

Introduction:

The Bonfield Public Library (BPL) political election policy is written to clarify the role for library board members and deals with elections, advocacy and the role of the board leading up to any election.

Background:

Library board members are a bridge between the library and the community. However, Ontario public libraries are largely funded by municipal taxes and therefore it is important for BPL to remain non-partisan during elections. Non-partisan is defined as being free from party or political affiliation or bias. However, non-partisan does not mean remaining silent. Being silent and not advocating for the library during an election that leaves BPL without a voice to inform the residents/candidates of Bonfield Township the value and role the public library plays in the community. Board members are encouraged to speak on the value of BPL and its benefits.

During elections, the Bonfield Public Library Board and Staff are neutral and non-partisan. To accomplish this BPL does not:

- Support, endorse, or advocate the viewpoints or beliefs of any one candidate, political party, organization or group;
- Allow the posting or distribution of election or campaign material in or around the library facilities on the website or social media; and
- Rent space for election or campaign activities except in the case of non-partisan programs approved by the Board/CEO i.e. polling stations.

Contributions:

- The Board may not contribute to the campaign of any candidate or political party in the form of money, goods or services. This is in accordance with the **Municipal Elections Act**, Section 88.8;
- The Board may not contribute to the campaign of any candidate of a **provincial election**, constituency association, nomination contestant, candidates, and leadership contestant of provincial political parties in the form of money, goods or services in accordance with the Ontario *Elections Finances Act*, Section 16(1); and
- The Board may not contribute to the campaign of any candidate of a **federal election**, a registered party, a registered association, nomination contestant, and leadership contestant of federal political parties in the form of money, goods or services in accordance with the *Canada Elections Act*, Section 363(1)

What can board members do during an election?

There are a number of non-partisan advocacy activities board members can engage in during an election. These include:

- Talk about BPL assets to the community whenever possible via social media or face to face;
- Be informed about: election issues, candidates and their platforms and share community comments about the library;
- Attend and/or participate in the candidate and mayoral forums; and
- Vote and encourage others to vote.