

ELECTION CAMPAIGN PROVISIONS

Date Issued: May 9, 2017

Mandated by: City Council

Current Revision: May 9, 2017

Cross Reference:

Next Review: January 1, 2020

Responsibility: City Manager

PURPOSE

To instill public confidence in the City's electoral process by clearly defining parameters for the use of City facilities and City 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.

POLICY

Members of Council and Administration shall act in ways that ensure the public has confidence in the municipal elections, and that City resources are not used in any way to unfairly benefit any Candidate or campaign.

DEFINITIONS

1. "Administration" shall mean any member of staff employed by the City of Fort Saskatchewan.
2. "Candidate" shall mean an individual running for the position of Mayor or Councillor in a municipal election or by-election, and who has submitted valid nomination papers to the City in accordance with the *Local Authorities Election Act*.
3. "City" shall mean the City of Fort Saskatchewan.
4. "City Facilities" shall mean any City-owned or City-leased building, office, structure or parking lot, and any property developed or used by the City as a public park, sports field, playground, or recreational area.
5. "City Manager" shall mean the Chief Administrative Officer pursuant to the *Municipal Government Act*.
6. "City Resources" shall mean resources (including human resources) paid for or acquired with City funds, and includes but not limited to, City staff time, equipment, technology, financial assets and non-financial assets (for example, vehicles, material, paper or electronic documents, tools, electronic equipment, i.e., fax machines, photocopiers, printers, computers, cell phones, telephones, and phone numbers), City funds, promotional material, Internet services (including e-mail and social media), and intellectual property, such as City logos, crests, or slogans.

7. "Council" shall mean the current municipal Council of the City of Fort Saskatchewan.
8. "Election" shall mean:
 - a. a municipal election, by-election, or vote on a question, held in accordance with the *Local Authorities Election Act*;
 - b. an election held pursuant to the *School Act* for the Province of Alberta, and
 - c. elections as required for provincial or federal office.
9. "Election Day" shall mean the date of voting for the City's municipal election or by-election.
10. "LAEA" shall mean the *Local Authorities Elections Act* for the Province of Alberta.
11. "Nomination Day" shall mean the date when individuals submit their nomination papers indicating their intent to run in a municipal election or by-election (4 weeks prior to Election Day).
12. "Social Media" shall mean freely accessible, third-party hosted, interactive technologies used to produce, post and interact through text, images, video, and audio to inform, share, promote, collaborate, or network.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. The City 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.
2. This Policy is applicable for all municipal elections and by-elections, as well as a vote on a municipal bylaw or question.
3. The City's election processes are governed by the *Local Authorities Election Act* (LAEA), as well as any other related City bylaws.
4. While applicable legislation may include provisions which regulate the conduct of Candidates and Administration, there is opportunity for the City to ensure documentation is in place to further ensure that its election practices reflect fairness, accountability, and transparency.

Communication:

5. Following the submission of nomination papers, responses to Candidate campaign requests or for general information shall be distributed to all Candidates. The intent of this provision is to ensure that all Candidates have access to and are provided with the same information at the same time.

Council:

6. Members of Council are elected in the capacity of Mayor or Councillor, and serve in that capacity until such time as newly elected Council members are sworn in, resign, or are disqualified.
7. No member of Council shall use or link the City's website or devices to any campaign-related material or websites. City content, graphics, logos or other branding, shall not be used for any campaign-related material.

8. Members of Council shall not use City devices for campaign or campaign-related purposes. Any social media accounts used for campaign purposes must be set-up on personal devices.
9. While holding the office of Mayor or Councillor for the City, no member of Council shall use City funds for any purpose relating to a campaign, campaign period, or campaign-related activities, including funding or resources required for any form of media advertising for the purpose of discussing or promoting the election process.

Access to City Facilities & City Resources:

10. No City facilities or City 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.
11. Campaigning and posting or distributing of campaign material in or on a City facility is prohibited for individual Candidates. Exception could be made for events, such as an all-candidate forum.

Administration:

12. Administration shall not participate in or conduct any work in support of a Candidate or a campaign while being compensated for work by the City. Members of Administration may participate in Candidate campaigns on their own time.
13. Administration working on a campaign shall not at any time portray themselves as acting on behalf of the City.
14. Notwithstanding Section 12, the City Manager, General Managers, Directors, Legislative Services Department staff employed by the City and contracted municipal election workers shall not participate in any municipal campaigns. These positions are required to maintain an impartial relationship with all Candidates.
15. No member of Administration shall use or attempt to use their position at the City to influence other members of Administration to affect the outcome of an election or a vote on a question to the public.
16. All members of Administration shall treat all Candidates in the same manner throughout the election campaign period. All members of Administration shall remain neutral while being compensated by the City, and ensure that the City conducts its election without influence.

AUTHORITY / RESPONSIBILITY TO IMPLEMENT

The City Manager is responsible for administrative compliance with this Policy, and Council is responsible for compliance by its members, City Bylaws, the *Municipal Government Act*, and other applicable legislation.