



CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF ALBERTON

BY-LAW NO. 32/26

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*Being a by-law to adopt an Election-Related Resources Policy for the Township of Alberton.*

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**WHEREAS** Section 88.18 of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, as amended, requires municipalities and local boards, before May 1 in an election year, to establish rules and procedures with respect to the use of municipal resources during the election period;

**AND WHEREAS** the Council of the Township of Alberton deems it necessary to adopt a policy to ensure the fair, transparent, and impartial use of municipal resources during an election period;

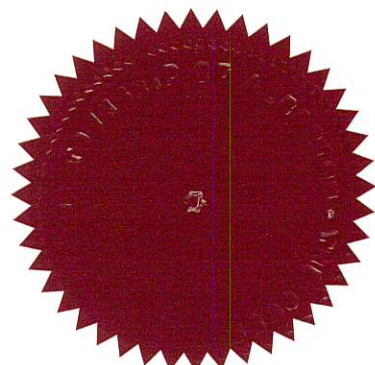
**NOW THEREFORE** the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Alberton enacts as follows:

1. The *Election-Related Resources Policy*, attached hereto as *Schedule "A"*, is hereby adopted and forms part of this by-law.
2. The purpose of the policy is to:
  - Ensure compliance with the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*;
  - Maintain public trust in the municipal election process;
  - Prevent the use of municipal resources for any election-related purposes, including the promotion or opposition of a candidate, registered third party, or question on the ballot.
3. This policy applies to:
  - All members of Council;
  - Municipal employees;
  - Candidates and registered third parties;
  - Any person or group using municipal resources.
4. **THAT** this By-Law shall come into force and take effect upon the final passing thereof.
5. **THAT** all other By-Laws or parts thereof inconsistent with, or in conflict of this By-law are hereby repealed.

**READ A FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD TIME AND PASSED THIS 16th DAY OF April 2026.**

Mike Ford, Mayor

Lisa Sheppard, Clerk





## Township of Alberton Election-Related Resources Policy

Approved By: Township Council

Approval Date: April 16, 2026

Effective Date: April 16, 2026

Revision Approved By:

Revision Dates:

### Policy statement

To provide direction regarding the use of Township of Alberton resources with respect to election-related matters.

It is recognized that matters related to election-related activity included within this policy may overlap and be included in the Council Code of Conduct; applicable to Members of Council, which is under the mandate of the Township of Alberton's Integrity Commissioner, and to which separate complaint protocols apply.

### Purpose

In compliance with the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* (the MEA), public funds and resources are not to be used for any election-related purposes, including the promotion of or opposition to the candidacy of a person for elected office.

Specifically, Section 88.18 of the MEA provides that municipalities "... shall establish rules and procedures with respect to the use of [municipal resources] during the election campaign period." In addition, Subsection 88.8(4)5 of the MEA provides that a municipality shall not make a campaign contribution.

The Ontario *Election Finances Act, 1990* and the *Canada Elections Act, 2000* include similar prohibitions with respect to provincial and federal election campaigns. Specifically, Section 29 of the *Election Finances Act, 1990* prohibits contributions from corporations, which includes municipal corporations. Section 363 of the *Canada Elections Act, 2000* similarly provides that only individuals may make campaign contributions.

  
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## Application

This Policy applies to the following:

- Members of Township Council
- Township employees
- Public members of any quasi-judicial body established by Council that is not considered to be a “local board” of the Township for the purposes of Section 88.18 of the MEA (for example, the Committee of Adjustment)

This Policy applies to the occurrence of:

- A municipal election, by-election, or campaign related to a question on the ballot; and
- Any participation in federal and provincial elections that is partisan in nature.

Where applicable, provisions in this Policy shall also apply to activities of all candidates, registered third party advertisers and ballot question campaigns in relation to Township resources. The term “election-related” may be used in this Policy to refer to the matters set out above.

Certain provisions of this Policy may be subject to additional Township by-laws, policies and procedures. Guidance should be sought from the Township Clerk or designate if clarification or interpretation is required, or if any situation arises that is not expressly addressed in this Policy.

## Members of Council

This Policy applies to all Members of Council. That said, the blackout period provisions set out in Section 5 of this Policy do not apply to a Member who is acclaimed, or who is retiring from office and therefore is not a candidate in an election.

This Policy is intended to balance the duty of a Member to represent their constituents and the legal obligation of the Township not to contribute to, or be perceived as contributing to, an election campaign. With respect to election-related activity, Section 7 of the Council Code of Conduct provides that Members are required to conduct themselves in accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* and this Policy.

It is recognized that Members, as elected officials, are responsible to serve their constituents and fulfill their responsibilities until the end of their term. That said, clear separation must exist between an elected official’s role as a Member of Council and their role as a candidate.

It is further recognized that there are no rules regarding the working hours that Members keep. Elected officials are often called upon to work at all hours of the day and night, as well as on weekends and holidays. They do not receive vacation or overtime, and there is no defined workday/paid time/on-duty time for a Member of Council. As such, a Member may be involved in election-related activities in their capacity as a candidate at times of the day that may generally be considered to be Township “office hours.” This is permitted, as long as the Member’s activities do not contravene provisions of this Policy, and public funds and resources are not used for election-related purposes.

  
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## Township employees

This Policy applies to all Township employees.

In line with the Township's Employee Policy and Procedures, Township employees are expected to preserve the public trust and confidence in the Township and apply the core values of their code of conduct to their daily work. Township employees are ultimately responsible for conducting themselves in accordance with the Employee Policy and Procedures, all relevant legislation, rules, regulations, as well as this Policy.

With respect to election-related activities, while the Township encourages employees to become involved in their community, it is recognized that some activities unrelated to work can interfere with an employee's ability to do their job and may undermine the neutrality of the Township. Employees are expected to promote the principles of transparency, impartiality, respect and accountability as set out in Section 6 of this Policy.

## Public members of Committees and of applicable quasi-judicial bodies

This Policy applies to all public members of any applicable quasi-judicial body (for example, the Committee of Adjustment) of the Township for the purpose of Section 88.18 of the MEA.

This Policy is intended to balance the duties of public members with the legal obligation of the Township not to contribute to, or be perceived as contributing to, an election campaign. As such, public members engaged in political activities must take care to separate those personal activities from their appointed positions.

Public members must conduct themselves in accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* and this Policy.

## Activities of candidates, registered third party advertisers and ballot question campaigns in relation to Township resources

This Policy is intended to balance the statutory and legal rights of candidates, registered third party advertisers and campaigns related to a question on the ballot with the legal obligation of the Township not to contribute to, or be perceived as contributing to, an election campaign. Provisions of this Policy will therefore apply to certain activities of all candidates, registered third party advertisers and ballot question campaigns that relate to the use of Township resources. However, this Policy does not apply to candidate, third party advertiser and ballot question campaign activities that are unrelated to the use of Township resources. This Policy also does not apply to candidates' use of public information.

## Policy requirements

### Section 1 - General provisions

1. Township resources shall not at any time be used to sponsor or produce any materials that promote or oppose the candidacy of a person for elected office, or that promote or oppose a campaign related to a question on the ballot.

  
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2. Subject to Section 5 Subsection 1 of this Policy is not meant to restrict Members of Council from routinely communicating with constituents by way of materials such as flyers, newsletters, householders, websites and email, and through activities such as events. However, Members shall ensure that any communications materials or activities produced or funded using Township resources comply with applicable provisions of this Policy and are not related to an election.

### **Section 2 - Township events, Community and Member-organized events Attendance at Township and Community events by Elected Officials**

1. Members of Council and other elected officials may attend Township and community-organized events and act as participants in their capacity as elected officials, including speaking at the event and partaking in ceremonial activities, provided that they do not promote or oppose the candidacy of a person for elected office. Attendance at Township and community-organized events by Members of Council during the blackout period is subject to Section 5 of this Policy.

### **Attendance at Township events by candidates, registered third party advertisers and ballot question campaigns**

2. Candidates, registered third party advertisers, ballot question campaigns and their representatives may attend Township events in their capacity as private citizens, but shall not campaign while in attendance or distribute campaign-related materials.
3. Candidates, registered third party advertisers and representatives of ballot question campaigns shall not be invited to deliver formal remarks at a Township event in their capacity as a candidate, registered third party advertiser or ballot question campaign representative.

### **Section 3 - Township Office Election Centre Campaigning in Township facilities and other Township properties Prohibited**

1. Campaigning is not permitted in areas of Township facilities (such as the office lobby, public entranceway and parking lot), or in Township parks and facilities, or within the municipal road allowance. This policy is in place to ensure that all election-related activities are conducted in a manner that is non-partisan and does not consume or involve the use of municipal resources for election-related activities. The Township Office is the designated Election Centre location and so as not to interfere with the neutrality of the Election Centre, activities are further clarified below:
  - a) No campaign materials or literature of any nature relating to any candidate shall be displayed within any area of an election centre. During a municipal election, any location designated as an Election Centre shall include the immediate area, as determined by the Clerk, in which the Election Centre is located. Campaign material includes campaign clothing or buttons, signs or any other advertising materials.
  - b) Campaigning shall not occur at Township events or programming.
  - c) Anyone campaigning shall not enter Township office spaces for the purpose of campaigning/soliciting support.
2. The placement of election signs on public property for municipal, provincial, and federal elections is not permitted on Township property.

  
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## Section 4 - Township resources

### Members' communications and related matters

1. As set out in Section 1(2) of this Policy, all Members of Council shall ensure that the content of any communications material produced or funded using Township resources is not for an election-related purpose, including the promotion of or opposition to the candidacy of a person for elected office.
2. Township resources shall not be used to pay for, access, develop, maintain or update election-related communications platforms such as campaign websites and social media accounts.
3. Communications materials, including branding (symbols, logos, graphics) and photographic or video materials, which were or are created or produced by Township employees or with Township resources, shall not be used in campaign materials or for any other election-related purpose. Branding created by an election campaign may be used by a Member when in office following the election. Such branding may also be used in subsequent election campaigns provided Township resources have not been used to modify or produce the branding.
4. Constituent information (including telephone numbers, email and mailing addresses) that is collected, stored, accessed, maintained, or updated using Township resources shall not be used for election-related purposes.
5. Members shall ensure that any communications materials issued to constituents following an election or by-election do not include reference to election-related matters. This includes but is not limited to the following:
  - a) Communications materials issued by a Member shall not thank people for voting or support, or refer to matters such as the campaign, other candidates or the election. Such materials may include a general statement to the effect of being proud or honoured to continue to represent constituents; and
  - b) Communications materials issued by a Member shall not include statements to the effect of farewell columns or a summary of past achievements/term of office, etc.

### Members' social media use

6. Social media accounts that are free to use are generally not considered to be Township resources. These accounts are personal to the individual Member and have not been created by the Township of Alberton, nor are they used by the Township for the purposes of official communications. That said, the following applies to social media accounts of Members of Council:
  - a) Members are encouraged to clearly distinguish between an elected official social media account and a campaign (election-related) social media account.
  - b) Members who post or share election-related materials through a social media account shall ensure that those activities are not conducted using Township resources, including but not limited to office staff during working hours or using Township infrastructure such as computers; and
  - c) If a Member's social media account includes election-related posts or sharing, any links or references to that account shall not appear on the Member's communications materials (for example, Township website, business cards, letterhead, community newsletters or media releases).

  
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### Township communications and related matters

7. Township-funded websites or domain names shall not include any campaign materials, make reference to and identify any individual as a candidate, registered third party advertiser or ballot question campaign member, or profile any slogan or symbol associated with a candidate, registered third party advertiser, or ballot question campaign. This prohibition does not apply to the identification of candidates on official municipal election or by-election pages of alberton.ca.
8. Corporate social media accounts identified under the Township's Social Media Policy shall not reissue or repurpose (for example, by way of "retweeting," "liking," or linking to) any posts by a nominated candidate (for office on municipal Council, or provincial or federal candidates). This restriction does not apply to posts by the Mayor related to intergovernmental activities in the Mayor's capacity as Chief Executive Officer of the Township as set out in Sections 225 and 226.1 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*.

### Township information and related matters

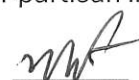
9. Township information provided upon request to one candidate, registered third party advertiser or ballot question campaign shall also be provided to any other candidate, registered third party advertiser or ballot question campaign that requests the same information.
10. Requests by a candidate, registered third party advertiser or ballot question campaign for individual meetings with the CAO/Clerk-Treasurer or other Township employees, or for tours of Township facilities, may not always be accommodated due to resource and time constraints. If such a meeting or tour is organized for one candidate, registered third party advertiser or ballot question campaign, the department shall also organize a similar meeting or tour for any other candidate, registered third party advertiser or ballot question campaign that makes such a request.

### Township visual identity and related matters

18. The Township's corporate logos, official marks, slogan, etc., shall not be printed, posted or distributed on any campaign materials except to link to the Township's website to obtain information about the municipal election.
19. Photographic or video materials that are copyright of the Township or that are or have been created by Township employees or with Township resources shall not be used for any external election-related purpose or in campaign materials.

### Election campaigns at other levels of government

20. Members of Council shall not use Township resources to host, promote, sponsor or otherwise organize or assist with any event that involves direct participation by candidates at other levels of government, given that there is potential for partisanship, real or perceived, to occur at, or in the organization of, any such event that directly involves candidate participation.
21. Members of Council may communicate with constituents regarding federal/provincial matters relevant to the Township of Alberton, as well as any issues that have a direct bearing on municipal business between the federal/provincial government and the Township of Alberton. Any such communication shall be non-partisan in nature and may be

  
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- conducted through communications such as general questionnaires to all candidates, or messages to constituents highlighting federal/provincial matters of importance to the Township without commentary/indicating a preference for a particular candidate/party.
22. The following applies if a Member of Council becomes a candidate in a provincial or federal election/by-election:
- i. A Member who is a candidate shall seek guidance from the Township Clerk with respect to responsibilities and obligations required to comply with this Policy. While certain restrictions may apply in order to ensure compliance with this Policy and its purpose, it is recognized that the Member continues to be the elected representative and may remain active in their capacity as a Councillor. This may include participating in meetings of Township Council, its Sub-Committees, attending Township and community meetings and events in their capacity as Councillor, and fulfilling any other statutory roles and responsibilities of a Member of Council.
  - ii. Communications materials published, issued or otherwise used by a Member who is a candidate shall not advertise the Member's participation/attendance in events.
  - iii. Following a provincial or federal election/by-election, Section 4(5) of this Policy applies to any communications materials issued to constituents by a Member who is a candidate.
  - iv. Communications materials published, issued or otherwise used by the Township shall not reference the name or image of a Member of Council who is a candidate in a federal/provincial election/by-election. This includes but is not limited to municipal publications, advertisements, media releases and public service announcements, speaking notes and social media content (for example, Corporate Township social media accounts identified under the Township's Social Media Policy shall not retweet, link to, "like," or otherwise reissue or repurpose the Member's communications). This does not include materials such as Council and Committee meeting minutes and agendas.
  - v. Any reference made in Township communication materials to a specific Councillor who is a candidate in a federal/provincial election/by-election shall be to the "Councillor for the Township of Alberton," or "Chair of the \_\_\_ Committee," rather than by name. The Mayor shall be subject to the same restrictions as Councillors, but may be named in media releases and Township materials related to intergovernmental activities only in the Mayor's capacity as Chief Executive Officer of the Township as set out in Sections 225 and 226.1 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*.
  - vi. Media releases, speaking notes and other communications materials that relate to a Member of Council who is a candidate in a federal/provincial election/by-election and are to be published, used or distributed by the Township during the applicable campaign period shall be provided to the Township Clerk or designate for review and approval.
  - vii. Section 6 of this Policy applies with respect to the Member's staff and any other Township employees should they be engaged in political activities.

#### **Section 5 - Restrictions during the 60-day blackout period prior to and including voting day**

1. In a municipal election year or in the event of a by-election, Township resources are not to be used to sponsor any advertisements, flyers, newsletters, householders and other communications with constituents for the 60-day period prior to and including Voting Day.

  
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General prohibitions and restrictions also apply during this period to the holding of events by Members, event-related activities, and other uses of Township resources.

2. Despite Section 5(1) of this Policy, where an emergency occurs, a non-emergency-related community issue arises or where a Member's annual community event is held during the blackout period, a Member may participate in certain activities or use Township resources to communicate with constituents with the approval of the Township Clerk or designate, in accordance with Section 5 of the Election-Related Blackout Period restrictions.
3. The prohibitions set out in Section 5(1) of this Policy do not apply to a Member who is acclaimed, or who is retiring from office and therefore is not a candidate in the election.
4. Township staff shall make all efforts to hold outside of the blackout period any Township event that may require participation from Members who are election candidates. If a Township event that may require participation from such Members must be held during the blackout period due to statutory/project timelines or other scheduling considerations, staff shall consult with the Township Clerk or designate and receive approval regarding the event further to the principles of this Policy.

### Section 6 - Township Employees

1. The following applies to Township employee participation in Township or external community events in their official position as a Township employee:
  - a) A Township employee may participate in an event, by providing information or otherwise, if the event has no election-related purposes, including the promotion of or opposition to the candidacy of a person for elected office.
  - b) A Township employee shall not participate in any event, by providing information or otherwise, if an event is to have any election-related purposes, including the promotion of or opposition to the candidacy of a person for elected office.
  - c) A Township employee shall seek guidance from the Township Clerk or designate with respect to participation in any of the following:
    - i. Events involving one or more candidates at any level of government as participants;
    - ii. Events involving one or more Members of Council as participants during the blackout period;
    - iii. Events related to matters at the provincial/federal level during a provincial/federal election campaign, as the case may be; and/or
    - iv. Events involving one or more MPPs or MPs as participants following the issuing of the writ.
2. Employees engaged in political activities shall separate those personal activities from their official positions. This includes the following:
  - a) Employees may participate in political activity at the municipal, provincial and federal levels provided that such activity does not take place during the employee's Township work hours or use Township resources;
  - b) Employees who involve themselves in an election campaign by posting or sharing campaign-related materials through personal social media accounts shall separate these activities from their role as a Township employee and shall ensure that none of these activities are done during the employee's Township work hours or using Township resources;
  - c) Any Township information obtained by an employee through their employment with the Township shall not be used for election-related purposes; and

  
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- d) Employees must ensure vacation, leave of absence or time off in lieu is submitted to the CAO/Clerk-Treasurer, or their designate, as the case may be, in advance of any campaign-related work conducted during traditional working hours.
- e) Notices, posters or similar materials in support of a particular candidate, campaign related to a question on the ballot, or political party shall not be displayed or distributed by employees at Township work sites or at Township facilities.
- f) Employees wishing to run for municipal, provincial or federal office shall request and obtain a leave of absence without pay and abide by the respective legislation governing such elections. Employees with questions regarding their obligations with respect to obtaining a leave of absence without pay may contact the CAO/Clerk-Treasurer.
- g) An employee who identifies a potential conflict of interest with respect to election-related matters (for example, a family member or close friend is a candidate, etc.) shall advise the CAO/Clerk-Treasurer in writing of the potential conflict of interest in accordance with the Employee Policy and Procedures. Thereafter, the CAO/Clerk-Treasurer shall develop a process to insulate the employee against any claim of conflict, be it real or perceived.

## Responsibilities

### Members of Council

- Ensure relevant requirements of this Policy and its Procedures are fulfilled in any duties and activities undertaken.
- Understand and support this Policy and its Procedures and ensure accountability for their actions.
- Seek clarification of any aspect of this Policy and its Procedures, as required.

### Public Members of the Committee of Adjustment

- Ensure relevant requirements of this Policy and its Procedures are fulfilled in any duties and activities undertaken.
- Understand and support this Policy and its Procedures and ensure accountability for their actions.
- Seek clarification of any aspect of this Policy and its Procedures, as required.

### Township Employees

- Ensure relevant requirements of this Policy and its Procedures are fulfilled in any duties and activities undertaken in their official position as a Township employee.
- Ensure relevant requirements of this Policy and its Procedures are fulfilled with respect to any political activity or candidacy undertaken by the employee, and regarding any conflict of interest identified by the employee.
- Understand and support this Policy and its Procedures and ensure accountability for their actions.
- Seek clarification of any aspect of this Policy and its Procedures, as required.

### Township CAO/Clerk-Treasurer

  
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- Ensure relevant requirements of this Policy and its Procedures are fulfilled in any duties and activities undertaken.
- Ensure the administration, communication, interpretation and monitoring/enforcement of this Policy and its Procedures.
- Receive and respond to any complaints, concerns and inquiries/requests for guidance related to this Policy and its Procedures.
- Delegate in writing any designate(s) assigned to administer any or all of this Policy and its Procedures.
- Review this Policy and its Procedures at least every four years, aligning with a Council term, and as required by changes to legislation. The CAO/Clerk-Treasurer is authorized to make minor administrative updates as may be necessary to maintain compliance and consistency with legislation, while respecting and preserving the intent of the Policy and its Procedures.

### Monitoring, Guidance and Interpretation

The CAO/Clerk-Treasurer or designate shall have the delegated authority to provide guidance with respect to election-related matters in relation to this Policy and/or its Procedures, and to issue in writing any interpretation on the application of this Policy and/or its Procedures and any related approvals or prohibitions. Such guidance, interpretation, approvals and prohibitions shall be based on the overarching legislative requirement for public funds and resources not to be used for any election-related purposes, including the promotion of or opposition to the candidacy of a person for elected office.

### Complaints and investigation

The CAO/Clerk-Treasurer or designate shall have the delegated authority to receive and investigate any written complaint with respect to the alleged use of Township of Alberton resources in contravention of this Policy and/or its Procedures. The written complaint must be submitted to the CAO/Clerk-Treasurer or designate and set out specific example(s) and corresponding details of how the alleged use of a particular Township resource may have contravened this Policy and/or its Procedures.

Upon completion of any investigation, the CAO/Clerk-Treasurer or designate may resolve any issues and, if necessary, determine appropriate corrective action based on the findings of the investigation, in consultation with the Township of Alberton's Integrity Commissioner as necessary in relation to the Council Code of Conduct. If the investigation determines that a Member of Council or public member of the Committee of Adjustment or of applicable quasi-judicial bodies has contravened the Policy and/or its Procedures, the Member or public member shall be required to personally repay any direct costs associated with the breach. The CAO/Clerk-Treasurer shall advise the complainant of the outcome of the complaint and any repayment that was made. The CAO/Clerk-Treasurer shall report on the exercise of delegated authority under this Policy following a municipal election or by-election.

It is also recognized that matters related to election-related activity are included in the Council Code of Conduct applicable to Members of Council which are under the mandate of the Township of Alberton's Integrity Commissioner, and to which separate complaint protocols apply. For example, Section 7 (a) and (b) of the Council Code of Conduct for Members of Council states as follows:

  
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- (a) "No member of Council shall use or be permitted to use any Township facilities, services, resources, property, or lands, other than public road allowances used to post signage in accordance with municipal policies, for his or her campaign for re-election to Council."
- (b) "In order to preserve impartiality of, and potential impact on, staff and volunteer relations with members at all times:
  - (i) No Member shall use for the Member's re-election campaign any services provided by Township employees in the normal course of their employment with the Township, whether during or outside work hours, and
  - (ii) No member shall request, call upon or solicit Township staff or volunteers to assist with, participate in, support or promote a Member's campaign for re-election."

If the investigation by the CAO/Clerk-Treasurer or designate determines that a Township employee contravened this Policy and/or its Procedures, the failure on the part of an employee to comply with this Policy and/or its Procedures may result in corrective action as appropriate, including discipline up to and including dismissal, to be conducted in accordance with Human Resources' processes and in alignment with terms and conditions of employment.

MAYOR

CLERK

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