



Township of Springwater Municipal & School Board Election Election Day - October 26, 2026

To:	All Council and School Board Candidates
From:	Renée Ainsworth, Clerk
Date:	June 29, 2026
Re:	2026 Municipal Elections – Campaigning at Municipal Events or on Municipal Property

This memo provides guidance to municipal council and school board candidates on the use of Township resources during the municipal election period, with particular attention to attendance at municipally hosted events and the use of photographs taken at those events in campaign materials.

Township events include events hosted by:

- Elmvale Business Improvement Area (BIA)
- Community Recreation Associations (CRA's)
- Springwater Public Library
- Springwater Sports Heritage Board
- Huronia West OPP Detachment Board
- Township Committees

Purpose

The Township must remain politically neutral during the election period. Candidates are responsible for ensuring that their campaign activities do not involve the use of municipal resources, municipal branding, or any real or perceived endorsement by the Township.

This guidance is intended to help candidates avoid inappropriate use of corporate resources and to support a fair and transparent election process.

General Rule

Candidates may not use Township corporate resources for any election-related purpose.

For the purpose of this memo, corporate resources generally include:

- Township funds, equipment, supplies, and facilities

- Township staff time or services;
- Township communication channels, including the website, social media accounts, newsletters, and email systems;
- Township logos, branding, templates, and official imagery;
- Information or materials produced by the Township that are not equally available to the public;
- Municipally funded events, programs, and activities where use could imply municipal support or endorsement;

Attendance at Municipally Hosted Events

Candidates may attend municipally hosted public events in the same manner as any other member of the public.

Attendance at a municipal event does **not** mean that:

- the Township endorses the candidate;
- the candidate is attending in an official campaign capacity;
- Township staff may assist with campaign promotion; or
- the event may be used as a campaign platform.

While attending municipally hosted events, candidates should not:

- campaign at the event;
- distribute campaign materials unless expressly permitted by the Township for all candidates on an equal basis;
- use Township staff, event set-up, staging, signage, or audio/visual services for campaign purposes;
- interfere with the event's municipal purpose or operations; or
- create the impression that the event is sponsored by or connected to their campaign.

If the Township establishes event-specific rules respecting candidate conduct, all candidates are expected to comply with them.

Photographs Taken at Municipally Hosted Events

Candidates sometimes wish to use photographs taken at municipal events in campaign materials. The key distinction is whether the photo is a **personal/campaign photo taken by the candidate or their campaign**, or an **official municipal photo or image created using Township resources**.

1. Photos taken by the candidate or their campaign

A candidate may generally use a photograph in campaign materials if:

- the photo was taken by the candidate, a campaign volunteer, or a photographer retained by the candidate;
- no Township staff were directed to take, edit, or provide the photo for campaign purposes;
- no Township equipment, paid services, or other corporate resources were used to create the image for the campaign; and
- the image does not suggest Township endorsement.

Even where a candidate takes their own photo at a municipally hosted event, they should avoid:

- prominently featuring Township logos, branded signage, staff uniforms, or official backdrops in a way that implies endorsement;
- using images with members of Council or staff in a way that may reasonably be interpreted as support for the candidacy;
- obstructing or disrupting the event to stage campaign photography; and
- using photos taken in areas not open to the public or obtained through special access provided because of the candidate's current role.

2. Official municipal photographs and media

Candidates should **not** use in campaign materials:

- photographs taken by Township staff in the course of their duties;
- images posted on the Township website or Township social media channels, unless the Township has clearly made them available for unrestricted public reuse and such reuse would not be for campaign purposes (sharing social media posts or direct links to the Township website are permitted);
- official event photos, videos, livestream captures, or other municipal media products;
- photographs created using municipal equipment, software, or staff support.

Official municipal photos are corporate resources. Their use in campaign materials may create a real or perceived municipal endorsement and should be avoided.

Practical Guidance for Campaign Materials

Candidates should ensure that campaign materials do not include:

- the Township logo, crest, wordmark, or other municipal branding;
- photos of municipal premises, signs, vehicles, uniforms, or event staging presented in a way that implies official support;
- screenshots from Township social media, website pages, or webcast footage;
- references such as "in partnership with the Township" or similar wording, unless expressly authorized by the Township in a non-election context and not used for campaign promotion.

If a candidate chooses to use a self-taken photo from a public municipal event, the material should make clear that it is campaign content created independently by the candidate.

Incumbent Candidates

Incumbent members of Council should take particular care to separate their official duties from campaign activities.

Incumbents must not use:

- constituent or municipal contact lists for campaign purposes;
- Township-issued devices, email accounts, offices, or staff support for campaign activity;
- photos, announcements, or event participation arising from their office in a way that gives them an unfair advantage or suggests Township endorsement.

Where an incumbent attends a municipal event in an official capacity, any resulting official photographs, recordings, or municipal communications remain corporate resources and should not be repurposed for campaign use.

Candidate Responsibility

Each candidate is solely responsible for ensuring compliance with:

- the Municipal Elections Act, 1996;
- [Township Use of Corporate Resources Policy for Election Campaign Purposes](#);
- any applicable procedures for municipally hosted events; and
- any privacy, copyright, or defamation considerations associated with campaign materials.

Where there is uncertainty, candidates should err on the side of caution and avoid using the material.

Non-Township Events:

Campaigning at a non-Township event is at the discretion of the event organizers. Please contact event organizers directly for further details.



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If you have any questions about the above, please do not hesitate to contact a member of the Clerks Department at clerks@springwater.ca or via telephone at 705-728-4784 x 2304