



July 30, 2026

Dear Candidate:

Congratulations on officially stepping forward as a candidate in the 2026 Georgian Bluffs municipal election. Choosing to run for local office is a profound demonstration of leadership and dedication to your community. Your willingness to serve reflects a deep commitment to shaping a brighter future, improving local infrastructure, and ensuring that the voices of your fellow residents are heard.

I am writing as CEO / Chief Librarian of the Owen Sound and North Grey Union Public Library (OSNGUPL - <https://osngupl.ca/>) to provide some introductory information about the library that serves your municipality. Our library has been a wonderful example of municipal cooperation for decades. The "Union", in our name, does not mean unionized. It is a specific term in the Public Libraries Act, <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90p44>, which means "a cooperative system established by agreement between two or more municipalities to jointly fund and operate a shared service".

Since 1994, the municipalities of Georgian Bluffs, Chatsworth and Owen Sound have agreed to provide library services together for their residents. Some of the municipalities may have additional service agreements with other libraries near them, but OSNGUPL is their primary library as designated to the Province by the *Union Library Agreement*. The Owen Sound & North Grey Union Public Library also has a separate service agreement with the Meaford Public Library which provides OSNGUPL memberships to Meaford Public Library members. This is funded by the Meaford Public Library at a proportional rate that is the same as the costs to the three "Union" partners.

During the election, the library is a location that the public may visit to access both information about the election and specific campaign literature of the candidates. The library's role is outlined in the attached *OSNGUPL Policy #L32 – The Library and Political Elections*. I am happy to answer any questions or address any concerns.

Information about booking library space, at the not-for-profit rate, can be found at <https://osngupl.ca/services/room-rentals/>. We also have a button maker which is one of our available creation stations, <https://osngupl.ca/creation-station/>. Please note that the priority use for the button maker is to assist library staff with ongoing program needs, but it is available for bookings with users supplying or paying for the needed buttons.

The library will be hosting a tour and presentation for municipal candidates on Saturday, September 19th. To assist with your busy schedules, you will be able to choose between sessions at 1:30 p.m. in the afternoon and 7:00 p.m. in the evening. Additional information will be sent to the Municipal Clerks so that they may ensure that all candidates receive it.

In a follow-up email, I will share more information about library governance and the library agreements. I will also share information about library programs and services, budget and financial data, and usage statistics.

Once again, thank you for your interest and enthusiasm in taking on a municipal leadership role in our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tim Nicholls Harrison". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Tim Nicholls Harrison, (he / him / his)
CEO / Chief Librarian
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Owen Sound & North Grey Union Public Library Policy	Policy # L 32
SUBJECT: The Library and Political Elections	Policy Approval Date: April 26, 2018 January 21, 2019 Revised: September 26, 2022 Policy Review Date: September 2026
BOARD AUTHORITY OR STAFF APPROVED: Library Board Resolution 31-18 Library Board Resolution 31-19 Library Board Resolution 48-22	Page # 1 of 4

The Library and Political Elections

The Library must act and appear to act in a non-partisan way at all times, especially during elections, while supporting the democratic process, freedom of expression and informed discussion on political issues. This policy applies to municipal, provincial and federal elections.

Section 1: Responsibility and application

1. This policy applies to Board members, employees, and volunteers of the library in their dealings with candidates and political parties and the use of library resources during the campaign periods for municipal elections.
2. It is the responsibility of the Library CEO to ensure that the library complies with legislation related to elections at all levels - municipal, provincial, and federal.

Section 2: Use of library resources and property

1. It is the responsibility of the library to ensure that no candidate, registered third-party advertiser or political party is provided with an unfair advantage in the use of library resources at any time.
2. For municipal elections, by May 1st in the election year, the library will establish the rules and procedures with respect to use of library resources during the period leading up to the municipal election. This requirement is found in the *Municipal Elections Act 1996*, Clause 88.18 *Use of municipal, board resources* which states:
"Before May 1 in the year of a regular election, municipalities and local boards shall establish rules and procedures with respect to the use of municipal or board resources, as the case may be, during the election campaign period." (see note 1)
3. Rules for use of library resources and property are as follows: (see note 2)

- a) All candidates and political parties have equal access to publicly available resources and services of the library.
- b) Meeting rooms may be rented in accordance with policy L 35 Meeting Rooms.
- c) Candidates cannot use equipment, supplies, staff, or other operational resources of the library nor may they use the library's logo in any campaign material.
- d) 'All-candidates' meetings can be held at the library, either as a library program or sponsored by another group, provided that all candidates are invited to attend such meetings. A candidate cannot be featured or promoted in association with any other regular library program or event.
- e) Candidates and political parties are permitted to distribute campaign materials on public rights-of-way at the library, unless prohibited by a municipal by-law.
- f) In accordance with the *Canada Elections Act* section 81.1(1) federal election candidates or their representatives are allowed to campaign in facilities that are available for free to the public. During municipal and provincial elections candidates will be granted the same right to campaign in the library. (see Note 3)
- g) In accordance with policy L15 Community Information, during an election the library will provide an area where candidates may make available up to 25 copies of their campaign brochure; will promote awareness of the election; and provide general information on elections. (See note 4)
- h) No election sign or poster specific to a candidate or political party can be posted on the grounds of the library or in the library building.

Section 3: Campaign Contributions

The library will comply with legislation on campaign contributions at all levels.

1. Municipal Elections

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 which reads:

"Contributions to candidates

88.8 (1) A contribution shall not be made to or accepted by a person or an individual acting under the person's direction unless the person is a candidate. 2016, c. 15, s. 51.

Only during election campaign

(2) A contribution shall not be made to or accepted by a candidate or an individual acting under the candidate's direction outside the candidate's election campaign period described in section 88.24. 2016, c. 15, s. 51.

Who may contribute

(3) Only the following persons may make contributions:

- 1. An individual who is normally resident in Ontario.
- 2. Subject to subsection (5), the candidate and his or her spouse. 2016, c. 15, s. 51.

Who cannot contribute

(4) For greater certainty, and without limiting the generality of subsection (3), the following persons and entities shall not make a contribution:

1. A federal political party registered under the *Canada Elections Act* (Canada) or any federal constituency association or registered candidate at a federal election endorsed by that party.
 2. A provincial political party, constituency association, registered candidate or leadership contestant registered under the *Election Finances Act*.
 3. A corporation that carries on business in Ontario.
 4. A trade union that holds bargaining rights for employees in Ontario.
 5. The Crown in right of Canada or Ontario, a municipality or a local board.
- 2016, c. 15, s. 51.”

2. Provincial Elections

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) which reads:

“16 (1) Contributions to parties, constituency associations, nomination contestants, candidates and leadership contestants registered under this Act may be made only by persons individually. 2016, c. 22, s. 10 (1).”

3. Federal Elections

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) which reads:

“363 (1) No person or entity other than an individual who is a Canadian citizen or is a permanent resident as defined in subsection 2(1) of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* shall make a contribution to a registered party, a registered association, a nomination contestant, a candidate or a leadership contestant.”

Section 4: Employee, Volunteer and Board Member Participation in Election Campaigns

1. A library employee or volunteer involved in a political campaign must be politically neutral in carrying out his or her library duties during and must not participate in campaign activities during his or her working hours.
2. 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 of the *Municipal Elections Act* which reads, in part (See note 5)

“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).”
3. Board members may continue their library board responsibilities when they are running for office.

Section 5: Requests for information about the library

1. The CEO will coordinate requests for information about the library received from candidates or political parties.
2. Information that is provided by the library to one candidate or political party will be provided to all other candidates and political parties upon request during an election.
3. Any candidate or political party may request a meeting with the CEO or tour of the library.