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For More Information

For more information on municipal elections, please contact your Municipal Office or the Municipal Training and Development Corporation at:

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Chapter One

An Introduction to Municipal Elections

About Municipal Elections

What and When

Newfoundland and Labrador general municipal elections are held every four years. Election day is the last Tuesday in September.

Terms of Office

If you are elected to municipal office, you will be expected to serve a four-year term.

Time Commitment

You should be aware that holding municipal office can be time-consuming. In addition to regular meetings - you may be asked to sit on special committees, boards or commissions and deal with citizen's issues and concerns that also require significant time. You might consider talking to someone currently holding municipal office to find out how much time you will be expected to commit.

Conflict of Interest

You can still run for local office even if there are potential areas of conflict of interest. Conflict of interest rules respecting municipal councillors require that once elected you may not vote on or participate in council discussions respecting matters where you have a direct or indirect monetary interest.

Qualifications

Who May Run

You may run for municipal office if you:

- are eligible to vote in the municipality in which you are nominated.
- are not in arrears of taxes or other charges to the council.
- have lived in the municipality for at least 30 days before the commencement of the nomination period.
- are an employee of the council other than the clerk, manager or paid department head, provided that you have requested and received a leave of absence from your position with the council.

Who May Not Run

You may not run for municipal office if:

- you are the clerk, manager or a paid department head of that council.
- you are the chief administrative officer of an agency or body established by the council to which you are seeking nomination, if that agency or body is required to have its annual budget approved by that council.
- you were a member of council that was dismissed by the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs, in accordance with paragraph 206(1)(b) of the *Municipalities Act, 1999*.
- you were individually dismissed as a member of a council by the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs in accordance with paragraph 206(1)(b), *Municipalities Act, 1999*.
- your council seat was vacated under paragraph 206(1)(e) or subparagraph 206(1) (f) (ii) of the *Municipalities Act, 1999* or your seat has been declared vacant, by the council to which you were elected.
- you are a member of the House of Commons or the Senate of Canada.
- you are a member of the House of Assembly.
- you are a judge of the Supreme Court or Provincial Court.

Nominations

Who May Nominate

To run as a candidate for any municipal office, you must be nominated by two people who are qualified to vote in the municipality where you are seeking election.

Candidates shall be nominated on the days (s) designated by the individual municipality between the 21st and 28th day immediately prior to election day. Please confirm the days(s) and hours designated in your municipality by contacting the town/city clerk.

Nomination Form and Declaration of Qualification

With your two nominators, you must complete a written nomination form which includes:

- your full name
- the office for which you are nominated
- your civic address
- the names of your two nominators
- your acceptance of the nomination
- your solemn declaration that you are qualified to be nominated for office

Both you and your nominators must be present at the nomination and you must deposit with the returning officer, a non-refundable sum of ten dollars if seeking election in a town and fifty dollars in a city.

Unable to be Present?

If you are unable to be present for your nomination, contact your town/city clerk.

Financing and Disclosure

All elected candidates must file two different types of disclosure statements after being elected.

Campaign Disclosure (Public Document)

Elected candidates must complete a campaign contribution disclosure statement within 90 days after voting day. If you are not elected, you do not have to file a campaign contribution disclosure statement.

Your campaign contribution disclosure statement must disclose:

- the total amount of all monetary contributions made to your election campaign, together with a listing of all individual contributions in excess of \$100.00; or
- the total amount of contributions received if no one contribution exceeded \$100.00 or
- that no monetary contributions in any amount were made to your campaign.

Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statements (Internal Council Document)

If you are elected you will also be required to complete a conflict of interest statement within sixty days after taking office and not later than March 1st in each subsequent year.

The statement is to be filed with the town/city clerk and must list the following:

- real property or an interest in real property within the municipality that is owned by the councillor.
- corporations in which the councillor holds 10% or more shares.
- partnerships and sole proprietorships in which the councillor holds 10% or more interest.
- businesses located within the municipality that are owned by the councillor.

These forms are available at Council Offices or the Municipal Training and Development Corporation. For further information, please call your town/city clerk or MTDC.

Election Procedures

Appointing Representatives

Only one agent can be appointed for each polling station in which voting is taking place. A polling station is defined as the building in which one or more polling divisions are located.

Agents representing candidates in the election must be authorized by the returning officer and have sworn or affirmed the required oath of affirmation by 4:00 p.m of the day prior to the date of election day.

Publicity at Polls

The Municipal Elections Act prohibits candidates and/or their agents from campaigning or distributing campaign material inside a polling station or within 30 metres of the entrance to a polling station on election day.

Access to Voters List

As a candidate in a municipal election, you can obtain a copy of the voter's list from the Returning Officer. If you choose to exercise this right, you will be required to swear or affirm that you will use the information contained in the voter's list for election purposes only.

Chapter Two

Organizing an Election Campaign

Introduction

Every year, from St. John's to Kitchener, Yarmouth to Vancouver, excellent civic candidates lose elections because they don't understand the art of campaigning. The reverse is also true - some really rotten candidates win because they, or someone working for them, practise the art of campaigning flawlessly.

The purpose of this manual is to ensure that you will know enough about organizing a civic election campaign to be able to do it successfully.

This manual will attempt to provide you with the basic information you will need from the time you decide to run for office through to the exciting day of your victory.

Some topics covered in this manual are:

Municipal Elections . . . What You Need to Know

- Planning - the key to success
- Building a campaign team
- The many jobs that need doing
- Campaign strategies & how they work
- Election day and post election day plans

In planning this manual, some basic assumptions have been made:

- 1) That you have all made your decision to run for municipal council or that you are prepared to head up a campaign for some other person to run in one of these areas.
- 2) That you have some basic organizational skills and experience as well as some natural liking for "being organized".

Planning - The Key To Success

Right . . . you have decided to offer yourself as a candidate in the next election. Although it's six months or a year away from now, what can you do today to get you started toward success?

There are two ingredients at work when someone gets elected . . .

- the quality of the candidate themselves
- how well they are presented to the voters

Therefore, in doing advance preparations to ensure success, you have to prepare yourself as well as your campaign strategy.

Prepare Yourself

- Make a realistic self-appraisal in terms of your physical, emotional, intellectual and social attributes and get to work on any deficiencies.
- Get the support of your family and/or close friends - you're going to need them in the months ahead.
- Learn the issues - talk to people; set up a newspaper clippings file; find out what's going on; participate in public forums, briefing sessions.
- Analyse your motives for running. One of the very first questions that will be asked in public as well as in private is "why are you doing this?" Likewise, a frequently asked question since being elected has been "what made you decide to run?". You need to have a well thought out answer to this in order to be seen as a credible candidate.
- Start to get yourself seen and heard in public.

Plan your Campaign

- Determine what your goal is and do some analysis of what it will take to achieve it. Are you bidding for 1 of 7 seats? Are you looking for the highest vote? Are you aiming to beat someone in particular? This decision will influence a number of decisions in the campaign.
- Decide on your campaign team structure and choose your manager or vice versa depending on your experience and her/his. We'll discuss this in more detail later.
- Draft job descriptions for each of the key positions on your campaign team and fill these positions as early as possible.

- Do up an Action Checklist which includes all of the things that will need doing which can be done in advance of the campaign itself (which will probably last 6-8 weeks).
- Keep a notebook with you at all times and reserve a section for volunteers. As you talk to your friends and it becomes known that you are planning to run, ask them if they would be willing to help. Mark down their names and anything specific that they volunteered for so you can get back to them during the campaign. To back this up you can set up a card file for your volunteers. This will be indispensable especially if you run a second time.
- Start to think about and draft your 8 week plan.

Remember

You are going to work very hard in the days ahead. Anything you can do in advance to help things run smoothly and to keep you free to campaign during those last few weeks will pay great dividends as election day draws closer.

Also, if you are like most first time candidates, you will have a number of people working for you who have never done this sort of thing before. Good planning on your part and a positive attitude will boost their confidence as well as your odds of success.

A Functional Campaign Committee

Committees can vary depending on the size of the constituency. Key questions you need to ask yourself in setting up your team are:

- How large should the team be
- What jobs need doing
- What kind of person would best fit each role
- Who has control

The Jobs/Roles

Manager

Duties	Who?
Main Administrator	Strong organizer
Ensures everything is planned	Thorough and has time
Ensures things get done	Positive and friendly
Helps find workers	Enthusiastic
Assists with budget/Signing officer	Has stamina & is unflappable

Financial Chair/Treasurer

Duties

Identifies donors
Solicits contributions
Sets up bank account
Handles receipts & bills
Prepares final records

Who?

Good contacts for donations
Extroverted
Comfortable with fundraising
Basic financial skills

Media & Public Relations Director

Duties

Prepares news releases
Drafts ads, TV & radio spots
Designs all literature, etc.
Organizes media events

Who?

Flair for graphic design
Photography skills
Writing & marketing skills
Has good media contacts

Literature Distribution Director/Door to Door Organizer

Duties

Determines amount of literature
Defines areas/districts
Solicits volunteers for areas & streets (if needed)
Prepares canvass list & trains volunteers

Who?

High organizational ability
Knows a lot of people
Gets the best from people
Gets things done. Has fair amount of time

Signs Director

Duties

Sets locations & gets permits
Gets a team to help construct
Erects & removes signs
Monitors need for repairs

Who?

Reliable
Not afraid of manual labour
Has or can get vehicle, tools

Election Day Co-Ordinator

Duties

Who?

Lines up people to telephone
Prepares a list of drivers
Books victory hall & refreshments
Arranges and trains scrutineers
Gets necessary approvals

Is available on Election Day
Prefers active involvement
Sociable
Experience as a scrutineer

Some Observations

- The most important task is to select your core committee and you should do this first and contact them in person. Making that first phone call is the hardest part for some people.
- Who you choose for Manager is absolutely vital... probably the second most important person is the one who organizes your literature distribution & door-to-door... a very close third, especially if you are not financing the campaign yourself is your fund-raiser.
- You may or may not need to have a campaign headquarters ... there is an advantage to having one in a highly visible spot in the community but it takes a lot of money and people to operate.
- You will have to keep everyone's spirits up from time to time.
- You set the pace - people follow your example.
- Keep your main committee compact... 7-8 people, but encourage a lot of sub-committees. The more people you have involved in this way the better... they all have their circle of contacts who are likely to be influenced to vote for you because of that person's involvement.
- While the campaign manager runs the campaign, ultimate control rests with the candidate.

Finding Campaign Workers

There is no problem to find campaign workers if you are willing to ask people. Draw a large circle and write in the circle all of the relatives you can ask to help...draw a second circle, note in the second one all of your neighbours, draw a third circle, note in the third all of your friends, etc.

On average people can usually come up with 50-100 people using this method. If that's not enough, sit down with your committee and have them do their circle of contacts...then ask all your other workers to do the same if needed...Get the picture?

If all else fails, call someone on a street .. An unknown.

This is where your previous involvement in groups and organizations really pays off. People in communities really do want someone to represent them whom they feel is competent, will represent their best interests and is able to get things done. If you have served people well in other organizations, even if they don't know you personally, they are quite likely to agree to take on some small task to help you get elected.

In addition to this, there is really only a small portion of any community which is very much in tune with its political level; there are any number of people who would never consider themselves political...who have never worked on anyone's campaign...and more to the point have probably never been asked. Particularly if you are a new candidate, these people are your best source and they far outnumber the ones already committed to someone else.

Another thing to keep in mind is that people will often agree to work for more than one candidate. Especially in the situation where people have more than one vote, they will have no hesitation in making deliveries for one candidate and telephoning for another. After all, all that they are saying is that these are the people I want to see elected.

So don't cross anyone off your list prematurely... ask them and let them make their own decision.

Organizing Details

Campaigns are won or lost on the basis of how they are organized. A very well organized campaign can compensate for most other factors including not having a whole lot of money, and not being really well known to start with.

There are many ways to cut costs and still ensure that the voters become aware of your candidacy and learn enough about you to be willing to vote for you.

A budget of \$1 500 or \$15 000 can be used, depending on the amount that you have to spend. If you can't afford expensive advertising or glossy brochures, have your campaign committee spread the message by personal contacts backed up with modest traditional methods such as flyers and signs.

Your object could include knocking on every door in your community and giving the residents some information and personally ask them to vote for you. Having an individual who lives on a street make this contact for you is ideal. This is based on the assumption that if they know that individual and they say to the resident "M is pretty good, you should consider giving her a vote", the odds are, especially if you don't know any of the candidate very well, you'll go along with that.

A modest campaign can bring a very positive reaction from members in the community. People will respect the fact that you don't have any big business backing you with bags of money - no strings attached - just like the majority of them. Another aspect is that by doing things differently, ie., homemade signs, will make you stand out.

Now its fairly easy to get 7,000 flyers delivered through the post office. It's another matter to get 7,000 doors knocked on and a flyer put in someone's hand.

That's where organization comes in. You have to organize an election campaign with the same thoroughness as you organize anything else...you need to plan your work, then work your plan!

Identify your goal, set specific objectives to achieve it then identify everything you are going to need to do...when it needs to be done and who's going to do it, etc.

It has previously been mentioned about an 8-9 week plan. Basically this is a weekly "things to do" list for the 8-9 weeks leading up to election day. It gives you the security of knowing that you have planned for everything that needs to be done; By having it there on paper and reviewing it at every meeting you are able to pick up glitches quickly and deal with them before they do irreversible damage.

Key Dates and Events

There are key dates/events that need to be entered into your plan and these will then dictate when a hundred other things must be ready:

- Election day
- Nomination day
- Door to door starts
- Distribute literature
- Erect signs
- Telephone campaign starts
- Advertisements

You can take any one of these and, with a calendar, travel backwards to determine when everything will need doing. In doing this planning exercise you need to be meticulous about detail...never "assume" anything...don't stop checking until it is actually done...be prepared with cut-off dates...if something isn't completed take it back and get it done.

Having a balanced committee in terms of men and women is good. Choose people who seem to have the most organizational experience from church groups, PTAs, parent's and children's organizations and dozens of door to door campaigns for volunteer organizations. Men and women with this experience seem to clearly grasp how the campaign has to work, and do what needs doing. If you know people who fit this description, get them on your committee!

Standard strategies you can use for campaigning are:

- Literature
- Signs/Posters
- Public appearances
- Paid advertising
- Door to Door visits
- Motorcades
- Fund-raiser events

In deciding which of these to choose consider these factors:

- Credibility - re: amount and style
- Cost - paid advertising, professional design
- People power required
- Uniqueness - people like a bold new approach
- Nuisance factor
- Variety

Regardless of which strategies you choose, experience has shown that voters want to see the real person and not the standard election rhetoric. They are sceptical if you appear to run too expensive a campaign - most people know that municipal politics pays little if anything therefore they tend to question what you hope to get out of it that you are willing to spend large amounts of money.

Nothing replaces personal contact and the more contacts the candidate can make the better. You are your own best advertisement! Door to door campaigning always provides the unexpected.

It helps to have a distinctive theme and look to your campaign so that even if people don't bother to read something, it registers with them who it's for.

Most people really will not spend much time trying to absorb information. It is better to focus on a few key points than to provide reams of material that people will relegate to the round filing basket in the kitchen without a glance.

Pictures attract people - they'll read a line or two under a picture - they'll be drawn to pictures of you in different situations - they feel they can get to know you by looking at a picture of you a lot faster than reading something about you.

Dare to be different - try to devise an approach that no one else has ever done before - as simple but outstanding as possible.

Election Day - Get Your Vote Out!

In the scramble for your first election day, try to put together a telephone committee and a group of drivers. Ask that the telephone people call as many people as they can stating that they are calling on your behalf and ask that if they need transportation, information on where to vote, etc.

Operate on the theory that although you don't know exactly who your supporters are, the odds are that you have a pretty good chance of getting one of their votes if they vote at all. If you have the money, a telephone information number can be used so that people can call to find out where they have to vote, if they need transportation. Also try to have scrutineers at every voting area.

Election day is a time to celebrate...if only the end of the campaign, and to thank your workers. Election night is the most exciting time of all. Try to have an "election central" where you can gather with your family and friends before the votes start coming in.

The tension as you wait for the first counts, the sick feeling as you lose a few polls; the indescribable joy as poll after poll comes in and you're ahead - you're topping the polls - you've done it - you've won! The media are there - you are surrounded by well-wishers - it's surely what they call a natural high!

At that point you are the person that everyone wants to talk to and be with. Whether it's at your house or at your headquarters or elsewhere; whether you like it or not, it's party time - so you'd better have brought in a few provisions. Take advantage of election night to thank your workers, and send a personal invitation to each person to the festivities. You could not ask for a better positive reinforcement for all the hard work people have done than to invite them to share the thrill of victory.

Conclusion

There are probably any number of other approaches or great ideas you can come up with for a successful campaign. There are certainly a lot more things that could be told, but everyone needs to find their own personal style.

Go For It!

Draw from all of the political expertise you are able to gather and use it to make your own mark. People enjoy a new approach to anything and as long as they have confidence in your ability to do the job they will be willing to give you a try.

Appendix A

Sample Planning List

- book election day party space.
- draft your team structure.
- draft terms of references for any positions.
- select/enlist committee member and brief (first meeting).
- form sub-committees.
- draft "volunteer cards".
- prepare instruction sheets for canvassers and area directors.
- design signs/posters, etc.
- get press photos taken.
- prepare press statement.
- order signs/buttons/stickers/posters/post-cards/thank you cards.
- select area directors for canvassing/literature distribution.
- determine numbers required for printed materials.
- select promotional strategies.
- draft budget and fundraising guidelines.
- obtain street maps, voter lists and polling stations.
- set up campaign account and initiate fundraising.
- do rough draft of canvass literature.
- do rough draft of newspaper/radio ads.
- order first literature.
- obtain nomination papers and arrange for signatures.
- obtain media contact list.
- purchase receipt books.
- prepare your eight week plan.

Sample Helper Information Sheet

Helper						Phone:		COMMENTS
Street								
Town/City				Postal Code:				
Spouse						Worker: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		
Elections Worked	Donations	Post Lawn Signs	Will Phone	Will Canvas	Will Help with Signs	Other See Over	Comments	
Yr. -								
Work Done:								
Yr. -								
Work Done:								
Yr. -								
Work Done:								

Sample Action Plan

Action Required	Who Will Do This?	Start Date	Finish Date	Cost	Complete

How to Run an Election Campaign

Running an election campaign requires hard work, creativity and stamina. And Remember: You can't do it alone! In order for your campaign to run effectively and efficiently, a team of volunteers are need to carry out specific tasks.

Here are some helpful hints to running a successful election campaign:

- Recruit volunteers; give them specific tasks and dates for completion.
- Plan temporary budget.
- Develop a master voter's list.
- Arrange kick-off rally.
- Organize the victory party (appoint a chairperson).

Campaign Strategy

Kinds of Campaigns

Be Positive:

(Here are the problems: I can help solve them)

- Isolate specific issues
- Find ways to improve the situation
- Speak to issues only
- Work with all kinds of people
- Listen to all sides before making decisions
- Respond to public input

Sample Budget for Campaign

Filing fee for candidate

Administration

- rental of office space
- telephone/lights/heat/water
- equipment rental
- stationary/office supplies
- Staffing and petty cash

Mailings

- solicitation letter (printing/stationary/postage)
- flyers (printing/postage)
- pre-election "You vote at" postcard

Advertising and promotion

- photographs

Newspaper ads
radio/TV
buttons/stickers
canvass brochure
signs/posters

Other

Travel expenses
election follow-up (supporters party/
removal of signs/appreciation letters)

Instructions for Candidate

The purpose of all the door-to-door campaigning is to make the voter aware of the candidate and to get an indication from the voter of his/her preference. The best time to walk in is during a week-end, or between 6:30 and 9 p.m. All canvassing must be completed by (date)_____

- Check your route on the poll map.
- Bring instructions, voters' lists, flyers, clipboard, paper, pen, buttons, bumper stickers with you when you walk your route.
- Call at all listed addresses in apartment buildings. Save your strength by starting at the top.
- Talk to residents. If you cannot answer a question, promise to find out and relay information. Do not discuss other candidates.
- If you encounter hostility, excuse yourself, smile and leave immediately.
- If a resident appears likely to vote for your candidate, try to get some commitment such as accepting a campaign button, etc. If he/she needs a ride to the poll, call the transportation chairperson (name)_____ to arrange this
- Compile a list of supporters on the route and contact them on election day to remind them to vote.
- If no one is at home when you call, mark the address on your route list and return later. If a return visit is not possible or still no one is home, write a note on a flyer asking for a vote for your candidate. Leave the flyer where it can be seen easily.

Acknowledgements

The Municipal Training and Development Corporation wishes to acknowledge the efforts of the Women's Mentoring Advisory Committee and the inspiration provided by the then Honourable Julie Bettney for the creation of the original guide *A Women's Manual on Organizing an Election Campaign*. With some minor editing and re-writing to provide a manual that will be useful to men and women alike, the original material is intact.

Some of the material in Appendix A was adapted from information provided by the American Association of University Women. Other material by Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

For More Information

For more information on municipal elections, please contact your Municipal Office or the Municipal Training and Development Corporation at:

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