

To:	Warden Matrosovs and Members of Grey County Council
Committee Date:	April 9, 2026
Subject / Report No:	CCR-CW-03-26
Title:	Election Protocol for Members of County Council
Prepared by:	Brittany Rier, Deputy Clerk
Reviewed by:	Tara Warder, Clerk
Lower Tier(s) Affected:	All
Status:	

Recommendation

- 1. That Report CCR-CW-03-26 regarding an update to the Election Protocol for Members of Grey County Council Policy be received and the policy be endorsed as presented.**

Executive Summary

Under *The Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, the use of municipal resources for an election campaign or during an election period is strictly prohibited. Both the updated Election Protocol for Members of County Council and the Code of Conduct provide Council members with guidance related to the use of municipal resources during an election campaign while still ensuring they have the necessary resources available to continue to perform their duties as a member of Grey County Council.

Background and Discussion

Grey County does not formally participate in the municipal elections. Clerk's staff do work with the local municipal Clerks during the lead up to a municipal election for resource sharing, holding candidate information sessions, and preparing for joint elected official training at the beginning of the new term of council.

All municipalities are required to have an Election Protocol Policy in order to establish some guidelines for members of council during this time period. The Election Protocol for Members of County Council was established in 2018, prior to the 2018 municipal election, and was reviewed last in 2022. The policy provides general guidance related to the use of County resources including marketing and promotion services, use of email, social media, and attendance at events during an election campaign.

Its intent is to maintain a balance between ensuring Council members have the resources

necessary to continue to perform their duties during a municipal election period, while setting guidelines to ensure that during an election campaign, current members do not receive any benefits by virtue of their office. Little has changed in the policy since its inception. Staff have added the Code of Conduct as a reference document as well as updated language under the Email section in relation to the use of Council members' Grey County email addresses.

Rule 6 of The Code of Conduct, approved in 2021, also speaks to election campaigns and clearly lays out members' responsibilities related to election campaigns in relation to resources, social media, and municipal facility use among other items.

Also included in the policy is information related to those who may wish to pursue offices at either the federal or provincial level of government.

Legal and Legislated Requirements

The Municipal Elections Act, 1996, provides information related to the use of municipal resources during an election. The Integrity Commissioner may be consulted by members in relation to questions on the use of municipal resources during an election campaign.

Canadian Election Act, S.C. 2000, c. 9

Section 88.18 of the Municipal Elections Modernization Act

Financial and Resource Implications

There are no financial implications related to this policy.

Relevant Consultation

- Internal
- External

Appendices and Attachments

Election Protocols for Members of County Council Policy (attached)

[Grey County Code of Conduct for Councillors By-law 5154-23](#)

Election Protocols for Members of County Council Policy

Approved by: County Council

By-law: N/A

Replaces: G-GEN-012

Section: Governance

Policy: 3-11

Date Approved:

Last Revision Date: April 2026

Scheduled for Review by: 2030

Policy Statement

This policy will provide guidelines related to election protocols for Members of County Council.

Purpose

The purpose of this guideline is to clarify provisions outlined in the Municipal Elections Act, the Elections Act and the Canada Elections Act pertaining to elected officials running as candidates for other levels of government (Provincial, Federal, or Municipal re-election). This outline provides background on the following topics:

- When an elected official (County Councillor, Warden) will resign from the County of Grey as a result of an election
- Use of Grey County corporate resources during a campaign
- Use of Grey County marketing/promotions and services/channels during a campaign

Scope

This policy applies to Members of Council, registered candidates for municipal office and County staff. This policy shall not preclude Members of Council from performing their duties as a County Councillor.

1.0 Candidates Running for Provincial or Federal Seat

- 1.1 Elected officials are not required to immediately resign from their municipal roles and may continue to represent the public, represent the municipality at official functions, and preside over council meetings while registered and/or actively running as a candidate for another level of government-including Legislative Assembly of Ontario (MPP), House of Commons (MP) or appointment to the Canadian Senate.

1.2 However, the Legislative Assembly Act and the Municipal Elections Act deem the individual to have resigned their municipal council seat when his or her election to the Legislature is published in the Ontario Gazette or the Canada Gazette as official records-not withstanding any swearing in/inaugural election.

1.3 Conversely, for information only, a member of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario (MPP), of the House of Commons (MP), must resign their office by nomination day in order to run as a candidate in a municipal election.

2.0 Use of County Resources During a Campaign

2.1 During any election process (municipal, provincial, or federal), the appropriate Elections Act specifies that candidates are required to report all contributions, whether financial or in-kind, and that the placement of limitations on contributions is intended to level the playing field to prevent a candidate from outspending his or her opponents. Any use of Grey County resources or services by a candidate for his or her election campaign to any level of government would be viewed as a contribution by the County to the Member.

2.2 Therefore, no elected official, candidate or campaign will use municipal cellphones, computers, vehicles, property, facilities, equipment, supplies, services, staff, or other resources of the County for any election campaign or campaign-related activities.

3.0 Use of County Marketing/Promotions Services During a Campaign

3.1 During an election, “third party advertisers”, are required to register with the election authority. A “third party” is defined as any person or entity that is not a political party, candidate or constituency association that engages in political advertising. Third parties include corporations, partnerships, unincorporated businesses, and associations. The County, through its role as an upper-tier government in the Province of Ontario, is obligated and mandated not to contribute to a campaign.

3.2 The County logo or other branded County materials may not be used by any member, candidate or staff for any election-related campaign material.

3.3 This mandate includes the following marketing and promotions services:

- a) **Email:** Elected officials and campaigns will not use the municipal distribution/contact list for election purposes; the elected official may use their own distribution/contact list developed in connecting with their

constituents. They may not use their Grey County email address for any matters related to an election campaign.

- b) **Print and Promotional Material:** Materials paid by municipal funds or managed by the municipality may at all times identify and picture duly elected officials in the execution of their official duties. However, all print or promotional material paid by municipal funds or managed by the municipality will not illustrate or communicate that a Member of Council is registered in any election or about their campaign, whether municipal provincial or federal.
- c) **Social Media:** It is understood that the County will discontinue following all registered election candidates on its corporate channels during the election process. All channels managed by the County will not illustrate or communicate that a Member of Council is registered in any election or about their campaign, whether municipal, provincial, or federal.
- d) **Events:** An elected official may continue to, and is reasonably expected to, perform regular municipal duties while registered/running as a candidate for election as long as the event and the promotions associated with the event does not illustrate or communicate that a Member of Council is registered in any election or about their campaign, whether municipal, provincial, or federal.

Given the above impacts, when a marketing/promotional activity or event by the municipality could appear to support an elected official's campaign, perceived or real, it is appropriate to err on the side of caution and utilize alternate persons or methods to further distance the County from a perceived or real campaign alignment. This decision should be determined between senior staff, Head of Council, Integrity Commissioner, and/or candidate.

- e) **Staff:** County staff shall not engage in any of the following:
 - i) election related activity during normal working hours.
 - ii) use County facilities for campaigning purposes or activities.
 - iii) distribute campaign materials on County owned facilities or at County events.
 - iv) distribute election or campaign materials using municipal funds or resources.

- v) use the County logo, crest, coat of arms, flag, or other branded corporate resources or property for any election-related campaign material.
- vi) use County issued email addresses for election-related or campaigning purposes.
- f) **Photographs and Videos:** No member of Council or candidate shall use photographs and/or videos depicting any member of County staff in election-related campaign materials.

Photographs and/or videos owned by or produced for the County may not be used for election or campaign purposes.
- g) **County Facilities:** No member of Council or candidate shall use County facilities for campaigning purposes or activities. Campaign signs and materials may not be displayed on County property.

4.0 Legislated Requirements (if applicable)

4.1 The Municipal Election Act, 1996

4.2 Canadian Election Act, S.C. 2000, c. 9

4.3 Section 88.18 of the Municipal Elections Modernization Act

5.0 Forms

N/A