



IMPORTANT “NEW” LEGISLATIVE CHANGES AND INFORMATION FOR THE 2018 MUNICIPAL ELECTION

There were a significant number of important changes to the *Municipal Elections Act* which were enacted for the 2018 Municipal Election. Below is a summary of some of those important changes:

- The first day that candidates can register for nomination is **May 1, 2018**. The deadline to file a nomination for the municipal election will be until **2:00 p.m.** on **July 27, 2018**. (The election campaign period has been shortened from 37 weeks to 13 weeks.)
- Anyone wishing to run for Township or Regional Council must now submit the signatures of 25 eligible voters endorsing the nomination.
 - (i) The requirement to submit 25 signatures does NOT apply to candidates running for trustee of a local school board.
 - (ii) Each voter providing a signature must sign a declaration stating that they were eligible to vote in the Township on the day they signed the endorsement.
 - (iii) If a candidate files a nomination, and then changes their mind and decides to run for a different office on the same Council (such as Councillor, then decides to run for Mayor) new signatures are not required.
- For the first time in the Niagara Region, voters will be electing the Chair for the Regional Municipality of Niagara.
- For the first time, a Regional Councillor will also be elected at large within the Township.
- Contributions by corporations and trade unions to candidates are banned; however, corporations and trade unions can contribute to third party advertisers or register as a third party advertiser.
- Third Party Advertising - Individuals, corporations and trade unions can register to be third party advertisers and make contributions to third party advertisers.
- Council was given the authority to pass a by-law to allow for ranked ballot voting.
- A candidate may resubmit his or her financial statement to correct an error up until the filing deadline. **NOTE:** The Clerk (or delegate) has been given the mandate to review all financial statements, only to identify any contributions in excess of the prescribed limits, which will then be reported to the Compliance Audit Committee.
- A candidate who misses the filing deadline has been provided with a 30-day grace period for an extension provided they pay a \$500 late filing fee to the Clerk
- A new spending limit for post-election parties (celebrations) and expressions of appreciation after voting day has been established.
- New rules apply regarding the maximum amount a candidate and his or her spouse can contribute to the candidate’s own campaign (refer to Section 88.9.1 of the Municipal Elections Act).
- The maximum contribution to a candidate or third party advertiser has increased

IMPORTANT “NEW” LEGISLATIVE CHANGES AND INFORMATION

from \$750 to \$1,200; however a contributor shall not make contributions exceeding a total of \$5,000 to two or more candidates for office on the same Council or local board.

- A candidate who does not accept any contributions of money, or incur any expenses, is not required to open a bank account.
- If a candidate sells items for \$25 or less to raise campaign funds, the money is considered campaign income rather than a contribution. In this case, the candidate does not have to issue a receipt, or make sure that the person buying the item is eligible to make a campaign contribution.
- Every candidate will be entitled to a refund of the nomination fee if they file their campaign financial statement and, if needed, the auditor’s report by the deadline.
- If an eligible voter believes that a candidate or third party advertiser has contravened an election campaign finance rule, the voter may apply for a compliance audit. Compliance audit committees will be required to provide brief written reasons for their decisions.
- It is an offence to give, lend, offer or promise someone an office or employment in order to convince a person to run for office, not to run for office, or withdraw from running for office.
- It is an offence to give, lend, offer or promise someone money or other compensation in order to induce a person to run for office, not run for office or withdraw from running for office.

NOTE: Further information and explanation can be found in the 2018 Candidates Guide, 2018 Voters’ Guide and 2018 Guide for Third Party Advertisers for Ontario Municipal Council and School Board Elections (Ministry of Municipal Affairs/Ministry of Housing) as well as the Municipal Elections Act.