

SECTION: Administration
CHAPTER: City Wide

SUBJECT: Election Period Procedures

Purpose

The purpose of the Election Period Procedures is to:

- provide consistent, timely and transparent responses to requests for information from candidates;
- ensure the highest standard of good governance is supported by City Administration;
- ensure that Council elections are conducted in an environment that is open and fair to all candidates by outlining the use of City resources, publications, functions and events, and requests for information in the lead up to an election;
- complement the *Ethical Conduct for City of Yellowknife Employees* to ensure that best practice is achieved in transparency and objectivity.

Definitions

“Administration”	means the administrative and operational arm of the City, comprised of the various departments and business units and includes City Staff;
“Candidate”	means a candidate for election as Mayor or Councillor for the City of Yellowknife;
“City Administrator”	means the Senior Administrative Officer of the City appointed pursuant to the <i>Cities, Towns and Villages Act</i> , or their designate;
“Election Period”	means the date that Nominations Open until Election Day;
“Incumbent Candidate”	Means a Member of Council seeking re-election;
“Member” or “Members of Council”	means a member of the Council, including the Mayor;
“Returning Officer”	means the person appointed by City Council as Returning Officer for the City of Yellowknife.
“Staff”	means any paid employee of the City of Yellowknife including but not limited to full time, part time, casual and seasonal employees. This does not include volunteers or contractors.

Assistance to Candidates

All candidates for the Council election will be treated equally by Administration.

Throughout the election period, Administration will, at all times, ensure that incumbent Members of Council have the support, information and resources they require to fulfil their role as Members of Council.

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Provision of Information to Members of Council and Candidates

All queries relating to the election from Candidates are to be directed to the Returning Officer.

Matters outside the responsibilities of the Returning Officer are to be directed to the City Administrator or their designate.

The City recognises that all Candidates have rights to information from Administration. Transparency will be observed and practised in the provision of all information and advice during the election period.

In the interest of providing consistent and timely responses, staff will refer all requests for information about the City, its programs and services, from all Candidates by email to candidaterequests@yellowknife.ca. The goal is to respond to every request as soon as possible, but within five full business days.

Please note that City Administration will make every effort but cannot guarantee that it will be able to respond in advance of the election to candidates' questions received by the candidaterequests@yellowknife.ca within the last 5 business days prior to Election Day. This is due to the time it may take to coordinate a response within the prescribed five business day timeframe.

Responses will be provided in writing and posted on the City's election webpage in a question and answer format, without revealing the source of the request. This gives all Candidates access to the same information.

When information is not available or cannot be provided within a reasonable period, City Administration will advise the requestor and explain why the information is not available.

City staff who are contacted by a Member of Council for information will seek to ascertain whether the information is requested by the individual as a Candidate or as a Member of Council, given some Members of Council are also Candidates.

City staff may continue to respond to requests for information, as they normally do, from Members of Council in their role as elected officials. However, please send an email to the candidaterequests@yellowknife.ca about all requests from Members of Council as Candidates.

Information and briefing material prepared by City Administration for Members Council during the Election Period will relate only to factual matters or to existing Council policies and services. Such information will not relate to new policy development, new projects or matters that are the subject of public or election debate or that might be perceived to be connected with a Candidate's election campaign.

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Use of City resources

Staff

City Staff must not undertake any tasks indirectly or directly connected with the election campaign of a Member of Council standing for re-election.

City Staff will not provide any information to any Candidate or prospective Candidate, other than information that is available to the general public.

Briefing/speaking notes for Members of Council will only be prepared by City Staff in relation to events that are part of the normal services or operations of the Member and such speeches will not be circulated or available for publication.

City Staff may not use City resources, including the use of photocopiers, stationery or computer equipment for any election campaign activities.

Equipment provided to Members of Council

Members of Council may continue to use any equipment provided to them by the City to facilitate the performance of their normal duties as a Member of Council.

Members of Council must ensure that any equipment issued to them by the City, including mobile phones and laptops, is only used in connection with their duties as a Member of Council and will not be used for election purposes or in a manner that could be perceived as supporting or being connected with a Candidate's election campaign.

Social Media

Social media is defined in the Social Media Policy and includes, but is not limited to:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- YouTube
- LinkedIn
- Flickr
- Pinterest

Any publication on the City's social media sites during the election period will be restricted to operations and normal day-to-day activities. Hosting or responding to political content is not permitted. Launches or announcements of any new projects, policy initiatives, or programs should be avoided.

Where it is not possible to disable the ability to post comments, Staff responsible for administering social media accounts will ensure compliance with the City's Social Media Policy.

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Role of City Administrator

Before the election period commences, the City Administrator will ensure that:

- arrangements are in place to avoid significant interruptions to the normal business of the City due to the prohibition on making major policy and significant decisions. This may include, for example, programming major tender processes outside the Election Period;
- guidance is issued to members of staff outlining changes to normal business practices, the restrictions and other issues to be considered by staff during the Election Period;
- all items listed for consideration on a Council agenda are checked for compliance with the terms of these procedures;
- all Members of Council, Administration and members of the public are made aware of these procedures.

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