

**The Corporation of the Municipality of West Grey  
Bylaw No. 2026-015**

A bylaw to adopt a Use of Municipal Resources for Election Purposes Policy.

WHEREAS Section 88.18 of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996, S.O. 1996, c. 32* requires municipalities to establish rules and procedures with respect to the use of municipal resources during the election period; and

WHEREAS Sections 88.8, 88.12, 88.4, and 88.5 of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, set out rules regarding campaign expenses, campaign materials, contributions, and advertising; and

WHEREAS the Council of the Corporation of the Municipality of West Grey deems it expedient and necessary to adopt a policy to ensure the fair, transparent, and consistent use of municipal resources before and during municipal election periods;

NOW THEREFORE the Council of the Corporation of the Municipality of West Grey hereby enacts as follows:

1. That Council hereby adopts the 'Use of Municipal Resources for Election Purposes' policy attached as Schedule 'A' hereto.
2. That Schedule 'A' and all other notations thereon are hereby declared to form part of this bylaw.
3. That Bylaw No. 09-2022 is hereby repealed.
4. That this bylaw shall come into force and take effect on the day of passing.

Passed and enacted by the Council of the Municipality of West Grey this 17<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2026.

  
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Mayor Kevin Eccles

  
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Jamie M. Eckenswiler, Clerk

By signing this bylaw on February 17, 2026, Mayor Kevin Eccles will not exercise the power to veto this bylaw.

**Schedule A – Bylaw No. 2026-015**

**Use of Corporate Resources for Election Purposes Policy**

**Department:** Legislative Services

**Policy Statement**

1. This policy sets out provisions for the use of Municipal facilities, resources, and infrastructure during an Election Period, in order to preserve the public trust and integrity in the elections process and to comply with the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* ("Act"). This policy allows the Municipality to balance the need for freedom of expression and assembly of Candidates and its legal responsibility to ensure that no Candidate, registered Third Party Advertiser, or political party is provided with an unfair advantage.
2. This policy recognizes that Members of Council are holders of their office until the end of the term and supports them in continuing to fulfill their responsibilities as Members of Council. Nothing in this policy shall preclude a Member of Council from performing their duty as an elected official, nor inhibit them from representing the interests of their constituents.

**Purpose**

3. The Act requires municipalities to establish rules and procedures for the use of municipal resources during the election period before May 1 in the year of a regular election (Section 88.18). The Act also provides that the Municipality cannot make a contribution (including money, goods, and services) to any Candidate, registered Third Party Advertiser, or political party during an election (Sections 88.8(4) and 88.12(4)). The *Election Finances Act* and the *Canada Elections Act* impose similar contribution restrictions for provincial and federal election campaigns, respectively. The provisions in this policy may also be subject to additional Municipal bylaws and policies.

**Scope**

4. This policy applies to municipal (including school board), provincial or federal elections or by-elections and to questions on the ballot. References in the policy with respect to political parties refers to provincial and federal elections or by-elections and do not apply to the Municipality's municipal elections or by-elections.

**Headings**

5. The division of this policy into parts and the insertion of headings are for convenient reference only and do not affect the interpretation of the policy.

**Definitions**

6. For the purposes of this policy:  
  
"Campaign Materials" means any materials used to solicit votes for a Candidate(s) or question on the ballot in an election period including, but not limited to: literature, banners, posters, pictures, buttons, clothing, or other paraphernalia. Campaign materials include, but are not limited to: materials in all media, such as print, displays, electronic radio or television and online sources including websites or social media.  
  
"Campaigning" means any activity by or on behalf of a Candidate, registered third party, political party or question on a ballot meant to elicit support during

the election period. Campaigning does not include the appearance of elected officials, other Candidates, or registered Third Party Advertisers at an event in their personal capacity without the display of any signage or graphics which identifies the individual as a Candidate or registered Third Party Advertiser(s) and without the solicitation of votes.

“Candidate” means any person who has filed and not withdrawn a nomination for an elected office at the municipal (including school board), provincial or federal level in an election or by-election.

“Elected Official” means an individual elected to the House of Commons, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, West Grey Council or a school board.

“Election” means an election or by-election at the municipal (including school board), provincial and federal level of government, or the submission of a question or bylaw to the electors.

“Election Period” means the official campaign period of an election:

- For a municipal (including school board) election, the election period commences on May 1 of an election year and ends on voting day.
- For a provincial or federal election, the election period commences the day the writ for the election is issued and ends on voting day.
- For a question on the ballot, the period commences the day Council passes a bylaw to put a question to the electorate and ends on voting day.
- For a by-election, including a Mayoral by-election, the period commences when the by-election is called and ends on voting day.

“Municipal Employee” means an employee of the Municipality and includes contract employees.

“Municipal Resource” means, but is not limited to Municipal employees, any money, goods, services, or property owned or provided by the Municipality and includes, but is not limited to:

- a. telephones, cell phones, personal digital assistants, computers, tablets or other electronic devices;
- b. printers, scanners, fax machines, copiers or any paper, toner, ink or other related consumables;
- c. email or voicemail;
- d. Council budget or expense accounts including but not limited to internet, car, travel, meeting, mail, postage, photocopying, office supplies, advertising and promotional expenses;
- e. any website, social media account, or domain name owned, maintained or registered by or on behalf of the Municipality;
- f. the Municipal logo and election logos, or any photograph, graphic, slogan, crest, coat of arms, flag, chain of office, uniform, business cards, letterhead or any other information or intellectual property;
- g. information, including databases that may be the repository of names, contact information, business records, financial information or other identifiers compiled and used by Municipal employees to conduct Municipal business.

h. any Municipal office, facility, vehicle, or equipment.

“Person” includes an individual, corporation, or trade union.

“Third Party Advertisement” means an advertisement in any broadcast, print, electronic or other medium that has the purpose of promoting, supporting or opposing a Candidate for office, or an issue on a question on a ballot, and is not under the direction of a Candidate.

“Third Party Advertiser” means, in relation to a municipal election, an individual, corporation, or trade union that is registered with the Clerk, as per Section 88.6 of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, whose purpose is to promote, support or oppose a Candidate for office, or an issue on a question on a ballot, and is not under the direction of a Candidate.

“Question on a Ballot” means any question or bylaw submitted to the electors by Council, a school board, an elected local board, or the Minister of Municipal Affairs under the Act.

“Voting Day” means the day on which the final vote is to be taken in an election.

### **Provisions**

7. The Municipality shall not contribute Municipal resources to Candidates or Third Party Advertisers.
8. No person with access to or control of Municipal resources shall use Municipal resources for the purposes of an election, or contribute, or allow the contribution of Municipal resources for campaign-related purposes. For greater clarity the following applies:
  - a. All Candidates and Third Party Advertisers are prohibited from using the Municipality’s logo, brand, slogan, or identifier for which the Municipality has proprietary rights, including municipal election logos (e.g. West Grey Votes), in campaign-related material either in print or digital format (including clothing);
  - b. Websites or domain names that are funded by the Municipality shall not include any campaign-related material;
  - c. Campaign-related messages shall not be recorded using the Municipality’s voicemail or email system;
  - d. The use of corporate information technology (IT) assets, infrastructure or data (i.e. computers, corporate email, web pages, social media links, portals, photocopiers, scanners, fax machines or telephones) to respond to or communicate campaign-related messages is prohibited;
  - e. Municipal employees shall not assist, in a staff capacity, with any communications activity related to the preparation or distribution of campaign-related materials or events;
  - f. No photographic or video material created by the Municipality may be used in any campaign-related materials;
  - g. Candidates may not post photographs of themselves with Municipal employees in uniform;
  - h. Use of Municipal facilities for campaign-related events and use of commercial advertising space located in Municipal facilities or on Municipal

property may occur for campaign-related activities provided that the Candidate or Third Party Advertiser undertakes the use in accordance with:

- i. any usual licence, invoice, rental agreement or facility use agreement;
  - ii. any standard associated fees set out by third parties or the Municipality
  - iii. requirements to account for the expenses on election financial statements;
- i. materials paid by municipal funds that reference that a Candidate or Third Party Advertiser is registered in any election or indicate that a Candidate will be running for office is prohibited from being printed or distributed; and
  - j. Council expense budgets during a municipal election year shall be prorated. Funds equal to the time in office will be available to new and re-elected members at the beginning of the new term.
9. Section 8 of this policy shall not apply to:
- a. Municipal resources that are used by the Clerk or their designate for the purpose of conducting a municipal election; and
  - b. Minutes of Council meetings.
10. Municipal employees shall:
- a. Provide all Municipal services in a fair and impartial manner; and
  - b. Refrain from canvassing or actively working in support of a Candidate or party or Third Party Advertiser during normal working hours unless they are on paid or unpaid leave.
11. Municipal employees are discouraged from direct involvement in municipal election campaigns. An employee may involve himself/herself in a non-municipal election campaign unless it would affect their judgment in the performance of their job duties. Employees may exercise their civic right to run for public office as long as they can make appropriate arrangements to effectively discharge their duties during the course of their political involvement.
12. During an election under the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, responses to information requests from a Candidate will be provided to all Candidates in a manner deemed appropriate by the Clerk. Staff will need to determine if a request from members of Council, who are also Candidates, are made in their capacity as a member of Council or as a Candidate, bearing in mind the requirement for fair and transparent treatment of all Candidates. In the event of uncertainty as to the nature of a request, staff shall refer to the Clerk who will determine the nature of the request.
13. Information provided to one Candidate, registered Third Party Advertiser, or political party that is of a general nature and may provide valuable guidance to all others will be provided to all Candidates, registered Third Party Advertisers, or political parties. The Municipality will post the information on the internet or through other mechanisms to ensure equal access to information.
14. Candidates, registered Third Party Advertisers, or political parties are permitted to attend Municipal events, or events held at Municipal facilities, in either their capacity as elected representatives or as private citizens, but may not campaign (which includes the wearing of campaign clothing and buttons, etc.). No election signs may be posted, and no campaign materials may be disseminated at Municipal events.
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15. Elected officials are permitted to attend Municipally organized events or events held at Municipal facilities and act as ceremonial participants in their capacity as elected officials, including speaking at the event and partaking in ceremonial activities. Once the writ is issued for Provincial or Federal elections, MPPs and MPs, respectively, are no longer elected officials and therefore should not be invited to attend Municipal events.
16. Violations of this policy will be addressed, where appropriate, pursuant to the provisions of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*.

**Monitoring and Compliance**

17. The Clerk shall ensure that this policy is reviewed periodically so that it remains relevant to the needs of the Municipality, in accordance with legislative requirements, and good business practices.
18. The Clerk is authorized to make such administrative changes to this policy as appropriate to keep the policy current. Any revision to the policy's intent must be presented to Council for consideration.