

Guide to running for office in 2014



By Mark Pavilons

Are you thinking of running for King council this year?

It's an honourable yet challenging task to be sure. There's limited praise but it can be very rewarding.

There are many things potential candidates need to know before tossing their proverbial hat in the ring.

The Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing has prepared the 2014 Candidates' Guide for Ontario Municipal and School Board Elections, which offers everything you need to know. It can be found at <http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/Page7112.aspx>.

First and foremost, to be eligible to run, you must be eligible to vote. You must be a Canadian citizen, 18 or older and qualify as a resident or ?non-resident elector.? You can run in any of King's six wards and you don't have to reside in a particular ward. The only drawback there is you can't vote for yourself if you run outside where you live.

Municipal employees are allowed to run for office, but they must take a leave of absence before they file their nomination forms. If elected, they must resign from their jobs.

There are certain people who are disqualified from running ? judges, MPs, MPPs or senators for instance.

In order to run for a trustee position on a school board you must be a resident within the jurisdiction of the board, and you must be eligible to vote in a school board election. On the day you file your nomination, you must be a Canadian citizen aged 18 or older, and you must meet any other qualifications to vote for the school board.

If you want to run, the clerk's department at the Township has the forms.

You should write down your name as you want it to appear on the ballot. If you normally go by a different name than your legal first name, you may use that name provided the clerk agrees.

The nomination form must have original signatures. It may not be faxed, mailed or emailed. You must file the nomination form in person, or have an agent file it on your behalf. If an agent is going to file the form on your behalf you should check with the clerk to see if you are required to provide identification or additional paperwork.

The fee to file a nomination is \$200 to run for head of council, and \$100 for all other positions. This fee must be paid to the clerk at the time you hand in your nomination form.

You can file your nomination 2 p.m. on nomination day, Friday, Sept. 12.

The clerk has until 4 p.m. on Monday, Sept. 15 to certify or reject your nomination. The clerk must be satisfied that you are eligible to run in order to certify your nomination. If your nomination is not certified, your name will not appear on the ballot.

Your nomination filing fee will be refunded to you if you withdraw your nomination, if you are elected, or if you receive more than 2 per cent of the votes cast for the office. The fee will not be refunded if your nomination is not certified.

You can withdraw, and change your mind and run for a different office.

If there is only one certified candidate running for an office at 4 p.m. on Monday, Sept. 15, that candidate will be declared elected by acclamation.

The Municipal Elections Act, 1996 does not regulate signs. King and York have sign bylaws that address election signage. You can obtain a copy from the Township.

The Municipal Elections Act does not prohibit campaigning on voting day. While there are restrictions on advertising for federal and provincial elections on voting day, these ?blackouts? do not exist for municipal and school board elections.

The Act does prohibit campaign material inside a voting place. You should be aware that the ?voting place? could include the entire property of a building that has a voting place inside it, including the parking lot. You are not allowed to have campaign brochures, campaign buttons, signs or any other material inside the voting place.

You are responsible for keeping records of the financial activities related to your campaign. The Municipal Elections Act does not require you to use any specific accounting system. You may want to consult with an auditor or an accountant early in your campaign to make sure that you are using a bookkeeping and accounting system that will suit your needs.
For more, contact the clerk's department or visit www.king.ca.