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**CATEGORY: GOVERNMENT SERVICES**

**SUBCATEGORY: GENERAL**

**SUBJECT: USE OF CORPORATE RESOURCES FOR ELECTIONS**

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## **A. PURPOSE**

To supplement the provisions of Regional Council Code of Conduct, the Regional Employee Code of Conduct, Business Expense Accounts for Members of Council Policy, and the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended* to provide consistent information and direction to ensure that the Region of Peel's corporate resources are not provided or used for any "election-related purpose", except as required or directed by the Regional Clerk where there is a legislated requirement for the Region of Peel to conduct the election.

## **B. SCOPE**

This policy applies to members of Council, employees, registered election candidates (including acclaimed candidates), registered third party advertisers, and members of the public.

## **C. POLICY**

The Corporation of the Regional Municipality of Peel is committed to ensuring accountable and transparent election practices, relating to the use of corporate resources.

### **1. General Provisions:**

- a) An election campaign period for a candidate or a third party advertiser shall commence on the day a candidate files a nomination; or a third party advertiser files a registration (the earliest permitted date being the day the nomination and registration period begins) and will conclude on December 31 in the case of a regular election, and 45 days after voting day in the case of a by-election.
- b) In accordance with the provisions of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, municipalities shall:

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**CATEGORY: GOVERNMENT SERVICES**

**SUBCATEGORY: GENERAL**

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- establish rules and procedures with respect to the use of municipal resources, during the election campaign period;
  - not make a contribution to an election campaign (including money, goods and services); and
  - not make a contribution to a registered third party advertiser (including money, goods and services).
- c) Corporate resources and funding may not be used for any “election-related purposes”, unless required or directed by the Regional Clerk in the discharge of the Regional Clerk’s obligations where there is a legislated requirement for the Region of Peel to conduct an election.
- d) Staff may not canvass or actively work in support of a municipal candidate or third party during working hours unless they are on a leave of absence without pay, lieu time, float day or vacation leave;
- e) Municipal facilities, property, equipment, vehicles, supplies, services, signs, staff, or any resource that belongs to or is funded by the Region of Peel may not be used for the purposes of election campaign or for any campaign-related activities.

## **2. Specific Regulations:**

- a) The following, if supplied by the Region of Peel, shall be discontinued for all members of Regional Council, throughout the period from May 1<sup>st</sup> of the municipal election year until the last day of the current term of Council, inclusive, or in the case of a municipal by-election, for the period 60 days prior to and inclusive of Voting Day, for any members running as candidates in the by-election:
- i. All forms of advertising, including advertising in municipal publications;
  - ii. All printing, high speed photocopying and distribution, including printing and general distribution and display of newsletters unless so directed and approved by Council;

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**CATEGORY: GOVERNMENT SERVICES**

**SUBCATEGORY: GENERAL**

**SUBJECT: USE OF CORPORATE RESOURCES FOR ELECTIONS**

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- iii. The ordering of any stationery or office supplies or furnishings unless approved by the Region Clerk;
  - iv. Coat of Arms, Corporate Seal and/or Corporate logo
  - v. Links to Council member-related web sites or social media links;
  - vi. The posting of information relating the activities of Council or any member of Council on the Region's website, excluding the minutes of Council and committee meetings. Only the photos and contact phone and/or email posted for each member of Council at the commencement of each term shall remain on the corporate website.
- b) To avoid any confusion with any website or social media accounts used for Council work, members of Council who choose to create or use their own websites or social media accounts shall, throughout the period from May 1<sup>st</sup> of the municipal election year until the last day of the current term of Council, inclusive, or in the case of a municipal by-election, for the period 60 days prior to and inclusive of Voting Day, for any members running as candidates in the by- election:
- i. Include a clear statement, easily found and readable, on each website or social media account's home page indicating that the account is being used either solely for Council work or solely for election campaign purposes;
  - ii. Include the statement in clause a) for as long as the website or account is accessible by the public.
- c) Members of Council, throughout the period from May 1st of the municipal election year until the last day of the current term of Council, inclusive, or in the case of a municipal by-election, for the period 60 days prior to and inclusive of Voting Day, for any members running as candidates in the by- election, shall not:
- i. Print or distribute any material paid for by municipal funds that indicates that a member of Council or any other individual is

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**CATEGORY: GOVERNMENT SERVICES**

**SUBCATEGORY: GENERAL**

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- registered in any election or where they will be running for office;
- ii. Profile (name or photograph), or make reference to, in any material paid for by municipal funds, any individual who is registered as a candidate in any election;
  - iii. Print or distribute any material using municipal funds that makes reference to, or contains the names, photographs, or identifies registered candidates for municipal elections (Minutes of Council and Committee meetings are exempt from this provision);
  - iv. \*Use the corporate website, domain names, other corporate systems, the Region crest or logo for campaigning/advertising or as a substitute to distributing newsletters or flyers;
  - v. Use the municipality's voicemail system to record election-related messages;
  - vi. Use the Region's computer network (including the Region's email system) for election-related correspondence;
  - vii. \*Use any photographs produced for and owned by the Region of Peel or any photos taken utilizing Region equipment or sent through Region email accounts for any election-related purposes;
  - viii. \*Use regional property or staff in any campaign photos or images unless all candidates are afforded the same opportunity. Photos/images of the exterior of Region facilities are permitted. Photos/images of the interior of Region facilities are not permitted;
  - ix. \*Use any Regional facility/property for any election-related purpose including but not limited to meeting rooms and mobile signs;
  - x. Benefit from the use of any corporate pricing established under the Region's purchasing policy;

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**CATEGORY: GOVERNMENT SERVICES**

**SUBCATEGORY: GENERAL**

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- xi. Use any Council or Councillor budgets for election-related purposes or to advertise, promote or support any candidate, third party or any position related to any questions which may be authorized to be placed on the ballot.

Clauses denoted with an asterisk (\*) shall also apply to registered candidates and third parties.

d) Staff Involvement:

Staff, including full time, part time and contract employees shall in the course of performing their duties:

- i. Behave in a manner that is impartial, fair, and unbiased toward all registered candidates and third parties;
- ii. Consult with their direct Supervisor prior to agreeing to perform any task requested by a member of Council, registered candidate, or third party that exceeds their normal duties or could be construed as contributing to an election campaign;
- iii. Not rent any Regional facility/property for any municipal election-related purpose to members of Council, candidates, third parties, or the public during any day that voting is taking place anywhere on the property, from May 1st to Voting Day, including set-up, hosting, or take-down activities;
- iv. Take care to separate personal activities from their official positions and shall not canvass or actively work in support of a municipal candidate or third party during normal working hours unless on a leave of absence without pay, lieu time, float day or vacation leave;
- v. Request and obtain a leave of absence without pay should they wish to run for federal, provincial or municipal office and abide by the legislation governing such elections.

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**CATEGORY: GOVERNMENT SERVICES**

**SUBCATEGORY: GENERAL**

**SUBJECT: USE OF CORPORATE RESOURCES FOR ELECTIONS**

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- e) Subject to Section C.1.d) staff may be involved in campaigns as long as this involvement does not affect the objectivity with which they must discharge their duties as a representative of the Region of Peel.

#### **D. RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Staff are authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect to this policy.
2. The Integrity Commissioner may at any time be consulted by members of Council with regard to complying with any part of this policy and will be responsible for enforcement of this policy through Council's Code of Conduct.
3. Nothing in this policy shall preclude members of Council from performing their duties as a Councillor, nor inhibit them from representing their constituents.
4. The Regional Clerk is delegated the authority to make administrative changes to this policy that may be required from time to time due to legislative changes or if, in the opinion of the Regional Clerk in consultation with the Regional Solicitor, the amendments do not change the intent of the policy.

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