

Candidate Q&A - 2026

The following questions have been submitted by candidates that have filed with the City of Stratford for the 2026 Municipal and School Board Election. For the awareness of all candidates, the responses to these questions are shared below:

Volunteer Services, Waiving of Fees, and Campaigns

Question – If a third party wants to volunteer their services for free/waive their fees, where and how is that to be documented, or reported for the record?

Answer – The 2026 Candidates Guide developed by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing provides the following information in relation to the question posed (bolding added for emphasis):

- On Page 20: "Campaign contributions are any money, goods or services that are given to you for use in your campaign, including money and goods that you contribute to yourself.

If you are **given a special discount** on a good or service that you are purchasing for your campaign, the **difference between what you were charged and what the market value would be** is considered to be a contribution.

Corporations and other businesses are not permitted to make contributions to candidates. If you are being offered a discount, you should make sure that whoever is offering the discount is entitled to make a **personal contribution** to your campaign.

If a **professional** who would normally charge for a service gives you that service for free, the **market value of the service** is considered to be a contribution.

If you have volunteers working for your campaign, the value of their **volunteer labour is not considered to be a contribution.**"

- On Page 27: "It is your responsibility as a candidate to file a complete and accurate financial statement on time."

- On Page 28: "The filing deadline is 2 p.m. on the last Friday in March following the election. Since March 26, 2027, falls on Good Friday and March 29, 2027, is Easter Monday, financial statements may be filed with the clerk until 2 p.m. on Tuesday, March 30, 2027.

If you received contributions or incurred any expenses you must complete the relevant parts of the financial statement."

Information about completing the Financial Statement Form 4 is outlined in the 2026 Candidates Guide beginning on page 32. A copy of [Form 4](#) was included in your Candidates Package and is available on the Province of Ontario's website.

Endorsement of Nominations

Question - If postal codes are not completed, are the endorsements rejected?

Answer - The 2026 Candidates Guide developed by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing provides the following information in relation to the question posed:

- On Page 8: "Anyone providing an endorsement signature must also fill in their name and address, including the postal code."

Use of Personal Credit Cards and Campaign Bank Accounts

Question - If a candidate wants to purchase signs, handouts, etc. and the candidate wants to pay by credit card does the candidate still have to go through a separate bank account?

Answer – The 2026 Candidates Guide developed by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing provides the following information in relation to the question posed:

- On Page 25: "Expenses must be paid from your campaign bank account. If you use a credit card to pay for purchases, you should make sure that you keep clear records showing that the expense on the credit card was reimbursed from the campaign account."

Campaign Finances

Question – What is a "fundraiser" defined as?

Answer - The 2026 Candidates Guide developed by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing provides the following information in relation to the question posed:

- On Page 21: "Fundraising functions are events or activities held by you, or on your behalf, for the primary purpose of raising money for your campaign. If you hold an event to promote your campaign and you happen to receive some contributions or ask people to consider contributing to your campaign, this would not qualify as a fundraising event."

Holding of Campaign Fundraising Events

Question - Can campaign fundraising events be held at the Rotary Recreation Complex?

Answer – The Use of Municipal Resources During an Election Period Policy C.3.14 provides the following information in response to the question:

- "Campaigning and the distribution or display of campaign material is not permitted on municipal land, including the interior of City Hall, other Municipal facilities, and Municipally-provided facilities, or any such locations which have been designated for or are being used for voting purposes by the City."

Campaigning and City-owned Property

Question - Are Spruce Lodge and Hamlet Estates on city-owned property? If so, can a candidate campaign to voters who live there?

Answer – Spruce Lodge is owned by The Corporation of the City of Stratford, the County of Perth and the Town of St. Marys. With respect to candidate access to buildings the following information is available from the Municipal Elections Act:

- Access to residential premises

88.1 No person who is in control of an apartment building, condominium building, non-profit housing cooperative or gated community may prevent a candidate or his or her representative from campaigning between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. at the doors to the apartments, units or houses, as the case may be. 2016, c. 15, s. 46.

- Display of signs at residential premises

88.2 (1) No landlord or person acting on a landlord's behalf may prohibit a tenant from displaying signs in relation to an election on the premises to which the lease relates. 2016, c. 15, s. 46.

- Same, condominium corporations

(2) No condominium corporation or any of its agents may prohibit the owner or tenant of a condominium unit from displaying signs in relation to an election on the premises of his or her unit. 2016, c. 15, s. 46.

- Exception

(3) Despite subsections (1) and (2), a landlord, person, condominium corporation or agent may set reasonable conditions relating to the size or type of signs in relation to an election that may be displayed on the premises and may prohibit the display of signs in relation to an election in common areas of the building in which the premises are found. 2016, c. 15, s. 46.

- Same

(4) Despite subsection (3), no landlord, person, condominium corporation or agent may prohibit the display of signs in relation to an election in common areas of the building if space in the building is being used as a voting place. 2016, c. 15, s. 46.

- Other Regulations:

For Candidates Gaining Access to Rented Premises

Section 28 of the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 provides that:

"No landlord shall restrict reasonable access to a residential complex by candidates for election to any office at the federal, provincial or municipal level, or their authorized representatives, if they are seeking access for the purpose of canvassing or distributing election material."

For Candidates Gaining Access to Condominiums

Section 118 of the Condominium Act, 1998 provides as follows:

"No corporation or employee or agent of a corporation shall restrict reasonable access to the property by candidates, or their authorized representatives, for election to the House of Commons, the Legislative Assembly or an office in a municipal government or school board if access is necessary for the purpose of canvassing or distributing election material."

For Candidates Gaining Access to Co-operative Housing Units

Section 171.24 of the Co-operative Corporations Act provides as follows:

"No non-profit housing co-operative or servant or agent of such a co-operative shall restrict reasonable access to the housing units of the co-operative by candidates, or their authorized representatives, for election to the House of Commons, the Legislative Assembly, any office in a municipal government or a school board for the purpose of canvassing or distributing election material."

Quorum for Council

Question - What is quorum for council?

Answer – Stratford City Council has 11 members (1 Mayor and 10 Councillors). Quorum for Council is 6 members.

Conflict of Interest

Question - Another mayoral candidate told me that they believed that the GTR is a conflict of interest for me as a candidate for mayor. Is it? If so, how?

Answer – Staff are unable to provide advice to members of Council, committees, or local boards on whether that member has a conflict under the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act. The City has retained an Integrity Commissioner who is permitted to provide advice to members of Council, Committees, and local boards.

Liability and Insurance

Question - Are members of council immune from personal lawsuits as a result of council matters to the point where they should have liability insurance?

Answer – Municipal councillors are generally protected from personal liability, for any decisions they make in good faith in the course of their duties. This protection is incorporated into the [Municipal Act, 2001](#) in sections 448(1), 450 and 284.14 as outlined below:

Immunity

448 (1) No proceeding for damages or otherwise shall be commenced against a member of council or an officer, employee or agent of a municipality or a person acting under the instructions of the officer, employee or agent for any act done in good faith in the performance or intended performance of a duty or authority under this Act or a by-law passed under it or for any alleged neglect or default in the performance in good faith of the duty or authority. 2001, c. 25, s. 448 (1).

Policy decisions

450 No proceeding based on negligence in connection with the exercise or non-exercise of a discretionary power or the performance or non-performance of a discretionary function, if the action or inaction results from a policy decision of a municipality or local board made in a good faith exercise of the discretion, shall be commenced against,

- (a) a municipality or local board;
- (b) a member of a municipal council or of a local board; or
- (c) an officer, employee or agent of a municipality or local board.

Immunity

284.14 A decision made, or a veto power or other power exercised, legally and in good faith under this part shall not be quashed or open to review in whole or in part by any court because of the unreasonableness or supposed unreasonableness of the decision or exercise of the veto power or other power.

The City also has errors and omission insurance which covers Council members' legal fees in certain circumstances.

Local Board Applicability

Question - Is Stratford General Hospital a local board of the municipality? Is the Parks Board a local board? Are there any others?

Answer - Stratford General Hospital is not a local board of the City of Stratford. It operates as a public hospital under the governance of the Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance board of directors, not as a municipal corporation or city-run local board.

The City does have local boards including but not limited to:

- Parks Board
- Downtown Stratford Business Improvement Area
- Stratford Economic Enterprise Development Corporation / investStratford
- Stratford Police Service
- Stratford Public Library Board

Social Services Related Stats

Question – Information was requested on stats related to Social Services. This information will be included in next week's Candidates Q&A.

A copy of the [2026 Candidates Guide](#) was placed in the Candidates Package and is available on the [City's website](#). A copy of the City's Use of Municipal Resources during an Election Period Policy C.3.14 was also included in the Candidates Package.