaining to Municipal Facilities/Buildings.

6.4 Members of Council, Registered Third Parties, and Candidates may not use any municipally provided facilities for any election related purpose, which includes the display of any campaign-related signs in the window or on the premises, as well as the display of election-related material in the office.

6.5 Campaigning and the distribution or display of campaign material is not permitted in any municipal or local board facility, on municipal land, or at municipal or local board event including any municipal or board meeting.

6.6 Notwithstanding Section 6.5, campaigning on public sidewalks and highways is permitted, provided that it is in compliance with prevailing legislation and Municipal by-laws.

6.7 Candidates or Registered Third Parties are prohibited from using a Municipal Facility/Building as a campaign office.

6.8 The rental, to candidates or Registered Third Parties of advertising space on arena boards and lobby monitors, or any other municipal social media site, is prohibited.

7 Township Staff

7.1 Municipal Staff are prohibited from using Corporate Resources for the benefit of a Candidate or Campaign.

8 Limitation

8.1 Nothing in this Policy shall prohibit a Member of Council from performing their job, nor inhibit them from representing the interests of the constituents who elected them. This policy is subject to the exception of Members' actions associated with fulfilling their normal and ongoing representative roles as Members of Council such as attending annual or regular scheduled events, up until the official end of the term they are serving.