



Use of Library Resources for Political Elections

Governance Policy

Purpose

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

Defined Terms

“Local Board” The Municipal Elections Act speaks to employees of local boards running in municipal elections. That Act refers to the definition of local board as defined in the Municipal Affairs Act where the definition of local board includes the public library board.

Policy

Campaign Contributions

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. Meeting rooms may be rented in accordance with the Brantford Public Library Meeting Rooms Policy.
3. Candidates may only use equipment normally provided as part of a room rental agreement. 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. 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 within a room on library property rented by them provided they are in accordance with the Brantford Public Library Meeting Rooms Policy.
6. As per Canada Elections Act section 81.1(2), the Library Board has determined campaigning is incompatible with the function and purpose of the Library. As such, candidates and representatives of candidates may not campaign in the Library, aside from an 'all-candidates' meeting. The same premise applies to municipal and provincial elections candidates.
7. Campaign brochures may not be displayed or distributed within the library unless and only during a duly constituted all candidates meeting. General materials promoting awareness of the election and general information on elections can be displayed.
8. No election signs or posters 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 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.

Library Board Members as Candidates

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

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.

Rules/Legislative Requirements/Regulations

This policy is written in accordance with the Municipal Elections Modernization Act, 2016 and specifically with clause 88.18 which references local boards.

Any areas not covered under this policy will be governed by the City of Brantford Policy – Use of Corporate resources for Election purposes – as applicable.

History

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Author: CEO/Chief Librarian

Approval Level: Brantford Public Library Board

Supersedes: Not applicable

Background documents, related policies: Brantford Public Library Meeting Rooms Policy; Municipal Elections Act; Elections Finances Act; Canada Elections Act

Approval Level: Brantford Public Library Board