

Peterborough Public Library Elections Policy



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1. Purpose

The Peterborough Public Library's aims to be an active agent for positive community transformation through interaction, discovery, and learning. In keeping with our mission and values, the Library seeks to engage and encourage civic and social discourse in a manner that is fair and equitable to all those seeking elected office, while maintaining and appearing to act in a non-partisan manner.

2. Policy Objectives

This policy supports the Peterborough Public Library's objectives of upholding principles of Intellectual Freedom, providing equitable access to services, and maintaining a welcoming, inclusive, and supportive environment free from discrimination and harassment. This policy allows the Library to maintain neutrality and non-partisanship of the Peterborough Public Library during election campaigns, and ensures the Library complies with the Municipal Elections Act.

3. Definitions

- 3.1. **Campaigning:** Any activity by or on behalf of a candidate, registered third-party advertiser, political party, or question on a ballot meant to elicit support during the election campaign period.
- 3.2. **Campaign Materials:** Means any materials used to solicit votes for a candidate, party, or registered third-party advertiser, or question on the ballot. Campaign materials include materials in all media formats, including print, displays, electronic, radio or television, or online.
- 3.3. **Candidate:** Refers to a person who has submitted their nomination form under the Canada, Provincial, or Municipal Elections Act in a given election.
- 3.4. **Director / CEO:** Peterborough Public Library Director / Chief Executive Officer
- 3.5. **City:** Corporation of the City of Peterborough
- 3.6. **Clerk:** Means the Clerk of the Corporation of the City of Peterborough or their designate who is responsible for conducting an election under the authority of the Municipal Elections Act, and is the Election Returning Officer.
- 3.7. **Conflict of Interest:** Any situation where an individual or organization in a position of trust has competing professional or personal interests, making it difficult for duties to be fulfilled impartially.

- 3.8. **Council:** Means the elected council of the Corporation of the City of Peterborough.
- 3.9. **Elected Official:** An individual elected to the House of Commons, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, City of Peterborough Council, or a School Board.
- 3.10. **Election:** An election or by-election at the Municipal (including School Boards), Provincial, and Federal level of government, or the submission of a question or by-law to the electors.
- 3.11. **Employees:** Any full-time and part-time individuals hired by the City of Peterborough to work in the Library, including all contract, temporary, student, secondment, or co-operative placement persons. This refers to employees in their capacity while working or representing the Library or City, not as private citizens exercising their civic rights.
- 3.12. **Library:** Peterborough Public Library
- 3.13. **Library Resources:** Includes, but is not limited, to employees and volunteers working hours, Library events and programs, Library services (including website, online services, and social media channels), Library facilities, Library funds, Library materials, vehicles, intellectual property, images, clothing, and Library infrastructure.
- 3.14. **MEA:** Municipal Elections Act, 1996
- 3.15. **Member of Parliament (MP):** A member of parliament of the House of Commons of Canada.
- 3.16. **Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP):** A member of provincial parliament a part of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.
- 3.17. **Political Activity:** Anything in support or opposition of a Federal or Provincial political party; anything in support or opposition of a candidate in a Federal, Provincial, or Municipal election, or individuals seeking to become a candidate in a Federal, Provincial, or Municipal election.
- 3.18. **Registered Third-Party Advertiser (RTPA):** In relation to a Municipal election, an individual, corporation, or trade union registered under section 88.6 of the MEA.
- 3.19. **Social Media:** Means freely accessible, third-party hosted, interactive internet technologies used to produce, post and interact through text, images, video, and audio to inform, share, promote, collaborate, or network. Examples of social media include, but are not limited to, X, Bluesky, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, TikTok, and LinkedIn.

4. Scope

This policy sets out provisions for the use of Library resources during an election campaign.

This policy applies to:

- 1. Library Board Members
- 2. Employees who work in the Library and Library volunteers

This policy applies to any Municipal (including School Board), Provincial, and Federal elections or by-elections, and to questions on the ballot.

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, despite their candidacy in an election.

This policy also recognizes that the Peterborough Public Library Board continues to meet and conduct business during an election campaign period. Nothing in this policy shall prohibit members of the Peterborough Public Library Board from performing their duties or preclude a Member of Council from performing their duty as an elected official, nor does it inhibit them from representing the interests of their constituents.

Nothing in this policy shall preclude an employee from exercising one's civic right and duty to participate in the election process as a private citizen.

5. Procedure

5.1. Conflict of Interest

- 5.1.1. Employees working in the Library and Board members should disclose to the Library Director / CEO any conflict of interest that may arise due to their affiliations with a candidate or RTPA.
- 5.1.2. Employees working in the Library and Board members may not contribute to the campaign of any candidate or political party using Library or City funds or resources.

5.2. Employee and Volunteer Participation in Election Campaigns

- 5.2.1. In the year of an election period for a Federal, Provincial, or Municipal election, employees, while on duty or representing the Library or City, are expected to take extra care to ensure they are perceived as impartial, fair, and unbiased.
- 5.2.2. Nothing in this policy prohibits an employee from campaigning for or assisting in the campaign of a candidate or RTPA as a private member of the public, provided that employees shall not use Library or City resources for the purpose of campaigning for or assisting in the campaign of a candidate or RTPA.
- 5.2.3. Employees shall not canvass or actively work in support of a candidate or RTPA during their working hours.
- 5.2.4. Employees shall not canvass for, or actively work in support of a candidate, RTPA, or political party while wearing a Library or City uniform, badge, crest, or other item identifying them as an employee, or while using a Library vehicle.
- 5.2.5. An employee that nominates for a Council position must take a leave of absence when they file their nomination papers.

- 5.2.6. If the employee is elected to a political office, they shall be deemed to have resigned from their employment immediately before making the declaration of office as per Section 30 (4) of the MEA.

5.3. Library Board Members as Candidates

- 5.3.1. Library Board members may continue their Library Board responsibilities when they are running for office.
- 5.3.2. Citizen Board Members should inform the Director / CEO if they register to run for office in an election.
- 5.3.3. Library Board Members may engage in political activity, including endorsing or opposing a candidate, political party, or a particular response to a referendum question, but not in a manner that would lead a member of the public to infer that they are acting in their capacity as a Library Board Member, on behalf of the Peterborough Public Library, or City of Peterborough.

5.4. Requests for information about the Library

- 5.4.1. The Director / CEO, or designate, will coordinate requests for information about the Library received from candidates or political parties.
- 5.4.2. Information that is provided by the Library to one (1) candidate or political party will be provided to all other candidates and political parties upon request during an election campaign period.
- 5.4.3. Any candidate or political party may request a meeting with the Library Director / CEO, or designate, or a tour of the Library. These will be organized based on resources, capacity, and timing. If a meeting and/or tour is organized, the Library will organize a similar meeting and/or tour for all other candidates, RTPA, or political party upon request.

5.5. Library Facilities in an Election Campaign Period

- 5.5.1. Meeting rooms may be rented in accordance with the Peterborough Public Library's Room Booking Policy. This is not permitted at any voting location on an advance voting day or election day.
- 5.5.2. Elections Canada, Elections Ontario, and the City Clerk may provide non-partisan information about upcoming elections including, but not limited to how to vote, registering voters, or voting locations.
- 5.5.3. This policy does not prevent the Library from being used a voting location.

5.6. Access to Library Resources during an Election Campaign Period

- 5.6.1. The City's or Library's logo, or other intellectual property, may not be printed, posted, or distributed on any election-related campaign materials.
- 5.6.2. Websites or domain names that are funded by the Library shall not include any election-related campaign material or links to sites that feature campaign material. Exception: The Library's website/social media can re-direct to official non-partisan websites from the Federal, Provincial, or Municipal government.
- 5.6.3. The Integrated Library System and any other system containing customer information may not be used by any candidate, RTPA, or political party.

5.7. Promoting Elections

- 5.7.1. Nothing in this policy prohibits the Library from promoting awareness of or providing information about upcoming elections as long as no particular candidate, RTPA, or political party is promoted, supported, or opposed.

5.8. Breaches to this policy

- 5.8.1. Breaches to this policy will be investigated by the Library.
- 5.8.2. If a breach is related to Library operations, steps will be taken to stop the action(s).
- 5.8.3. If a significant breach has been deemed to have occurred for a City of Peterborough election, it will be reported the City Clerk for investigation.
- 5.8.4. Breaches for Provincial elections will be reported to Elections Ontario.
- 5.8.5. Breaches for a Federal election will be reported to Elections Canada.

6. Accessibility

The City and Library will use reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, procedures, and practices regarding the provision of goods and services to all residents, including people with disabilities, are consistent with the following principles:

- 6.1. Goods and services will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of all residents;
- 6.2. The provision of goods and services to people with disabilities will be integrated with conventional service unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporarily or on a permanent basis, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use, or benefit from City goods and services; and
- 6.3. All residents will be given an equal opportunity to obtain, use, and benefit from City goods and services.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

- 7.1. The Peterborough Public Library Board is responsible for approving this policy.
- 7.2. Library Director and CEO is responsible for implementation of this policy.
- 7.3. Library Management and supervisors are responsible for ensuring employees have received training and are applying the policy equitably.
- 7.4. Employees are responsible for applying the policy.

8. Privacy and Confidentiality

The Library protects the privacy and confidentiality of all members' personal information in keeping with the access to information and privacy provisions of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.56 (MFIPPA) and other applicable legislation.

The Library collects personal information of Library members under the authority of section 23(4) of the Public Libraries Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.P.44, and personal information will only be used to administer services and programs at the Library.

9. Communications

This policy will be distributed on the Library's [website](#).

10. Inquiries

Inquiries regarding this policy should be directed to the Library Director and CEO.

11. Related Documents

- 11.1. Peterborough Public Library Room Booking Policy PPL-002
- 11.2. Peterborough Public Library Communication Information Display Policy PPL-001
- 11.3. City of Peterborough Accessibility Policy
- 11.4. City of Peterborough, Employee Code of Conduct
- 11.5. Canada Elections Act, S.C. 2000, c.9
- 11.6. Election Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.6
- 11.7. Municipal Elections Act, 1996, S.O. 1996, c.32, Sched.