



Report to: General Committee

Date of Meeting: 2006-06-19

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**SUBJECT:** Use of Corporate Resources – Election Purposes  
**PREPARED BY:** Sheila Birrell, Extension 4729

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the policy on the Use of Corporate Resources for Election Purposes, attached hereto as Schedule “A” be adopted;

And that the Town of Markham Business Expense & Conference Policy be amended as follows:

- Delete Item 14. “Use of Corporate Resources – Election Purposes”;
- Amend Section 13 to provide for an annual budget for Regional Councillors equal to the amount of the average Ward Councillor cost based on the print per page and mailing per household costs, to take effect in 2007; and
- Amend Section 13 to update print and mailing costs of Newsletters.

**FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

The average cost for Newsletters for a Ward Councillor is \$2,351. The costs associated with the recommendation would be \$9,404 in 2006 dollars. Costs will increase as population increases.

**PURPOSE:**

To respond to Council’s request regarding funding for Regional Councillor newsletters and to clarify the rules surrounding the use of corporate resources in an election year, to ensure their consistency with the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*.

**BACKGROUND:**

The Town Treasurer presented to the General Committee on May 15<sup>th</sup> on the Town of Markham Business Expense & Conference Policy, and the following recommendation was approved:

*“That the presentation by the Treasurer regarding Council expenses and the use of corporate resources in election years be received;*

*And that the issue of Council Newsletters and public notices be referred to staff to review and report back with recommendations on methods for communication by Regional Councillors, including provision of funding equal to funds afforded to Ward Councillors.”*

Staff have also proposed a separate policy for the use of corporate resources during election years.

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**OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:**

The policy on the use of corporate resources in an election year currently resides in the Town's Business Expense and Conference Policy. This report attempts to separate the election year issues.

**Policy on the Use of Corporate Resources During Election Years**

The draft policy speaks to:

- Parameters for staff actively supporting candidates
- Election-related material display or distribution in municipally-owned facilities
- Election year budgets
- Cutoff dates for public notices for the 2006 and subsequent election years
- Prohibitions on advertising, and spending after Nomination Day
- Prohibited use of Town equipment, i.e. voice mail system, Town website or Town funded websites, cell phones, PDA's, etc. for election-related purposes
- Prohibition on Newsletters after April 30<sup>th</sup>
- Policy applying to Members of Council who choose not to register and to Members of Council who are acclaimed.

The draft policy is clear and concise in that it prohibits the use of Corporate Resources for any election-related activity. It places the onus of compliance with the individual Members of Council. For example, if a Member of Council has a website that is currently paid through the individual Councillor's discretionary account, it would be in order to consider the cost for election-related business from the date of registration to Election Day and to pay the invoices from the campaign account.

In the past, Members of Council have expressed a preference for only one cell phone and/or PDA during an election year. In the event Members of Council choose to use their current cell phones or PDA's, individual Members of Council would be required to reimburse the Town for costs associated with that use. It could be as easy as including the monthly invoice as an expense. It would not be feasible for staff to attempt to determine which calls were Town-related and which were election-related.

**Newsletters**

Currently the eight Ward Councillors are entitled to two two-page Newsletters or one four page Newsletter a year. The average annual cost per Councillor is \$2,351., for a total of \$18,808. These costs are based on a print cost of .039 cents per page and a mailing cost of 8.4 cents per household.

To date, there have not been any requests from Regional Councillors for the printing and mailing of Newsletters and no budget exists for that purpose. The cost associated with four Regional Councillor Newsletters, twice a year, is estimated at \$75,276 or \$18,808 each. Staff is recommending that Regional Councillors be permitted to produce Newsletters for printing and distribution during their term of office, with the restriction that newsletters in an election year must be distributed before April 30<sup>th</sup>. However, staff is also suggesting that Regional Councillors only be allotted the annual average Ward Councillor cost, i.e. \$2,351 and that the 2007 budget be adjusted accordingly.

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**OPTIONS/DISCUSSION: (cont'd.)**

**Public Notices**

Currently public notices are permitted up to Nomination Day. Staff are recommending the draft policy stipulate, for the 2006 election year, a cutoff date for public notices (park openings, community/ward meetings, etc.) be June 30<sup>th</sup> and that, for subsequent election years, the cutoff date be April 30<sup>th</sup>.

Staff will be bringing forward a report in the fall with general recommendations relating to public notices, medium for the notices, and the associated costs for years, other than election years.

**FINANCIAL TEMPLATE:**

Not applicable

**ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

Not applicable

**ACCESSIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS:**

Not applicable

**ENGAGE 21<sup>ST</sup> CONSIDERATIONS:**

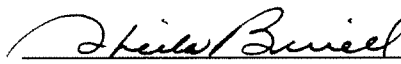
Not applicable

**BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:**

Not applicable

**RECOMMENDED**

**BY:**



Sheila Birrell  
Town Clerk

  
Andy Taylor, Commissioner  
Corporate Services

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Schedule "A" – Policy on the Use of Corporate Services In Election Years