



STRATFORD POLICE SERVICE

BOARD POLICY

Issued: 2025

Expires: Indefinite

GP-022SPSB Political Activity

1. Preamble:

- a) The purpose of this policy is to outline the guidelines and restrictions regarding the political activities of police officers employed by the Stratford Police Service, pursuant to the *Community Safety and Policing* (the "Act") and *Ontario Regulation 402/23 Political Activity* (O. Reg. 402/23); and
- b) In addition, this policy provides direction on the appropriate use of Board resources during an election campaign in accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act*. This ensures that all candidates are treated fairly and consistently and preserved the integrity of the electoral process.

2. It is the Policy of the Stratford Police Service Board (the Board) that:

- a) That Police officers of the Stratford Police Service have the right to vote in elections, be a member of or hold a position in a political organization, and make contributions to political organizations or candidates;
- b) When off-duty and not in uniform, they may:
 - I. Attend and participate in public meetings, including those with elected representatives, government officials, or candidates;
 - II. Attend and participate in meetings or conventions of a political organization;
 - III. Canvass for or act as a scrutineer for a political organization or candidate; and
 - IV. On polling day, transport voters to polling places on behalf of a candidate.

3. Police officers of the Stratford Police Service must not:

- I. Express views on issues directly related to their responsibilities as police officers;
 - II. Associate their views with their police position or represent those views as those of the Stratford Police Service;
 - III. Solicit or receive funds on behalf of political organizations or candidates; or
 - IV. Engage in any political activities that would or could place them in a conflict of interest.
4. On-duty activities are only permissible if authorized by the Chief of Police or, in the case of the Chief of Police, by the Board;
5. Police officers of the Stratford Police Service may express views on issues not related to election campaigns and may attend public meetings as long as they do not support or oppose candidates or political parties during election periods;
6. Police officers of the Stratford Police Service may not seek or hold candidacy in federal or provincial elections unless on a leave of absence without pay as granted by the Board;
7. Police officers of the Stratford Police Service may seek candidacy or serve on a band council or municipal council if the Police Service does not operate within the relevant band or municipality, and the candidacy does not interfere with their duties or create a conflict of interest. In such cases, officers may not need a leave of absence but must apply for one if required.
8. If elected to federal or provincial positions must resign immediately;
9. A Police officer of the Stratford Police Service elected to a band council or municipal council may not need to resign if it does not interfere with their duties or create a conflict of interest. However, they must abstain from discussions or votes related to the Police Service's budget.
10. The Chief of Police will maintain written procedures on political activities and address any concerns or complaints related to political activities to ensure adherence to this policy.
11. Use of Board Resources for Election Purposes:

- a) In addition, this policy applies to all candidates running for election including Board members, registered third parties and Board employees which includes the Stratford Police Service;

b) Legislative Authority:

The *Municipal Elections Act* prohibits a municipality or local board from making contributions towards the promotion of or opposition to the candidacy of a person for an elected office in any form or in support of or opposition to a question on a ballot. This includes assets, resources, services and employees.

c) Definitions:

- I. Act - means the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, as amended, and includes any regulation made there-under.
- II. Campaigning - means a municipal election-related activity for the purpose of supporting or opposing the election of a Candidate or a question on the ballot.
- III. Campaign-related materials - means those materials that promote or oppose the candidacy of a person for elected office.
- IV. Employees - includes full-time, part-time or contract personnel employed by the Board; and
- V. Registered Third Party - means an individual, corporation or trade union that is registered with a local municipality under s. 88.6 of the Act.

d) It is the Policy of this Board that:

- I. No person shall use Board facilities, equipment, supplies, services and employees or other Board resources for election campaign or any campaign-related purposes. No person shall undertake campaign-related activities at Board facilities including displaying campaign signs or materials at any Board facility;
- II. No person shall campaign and/or distribute campaign-related materials during any event hosted by the Board or Stratford Police Service regardless of location;

III. Communications:

- photographs and videos produced for and/or owned by the Board and the Stratford Police Service shall not be used by candidates, Board members, registered third parties or Board employees;
- the Board's and the Police Service's logo, brand and other marks shall not be used in campaigning or included on any campaigning website;
- the Board's voicemail system and Police Service voicemail system shall not be used to record campaigning messages;
- websites and social media sites that are funded, owned and operated by the Board and by the Police Service shall not include any election-related campaign material;
- the Board's and Police Service's communication materials shall not profile (name or photograph), make reference to and/or identify any individual as a candidate; advocate for or against a particular candidate; and
- Candidates, Board members, registered third parties and Board employees shall not print or distribute any election campaign materials using board funds or resources.

IV. Candidates, Board members, registered third parties and Board employees shall not use Board or Police Service devices for any election-related purposes including computers, cell/smartphones, tablets, printers, scanners, applications, photocopiers, email, social media accounts, telephone systems, network and file storage;

V. The Board's and Police Service's contact information including facility addresses, telephone numbers and email addresses are not to be used by a candidate or registered third party as their election campaign contact information; and

VI. Board employees may participate in election-related activities provided that employees do not engage in any political activity during working hours or use the Board's resources in accordance with this policy.

And that employees do not identify themselves as Board employees when engaged in political activity.

"Steve Cousins"

Chair

Approved January 15, 2025

Date