

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:

Visibility of Marketing Materials

Question - Contributions from businesses are prohibited for municipal elections, but can local businesses display campaign materials at the owner's discretion? Does that constitute a contribution issue if the business is incorporated?

Answer - The 2026 Candidates Guide developed by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing provides the following information in relation to the question posed:

- On page 17: "Campaign contributions are any money, goods or services that are given to candidates for use in their campaign, including money and goods that a candidate contributes to themselves. Corporations and other businesses are not permitted to make contributions to candidates."
- On page 11: All of a candidate's campaign signs and other advertising must identify that they are responsible for the sign. This is so that people seeing the sign or advertisement can tell that it is from a candidate's campaign, rather than from a third-party advertiser.

The 2026 Third Party Advertiser's Guide developed by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing provides the following information in related to the question posed:

- On page 1: "Activities that do not involve incurring expenses, such as discussions or expressing an opinion about a candidate (or an answer to a question on the ballot) are not considered to be third-party advertising. Examples include:
 - speaking to friends and neighbours
 - posting on social media, such as X, Facebook or Instagram
 - sending an email to a group or mailing list"

Internal communications from an employer to their employees, a corporation to its shareholders, directors, members or employees or by a trade union to its members or employees are not considered to be third-party advertising."

The business in question would need to be able to demonstrate the separation of the campaign material from a campaign contribution or a potential third party advertisement.

Businesses can seek independent legal advice to confirm compliance with the Municipal Elections Act.

Expense Limit for Holding Parties

Question - Is the amount listed under the "Maximum expense limit for cost of holding parties and making other expressions of appreciation after the close of voting" in the Preliminary Maximum Campaign Spending Limit Expenses and Preliminary Maximum Amount of Self-Funding Contributions by Candidate / Spouse – Own Campaign (EL37) Form the maximum amount that can be spent for an after-party even if there are donations made for the event?

Answer - The 2026 Candidates Guide developed by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing provides the following information in relation to the question posed:

- On page 23: "The spending limit for expenses related to holding parties and other expressions of appreciation after the close of voting is calculated as 10% of the amount of your general spending limit. Expenses related to parties and expressions of appreciation are subject to the specific spending limit regardless of whether they are incurred before or after voting day."

Under Section 88.20 (9) of the [Municipal Elections Act](#), "Maximum amount for parties, etc., after voting day": The expenses of a candidate that are described in paragraph 6 of subsection 88.19 (3) shall not exceed an amount calculated in accordance with the prescribed formula.

The spendings limits noted in Form EL37, provided to candidates by the Clerk's Office, was prepared in accordance with the formula provided for in the Act.

Donations

Question - Can anonymous donations be accepted?

Answer - The 2026 Candidates Guide developed by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing provides the following information in relation to the question posed:

- On page 18: "A cash donation of \$25 or less received at a fundraising event is not considered to be a contribution, and you may accept such donations without keeping track of who gave them to you. You will have to report the total amount of money that you received from these donations on your financial statement."
- On page 19: "Only a contribution that is \$25 or less can be made in cash. All contributions above \$25 must be made by cheque, money order, or by a method that clearly shows where the funds came from (such as certain debit, credit or electronic transfer transactions)."
- On page 20: "You must issue a receipt for every contribution you receive. The receipt should show who made the contribution, the date, and the value. If the contribution was in goods or services, you must determine the value of the goods or services and issue a receipt for the full value. If you receive a contribution from a joint account, the contribution can only come from one person. You must determine who is making the contribution and issue the receipt to that person."

You are required to list the names and addresses of every contributor who gives more than \$100 total to your campaign in your financial statement. You should keep a record of the names and addresses of every contributor, regardless of the value of their contribution, because the same contributor may make multiple contributions that end up totalling more than \$100.

Note: Contribution receipts are not tax receipts. Contributions to municipal council and school board campaigns cannot be credited against provincial or federal income taxes."

A copy of the [2026 Candidates Guide](#) and the [2026 Third Party Advertisers Guide](#) were placed in the Candidates Package and are available on the [City's website](#).