

What to consider before running for municipal office

by Rob Cotton
The News

Some may think it is early to be thinking about municipal elections to be held November 12, but for those thinking about running for office, especially for the first time, there is a lot to consider.

Municipal government is the one level of government where people can easily get involved in practical decisions that affect us all.

While running for municipal office isn't extremely complicated there are rules, regulations and procedures that must be followed.

Qualifications for candidates are straightforward. They must be Canadian citizens, at least 18 years old on polling day and a resident of the municipality. School board candidates must be an elector of the school board for which they are seeking office.

Some individuals are excluded from seeking public office in a municipal election;

- * an employee of the municipality
- * a judge of any court,
- * a member of the Ontario legislature, the House of Commons or the Senate,
- * a provincial employee as excluded by the Public Service Act,
- * an undischarged bankrupt or insolvent, and
- * an inmate of a penal or correctional institution.

Interested individuals who qualify

have to go through two different procedures - registration and nomination.

Candidates can't start a campaign until they have registered their name, address and office they are seeking with the returning officer, which is the municipal clerk. There is no cost involved in registration and it can be done anytime between now and October 11.

Once registered the candidates can begin to raise funds, and spend them, for their campaign. Lawn signs, pamphlets and buttons can be distributed. However, advertising in the media and outdoor commercial advertising must wait until October 12 and must stop by November 9.

In order for candidates names to appear on the ballot for a particular office they have to be nominated for that office. This procedure requires that at least ten electors of the municipality sign a nomination form, which is available from the returning officer (municipal clerk.)

Nomination papers must be filed between October 8 and October 11 at 5 p.m. No nomination is valid unless the candidate has first registered for that particular office.

Each candidate, or a designate, must set up a bank account to be used exclusively for campaign purposes.

Proper records of all contributions and expenses must be kept. Contributors must be given proper receipts and all contributions consisting of goods and services must be valued and recorded.

All registered candidates including those who were not nominated or elected, must file a financial return by June 30, 1992.

Campaign expenses can only be incurred during the campaign period, January 1, 1991 - March 31, 1992, and after the candidate has registered.

A campaign expense is one incurred for goods and services in relation to an election.

There are limits on campaign expenses and they differ for those seeking office as Reeve and those seeking other

offices.

The limit for candidates running for Reeve is \$5,500 plus \$.50 per eligible elector. For those running for council, schoolboard or other local board the limit is \$3,500 plus \$.50 per elector.

Raising this money through campaign contributions, again, can only be

done during the campaign period and after the candidate has registered.

All of these contributions must be recorded and reported on the candidates financial return.

Contributions can only come from individuals living in Ontario, unions that hold bargaining rights for employees in Ontario and corporations that carry on business in Ontario.

The limit on contributions from an individual, corporation or union, whether in money, goods or services is \$750 per candidate.

While contributors may donate up to \$750 per candidate they are limited to a total contribution of \$5,000 in each municipal jurisdiction.

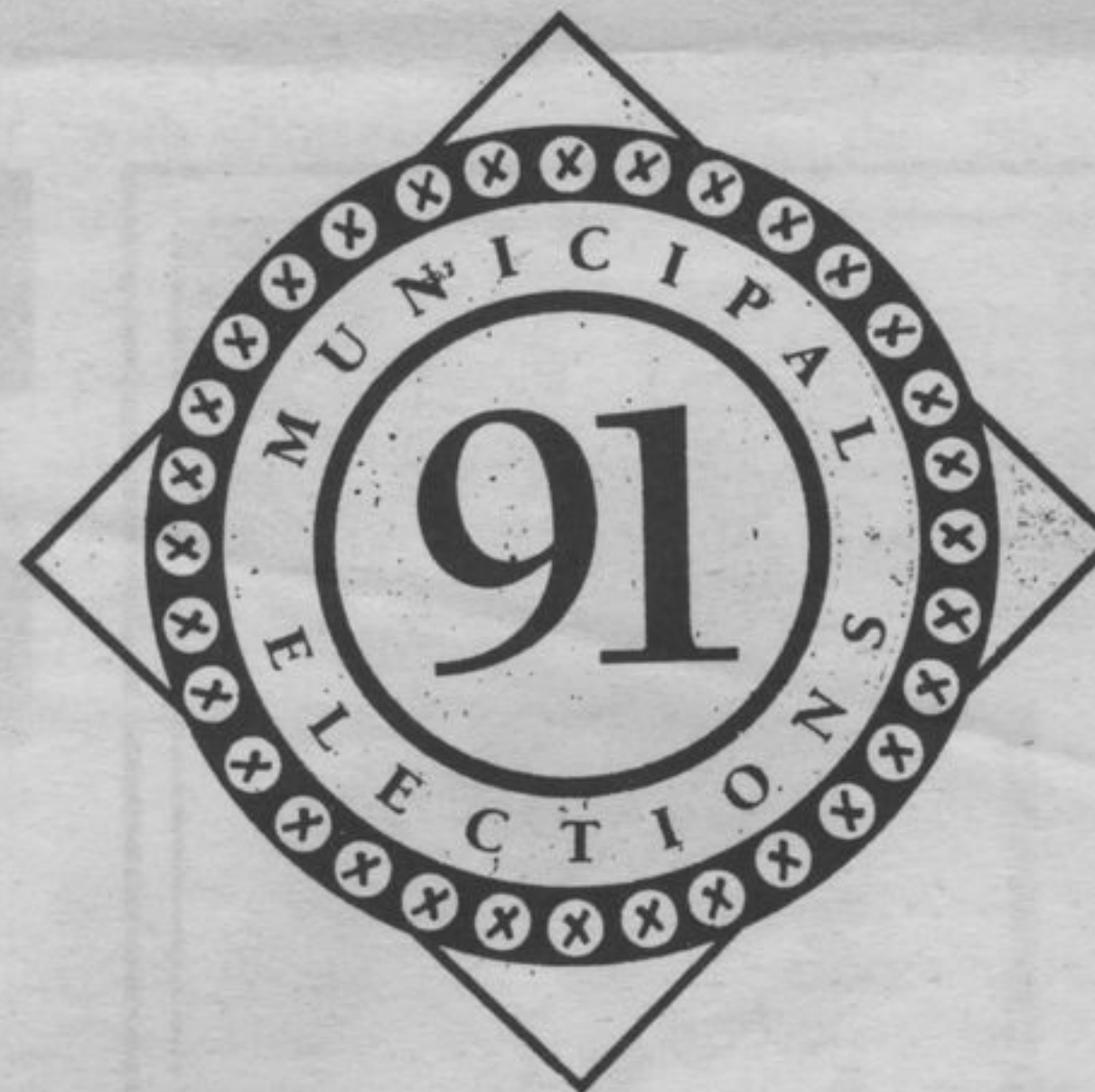
There is no limit on contributions from a candidate's personal funds.

The name and address of each contributor must be recorded with the amount. Contributions up to \$25 may be accepted in cash. Larger contributions must be made by cheque, money order or credit card.

Services donated by people acting on a voluntary basis do not count as a contribution.

However, goods and services such as food, beverages, lumber and printed flyers, are considered to be contributions and records must be kept.

More detailed information is available from the municipal clerk, The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and the Ontario Commission on Election Finances.



Self government - Ottawa's approach

For the past two columns, I've been explaining how the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation (NAN), along with the Ontario and federal governments, are negotiating aboriginal self-government in northern Ontario. I explained how the parties had already agreed to a Memorandum of Understanding in February of 1986, and an Interim Measures Agreement in November of 1990. The Memorandum of Understanding spells out the comprehensive list of issues that all the parties agree will be negotiated. The Interim Measures Agreement promises NAN and the local band councils that their interests in lands and natural resources will be protected, while the negotiations are taking place. I then explained how NAN has laid out five steps, as they see them, to achieve self-government, starting with the creation of their own institutions, and ending with legislative and constitutional entrenchment.

But how are the provincial and federal governments approaching this? First, let's talk about Ottawa. In a recent televised meeting of the board of directors of the Wawatay Communications Society, John Rayner, the assistant deputy minister of Indian Affairs, spelled out the details of Ottawa's new approach to aboriginal issues. This approach has been unfolded slowly, in a series of speeches by the Prime Minister, and by announcements from the House of Commons.

According to Rayner, there are four "pillars" in what he called "the new

relationship":

Pillar One: Land Claims

Rayner says there are three parts to this: "The first one is that the government has committed itself to accelerating the settlement of specific claims. Those are the claims arising out of Treaty, where the government has a legal obligation which it hasn't fulfilled, or an administrative decision by the government years ago which it hasn't followed through on. (There are) hundreds of claims outstanding. We were only settling them as a Department at a rate of 3 to 4 a year, and the government found that totally unacceptable. We're going to put 350 million dollars more over the next five years into the settlement of specific claims, both to provide more people to analyze them and to speed up the process, and secondly more money for settlement."

"Secondly (there will be) a specific claims commission as an independent dispute settling mechanism. I think the government was trying to show some sensitivity to the charge that the previous policy was unfair. The government was jury, judge and executioner - we decided whether a claim was valid, we decided on the terms of compensation, and then we put an offer on the table, and if an indian group didn't like it, we said; see you in court. The government said: that's wrong. Let's create an inde-

pendent commission which will have representatives of both aboriginal and non-aboriginal people on it to hear appeals on whether a claim is valid, or the terms of compensation, and also to facilitate the negotiating process when things get all snarled up."

"The third was that there would be a joint working party of indian and departmental officials to deal with the unresolved policy issues."

Pillar Two: The Improvement of Social and Economic Conditions On Reserves

"There have been several steps taken under this pillar, (including) the announcement in March of a 275 million dollar program on indian health and water. That is in addition to the current capital program, and it is to address the need for safe water and proper sewage treatment facilities."

Pillar Three: Creating The New Relationship

Rayner says this mainly involves a discussion of changes to the Indian Act, which he said "has been called every name in the book that's negative. It is paternalistic. It is basically an Act that was written at a time when the policy of the government was assimilationist. It's demeaning to people that have to live on reserves under the Indian Act. It's also demeaning to the Department and officials like myself that have to carry out certain provisions of the Indian Act.

The government's clearly said, we've got to find a way to get a better legal relationship between indian people on reserves and the government of Canada." He went on to explain that a joint aboriginal-government working group was being established to define what changes were needed in the Act, and how fast the changes will be carried out.

Pillar Four: Contemporary Concerns of Aboriginal People

This one boils down to the announcement in the Speech from the Throne in May of a Royal Commission on Aboriginal Issues. The former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, Brian Dickson, has been appointed, in Rayner's words, "as a special representative to consult on the terms of reference and the mandate of that Royal Commission, and to report back to the government. Responding I think to some criticism by native leaders that they wanted to be involved in the design and construction and composition of that very important body."

As for Ottawa's specific policy on self-government, it seems there isn't one, at least not one spelled out so clearly as Rayner's "four pillars". At a news conference in Thunder Bay last November, Shirley Martin, who at the time was federal Minister of State for Indian Affairs, said "there is no ONE definition of self-government across the country. We are prepared to negotiate self-government agreements quite dif-



**NORTHERN
INSIGHTS**

by Larry Sanders

