Madawaska Valley Public Library Policy Manual

Policy Type: Operational | **Policy Number: OP-18**

Policy Title: The Library and Political Elections | **Initial Approval Date: October 2015**
Last Review/Revision Date: 2024
Year of Next Review: 2027

Objective

To establish guidelines for the Madawaska Valley Public Library (the Library), the Madawaska Valley Public Library Board (the Board) members, staff members and volunteers to deal with candidates and political parties and the use of Library resources during the campaign periods for municipal, provincial, and federal elections.

Section 1: 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, staff 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. These rules and procedures will also be used for provincial and federal elections.

Section 2: Campaign Contributions

1. 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.

Section 3: Use of Library Resources and Property

1. All candidates and political parties have equal access to publicly available resources and services of the Library.
2. Meeting rooms may be rented in accordance with Policy Number OP-10 Facility Usage, space permitting.
3. Candidates cannot use equipment, supplies, staff or other operational resources of the Library nor may they use the Library's logo in any campaign material.
4. "All-candidates" meetings can be held at the Library, 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.
5. Candidates and political parties are permitted to distribute campaign materials on public right-of-ways at the Library, unless prohibited by a municipal by-law.
6. 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. During municipal and provincial elections candidates will be granted the same right to campaign in the Library.

7. In accordance with the Library's OP-11: Community Information Policy, Section 3: Election Campaign Material, during an election the Library will provide a public area where candidates may make available up to 25 copies of their campaign brochure when it announces meetings and forums for discussion of community issues, accompanied by a sign stating the Library does not endorse any specific candidate or political party; will promote awareness of the election; and provide general information on elections, if space allows.
8. 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.

Section 4: Staff and Volunteer Participation in Election Campaigns

1. Any Library staff member running as a candidate in the municipal election will comply with Section 30 of the *Municipal Elections Act*.
2. A Library staff member or volunteer involved in a political campaign must be politically neutral in carrying out his or her Library duties during and must not participate in campaign activities during his or her working hours.

Section 5: Library Board Members as Candidates

1. Board members may continue their Library board responsibilities when they are running for office.

Section 6: Requests for information about the Library

1. The Chief Executive Officer (the CEO), or designate, 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 tour of the Library.

Related Documents

Policy Number **OP-10: Facility Usage**
Policy Number **OP-11: Community Information**