

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:

Compliance Audits and Candidate Financial Statements

Question - If a candidate uses a company they own to make a large contribution to a local charity and then promotes that contribution on social media. A social media account that directly promotes and links to their website and themselves as a candidate frequently. Does this not warrant a compliance audit?

If the charity they donate to make further promotional videos with the candidate to promote the donation that was made by the candidate's corporation with the candidate in the video, does this not constitute a gift in kind for promoting the candidate from that non-profit?

Question - In regards to the financial statements candidates are required to complete, what is the review process of these statements once submitted? Are there any audits completed of the winners? For those that are over \$10,000.00 in contributions or spending what steps occur once their audit report is submitted?

Answer – The 2026 Candidate's Guide prepared by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing provides information in response to these questions:

- On page 28: "If an eligible elector believes that you have contravened the election finance rules, they may apply for a compliance audit of your campaign finances. The application must be in writing and must set out the reasons why they believe you contravened the rules.

An application for a compliance audit must be submitted to the municipal clerk who conducted the election within 90 days of the deadline to file the campaign financial statement.

The compliance audit committee will consider the application and decide whether to grant or reject the application. You may appeal the committee's decision to the Superior Court of Justice within 15 days after the decision is made.

If the committee grants the application, it will appoint an auditor to conduct a compliance audit of your campaign finances. The auditor is entitled to have access to all of the financial records related to your campaign. The auditor will produce a report, which you are entitled to receive.

The compliance audit committee will meet to consider the auditor's report. If the report concludes that there is an apparent contravention of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, the committee will decide whether to commence legal action.

The compliance audit committee does not have any authority to set penalties. Only the court can decide if you contravened the Act and, if so, which penalties should apply.

A person who does not want or who is not able to apply for a compliance audit may decide to commence legal action on their own. A prosecution related to the 2026 election must be commenced by November 15, 2030.

Penalties

"If you are convicted of an offence, you may be subject to the following penalties:

- a fine of up to \$25,000
- ineligibility to vote or run in the next general election
- up to six months in prison
- forfeiture of your elected office, if the judge finds that you committed the offence knowingly

If you are convicted of exceeding the spending limit, you may also be fined the amount by which you exceeded the limit."

In accordance with section [88.23\(4\)](#) of the Municipal Elections Act, the Clerk shall make available to the public a report setting out all candidates in an election and indicate whether each candidate complied with section 88.25.

Voters' List and Identification

Question - Can unhoused/homeless people say their address is the tent encampment, OR use the Connection Centre/Warming Centre? What ID can be presented if they have none? Is vouching allowed? If they are on Social Assistance can they use 82 Erie as their address, and can that be verified for them if they have no other id?

Answer – If a voter does not have identification showing a qualifying Stratford address and is not on the Voters' List, they should visit the City Clerk's Office at City Hall during regular business hours or the Voter Help Centre during its hours of operation to complete an Affidavit of Residence.

The address where the voter has most often returned to eat or sleep during the past five (5) weeks is considered their residence.

They must also complete an Application to Amend the Voters' List so their name can be added to the Voters' List.

Once completed, the Affidavit serves as proof of qualifying address and the voter can vote during the voting period.

If the voter is already on the Voters' List and does not have identification showing their name and qualifying address, the voter can complete a Declaration of Identity form at the Clerk's Office or Voter Help Centre confirming that they are the person whose name appears on the list.

A copy of the [Sign By-law](#), [2026 Candidates Guide](#), [2026 Third Party Advertiser Guide](#) and the [2026 Voters' Guide](#) were placed in the Candidates Package and are available on the [City's website](#).