

Introduction:

Bonfield Public Library (BPL) political election protocol policy is written to clarify the role of library employees and/or volunteers during Municipal, Provincial and Federal elections.

Ontario public libraries are largely funded by municipal taxes. Because we have to work effectively with elected municipal officials, it's very important for the BPL employees and volunteers to remain non-partisan during elections. When elections are called, the BPL must be seen as acting in an ethical and impartial manner toward candidates and political parties seeking office. It is not appropriate for employees and volunteers of the BPL to deliver political messages either during an election campaign or at any other time of year.

Non-partisan is defined as being free from party or political affiliation or bias. 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 site.
- Rent space for election or campaign activities except in the case of non-partisan programs approved by the Board/CEO i.e. polling stations.

Employees' democratic rights as private citizens to participate in an election process are fundamental to our society. As private citizens they may exercise their democratic rights. Employees do not have the right, however, to support or assist in any capacity, candidates or political parties for public office in their capacity as employees of the Board and when performing their duties as an employee of the Board.

Procedures

- The distribution of pamphlets, literature and other material along with the display of posters, signs or other forms of campaign on BPL facilities and on BPL property is not authorized.
- Employees/volunteers may not wear buttons, caps, etc. that support political parties or candidates.
- While at work, employees/volunteers should avoid becoming involved in partisan political discussions with patrons or visitors.
- Board employees/volunteers working in support of a particular candidate may not use Board property (phone, fax, photocopier and computer) for partisan political activity.
- Consistent with Ontario's privacy laws, personal information (name, address, phone number, e-mail) of patrons, board members or employees may not be given to any candidates or their staff.

With respect to a municipal election, any library employee running as a candidate in the municipal election will comply with the entirety of Section 30 on the Municipal Elections Act which reads, in part **"30 (1) An employee of a municipality or local board is eligible to be a candidate for and to be elected as a member of the council or local board that is the employer if he or she takes an unpaid leave of absence beginning as of the day the employee is nominated and ending on voting day. 1996, c. 32, Sched., s. 30 (1); 2002, c. 17, Sched. D, s. 9 (1)."**

Should federal, provincial, or municipal elections require BPL facilities to be used as a polling station, the Board will make the necessary arrangements and inform the CEO that the facilities will be used for this purpose.

If employees/volunteers see any activities that violate this policy or procedures, please report it immediately to the CEO or the Chairperson.

- Bonfield Public Library Board strongly encourages all eligible employees/volunteers to vote.