



REPORT

TO: Mayor Bonnette and Members of Council

FROM: Melissa Lawr, Deputy Clerk - Legislation

DATE: February 7, 2022

REPORT NO.: ADMIN-2022-0005

SUBJECT: Updated Use of Corporate Resources during an Election Year Policy

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report No. ADMIN-2022-0005 dated February 7, 2022 regarding Updated Use of Corporate Resources during an Election Year Policy be received;

AND FURTHER THAT Council approve the Use of Corporate Resources during an Election Year Policy, attached as Appendix A to this report;

AND FURTHER THAT the previous PLCY-2018-0002 be repealed.

KEY POINTS:

The following are key points for consideration with respect to this report:

- The Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended, requires municipalities to establish rules and procedures regarding the municipal or board resources, before May 1 in an Election year.
- The Towns' current Use of Corporate Resources during an Election Year Policy (PLCY-2018-0002) states that it is to be reviewed every four years, prior to the commencement of a municipal election
- The current policy was reviewed and amended using best practices from other municipalities with additional sections relating to technology, communications and budget administration being added

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure compliance with the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 by clarifying for current members of Council, candidates, registered third parties and Town staff the legislative requirements relating to campaign finances and the use of corporate resources. Town Council adopted the current Use of Corporate Resources during an Election Year Policy (PLCY-2018-0002) on April 16, 2018. The current policy states that it is to be reviewed every four years, prior to the commencement of a municipal election.

In preparation for the 2022 municipal election, staff has undertaken a review of PLCY-2018-0002 the Use of Corporate Resources during an election year and have identified a couple of matters which suggest that a minor refresh is necessary. Staff is recommending updates or revisions to the following sections:

- Municipal Facilities and Property
- Technology and Communication

Staff have also identified and added a section entitled “Budget Administration” which explains the percentage of budget a current council member is entitled to in an election year, as well as how those funds can be spent.

Section 6 – Municipal Facilities and Property

This section was amended to provide more clarification on where members, candidates and registered third parties can engage in election related activities as well as where they are not allowed to distribute campaign material. While the rental of a Town facility if rented in accordance to the Town’s rental procedures is acceptable, the election related activities and any campaign materials must not take place in any common area of the rented facility. At no time shall any election activity, campaigning or campaign materials be allowed in or on the property at Town hall.

Section 7 – Technology and Communications

This section was amended to include more detailed information and direction in relation to the use of technology by members of Council. Reliance on technology has increased throughout the pandemic and therefore updated guidelines on use of technology for election related communications is necessary. Virtual meeting platform accounts, such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams, that are funded by the Town of Halton Hills should not be used for any campaigning activity.

Section 8 – Budget Administration

This section was added to clarify the amount of the yearly budget that current members of Council can spend. For the period of January 1 to election day in a municipal election year the approved annual budget for members of Council is restricted to 11/12ths. This adheres to all members of Council, including a member not seeking re-election. After the election new Council members are allocated a budget equal to 1/12th of the approved budget amount for the month of December. Re-elected Council members will have the balance of funds remaining as of election day made available to them.

The policy will be included in the Candidate's Package for distribution and will be added to the Town's Election webpage.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This report aligns to the Town's Strategic plan recognizing the value to provide responsive, effective municipal government and strong leadership in the effective and efficient delivery of municipal services.

This report also identifies local autonomy and advocacy as one of the Town's Strategic priorities.

RELATIONSHIP TO CLIMATE CHANGE:

This report is administrative in nature and does not directly impact or address climate change and the Town's Net Zero target.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

Public Engagement was not needed as this report is administrative in nature.

INTERNAL CONSULTATION:

The Town Clerk was consulted when reviewing and updating the Use of Corporate Resources during an Election Year Policy.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

This report is administrative in nature and does not have any financial implications.

Reviewed and approved by,

Valerie Petryniak, Town Clerk & Director of Legislative Services

Chris Mills, Chief Administrative Officer