





DISCLAIMER

- The advice and guidance contained in tonight's presentation is derived from various sources. It is intended as general information. It is important to note that new information or changes may be issued as we get closer to the launch of the municipal election.
 - While every effort has been made to confirm the accuracy of information contained in this presentation, prospective candidates are nevertheless encouraged to consult the City of Burlington's website, as well as confer with the City Clerk's Office, for the most current information or changes in rules or practices.
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TIMING

- Voting Day is **Monday October 26th, 2026**. Voting hours can vary from community to community, but are typically 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
- Advance polls will be open beforehand.
- The status of internet voting is unclear. It may or may not be offered.
- Available positions in Burlington include:
 - Mayor;
 - Chair of the Region of Halton;
 - City Councillors (six);
 - Board of Education Trustees (Public and Separate Schools) (N.B. The provincial government may be proposing additional changes to the structure or mandate).

ELIGIBILITY FOR PUBLIC OFFICE

- A Canadian citizen.
- At least 18 years of age.
- Own property, or be the spouse of a property owner.
- Not disqualified under the Ontario Municipal Elections Act.



FILING YOUR APPLICATION

- Nominations open **May 1st**, and are expected to close **August 21st at 2 pm**
- Those interested in running for municipal public office need to:
 - Complete the Nomination form at City Hall;
 - File it with the City Clerk;
 - Ensure there are 25 endorsement signatures;
 - Pay a filing fee of \$100 for a councillor or \$200 for mayor.
- On **September 1st**, ask the City Clerk for the voter's list. Start tracking who has said they'll vote for you, and work on the undecided voters (and the no's).

FINANCIAL DONATIONS & FUND-RAISING

- Each candidate is responsible for keeping and maintaining financial records relating to their election campaign.
- Consider consulting with an accountant or an auditor early in your campaign regarding the bookkeeping or financial system you will use.



MANDATORY RECORD KEEPING

- Receipts issued for every contribution, including when you accepted the contribution and the date you issued the receipt (remember to issue receipts to yourself for any contributions you make).
- Record the value of every contribution, whether it is in the form of money, goods or services, and the contributor's name and address.
- Record all expenses, including the receipts obtained for each expense.
- Record any claim for payment of an expense that the campaign disputes or refuses to pay.
- Record the funds raised and expenses incurred from each separate fundraising event or activity.
- Record the terms of any loan received from a bank or other recognized lending institution.

MANDATORY BANKING REQUIREMENTS

- You may only accept contributions or incur campaign expenses during your campaign period (i.e. the day on which the City Clerk receives your nomination papers and filing).
- If you accept any contributions of money (including contributions from yourself or your spouse), or incur any expenses, then open a bank account exclusively for your campaign (N.B. you do not have to open a campaign bank account if you do not spend any money and do not receive any contributions of money).
- If you receive contributions of goods or services, but no contributions of money, you do not have to open a campaign bank account.
- You cannot use your personal bank account for campaign finances, even if you are planning a very small campaign. All contributions - including contributions you make to yourself - must be deposited into the campaign bank account. All expenses must be paid for from the campaign account.

CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS

- **Campaign contributions** – are defined as any money, goods or services that are given to you for use in your campaign. Includes contributions you make yourself, or discounts on goods or services you are purchasing for your campaign.
- Corporations, businesses and trade unions are prohibited from making contributions to candidates.
- Cash donations of \leq \$25 from fundraising events are not considered a contribution, but you still need to report overall totals on your financial statement. You can't accept cash contributions over \$25. The contribution must have a paper trail (cheque, E-Transfer, etc.)
- Contributors to your campaign must be Ontario residents.

CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS

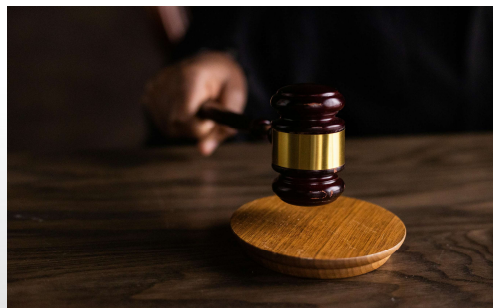
- The maximum amount an individual can contribute to a candidate in a municipal election is \$1,200. This includes money, gifts and ticket purchases.
- The maximum amount an individual can contribute to all candidates and third parties in a single municipality is \$5,000. This includes money, gifts and ticket purchases.
- In Burlington, assuming there are at least 142,218 eligible voters, a candidate for **mayor** and their spouse may collectively donate \$25,000 to their own campaign. The maximum for a councillor is around \$9,740. **Verify this number with the clerk; it's based on voter population.**

CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS

- Receipts must be issued for every donation received.
- Expenses must be paid from your campaign bank account.
- A financial statement must be filed no later than **March 31st, 2027 at 2:00 p.m.**
- An auditor's review of your financial statement is required if:
 - your campaign expenses exceed \$10,000;
 - the contributions you received (including contributions from yourself) exceed a total of \$10,000;
 - both your expenses and your contributions exceed \$10,000 each.

PENALTIES & FINES

- Penalties apply in the following instances:
 - if you fail to file a financial statement by the end of the 30-day grace period, or fail to apply to the court before March 31, 2027 for an extension by the filing deadline;
 - if your financial statement shows that you exceeded your spending limit;
 - if you fail to turn over your surplus to the clerk when you file your financial statement.



PENALTIES & FINES

- **Penalties:** Forfeiture of your office (if you won the election), and you become ineligible to run or be appointed to fill a vacancy until after the 2026 election.
- **Conviction:** 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.
- I'll now hand the presentation to Stephen White

YOUR CAMPAIGN TEAM & VOLUNTEERS

- **Suggested Structure:**
 - Campaign Manager.
 - Financial Agent.
 - Communications/Media Coordinator
 - Sign Coordinator.
 - Canvass Chair.
 - Canvassers.



CANVASSING & CONNECTING WITH VOTERS

- Research the results from previous municipal elections. Understand what groups and neighbourhoods have higher voting propensity rates.
- Understand what are the “hot button” issues with voters.
- Be visible. Ensure you are connecting with voters daily.
- Be strategic in your canvassing approach. Connect with seniors during the day, and younger voters in the evening.
- Focus Burlington has identified a number of issues that are of concern to residents. Check our website and newsletter for details:

<https://www.focusburlington.ca/>

ELECTION SIGNS

- All of your campaign signs, advertising and literature must identify that you are responsible for the sign. This allows voters seeing your signs or literature to differentiate materials from your campaign from that of third party advertisers.
- Your campaign signs must be removed after voting day. Your municipality may require a sign deposit, or have penalties for failing to remove your signs. Contact your local clerk for more information.
- **City of Burlington By-law 012-2022** (the Election Sign By-law) governs the placement of signs during elections. Generally, signs can only be placed on private property. Signs can be erected 45 days prior to the election, and must be removed no later than 3 days after the election. Prohibited areas include parks, public boulevards, and election polling stations. Each candidate can only have one vehicle sign.

DIGITAL ADVERTISING

- Social media is increasingly vital to the success of your election campaign. Many younger voters obtain their information from online news channels and social media.
- Ensure you are visible on platforms such as Instagram, Facebook and X.
- Consistent, timely and current messages are critical to connecting with voters.
- Get the candidate's guide from your City Clerk early, as social media disclaimers may be required.



SPECIAL EVENTS & CANDIDATE DEBATES

- The Municipal Elections Act, 1996 contains no requirement that candidate debates be held. The municipal clerk is not responsible for organizing these meetings or gatherings.
- Debates can be organized by community groups, media outlets, candidates or any other interested persons.
- In the past, organizations such as the Burlington Chamber of Commerce and various community organizations, have hosted debates.
- If offered a chance to participate, it would be to your advantage to engage.

GET OUT THE VOTE

- When you identify your supporters through your canvass it is advantageous to ensure they vote. Reminders, whether by e-mail or telephone, can be helpful.
- Where necessary, offer babysitting or a ride to the polls.
- Consider asking your supporters to vote early, or online.



TRENDS

- **AI-Powered Targeting** – Campaigns are increasingly using AI tools to segment voters and deliver hyper-targeted messages.
- **Multicultural Outreach** – Ontario’s diversity means in-language advertising (Punjabi, Mandarin, Tamil, Italian, etc.) will be a game-changer.
- **Programmatic & CTV Ads** – Connected TV and digital streaming ads will be used by larger campaigns to replicate broadcast reach with precision.
- **Youth Engagement** – TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts will play a major role in mobilizing young first-time voters.
- **Data-Driven GOTV** – Voter mobilization will rely on SMS, WhatsApp, and email reminders.

RE-CAP OF THE 2022 RESULTS

- Of the 142,218 eligible voters in Burlington, 39,217, or 27.6%, voted in the 2022 election, including:
 - Advance voting locations (Oct. 15th and 18th): 4,018 votes (10.2%).
 - Online voting (Oct. 11th to 20th): 14,980 votes (38.2%).
 - Election Day, 24 voting locations (Oct. 24th): 20,219 votes (51.3%).

RE-CAP OF THE 2022 RESULTS

- Mayor Meed Ward - re-elected with 78% of the vote (30,135 votes)
- The six elected councillors each received between 3,190 and 4,453 votes:
 - Ward 1: Kevin Galbraith (63.52%)
 - Ward 2: Lisa Kearns (72%)
 - Ward 3: Rory Nisan (64.18%)
 - Ward 4: Shawna Stolte (47.28%)
 - Ward 5: Paul Sharman (58.93%)
 - Ward 6: Angelo Bentivegna (61.11%)

RE-CAP OF THE 2022 RESULTS

Position	Number of Candidates Seeking Office	Margin of Victory
Mayor	5	24,941
Ward 1 Councillor	2	1,751
Ward 2 Councillor	3	3,358
Ward 3 Councillor	3	1,796
Ward 4 Councillor	4	1,758
Ward 5 Councillor	4	2,790
Ward 6 Councillor	3	1,953

FINAL WORDS OF ADVICE

- Secure your nomination early.
- Build a strong volunteer network.
- Differentiate your candidacy. Identify your unique value proposition.
- Launch a website & email capture tools.
- Develop a content calendar for social media.
- Set up Meta, Google, and YouTube ads with proper disclaimers.
- Invest in multicultural outreach.
- Prepare a GOTV strategy for advance polls and election day.
- Be able to answer the question “Why are you running for municipal office?”
- Sign the Focus Burlington

REFERENCES

Municipal Elections Act, Ontario.

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/96m32>

Association of Municipalities of Ontario:

<https://www.amo.on.ca/>

<https://www.amo.on.ca/running-municipal-office-everything-you-need-know-underrepresented-candidate>

https://www.amo.on.ca/sites/default/files/assets/DOCUMENTS/Healthy%20Democracy/AMO%20Lead%20Where%20You%20Live_2026_120125_V2.pdf

City of Burlington:

<https://www.burlington.ca/en/council-and-city-administration/elections.aspx>

REFERENCES

Ontario Government:

<https://www.ontario.ca/document/2022-candidates-guide-ontario-municipal-council-and-school-board-elections>

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/municipal-elections>

Focus Burlington:

AI-generated summaries of council meetings and council meeting transcripts.

www.focusburlington.ca