



OP18 – WSPL & POLITICAL ISSUES

Policy Type: Operational

Policy Number: OP18

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1.0 Scope and Legal Framework

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. These regulations are included in the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 as amended by Bill 181, the *Municipal Elections Modernization Act, 2016*. Specifically, Clause 88.18 *Use of municipal, board resources* states:

Before May 1 in the year of a regular election, municipalities and local boards shall establish rules and procedures with respect to the use of municipal or board resources, as the case may be, during the election campaign period.

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 elections, but these rules and procedures will also be used for provincial and federal elections.

2.0 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.

3.0 Use of Library Resources and Property

1. All candidates and political parties have equal access to publicly available resources and library services.
2. Meeting rooms may be rented in accordance with the Whitchurch-Stouffville Public Library's Meeting Rooms Policy.

3. Beginning May 1st of an election year, all Employees, Board Members, and Volunteers cannot use equipment, supplies, staff, or other operational resources owned by the Library for election or campaign related activities, nor may they use the Library's logo in any campaign material, except as outlined in item 7 of this policy. 'All-candidates' meetings can be held at the Library or other location, 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.
4. Candidates and political parties are permitted to distribute campaign materials on public rights-of-way near the Library, unless prohibited by a municipal by-law.
5. In accordance with the *Canada Elections Act* section 81.1(1) federal election candidates or their representatives are allowed to campaign in facilities that are available for free to the public. This privilege will not be extended to candidates for provincial or municipal elections.
6. During an election the library provides a designated area where candidates may make available up to 25 copies of their campaign brochure; promotes awareness of the election; and provides general information on elections.
7. No election sign or poster specific to a candidate or political party can be posted on the grounds of the Library or in the Library building.

4.0 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 their library duties during and must not participate in campaign activities during working hours.
3. Board members may continue their Library Board responsibilities when they are running for office.

6.0 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 a tour of the Library.