



SMITHS FALLS

RISE AT THE FALLS

April 2026

2026 MUNICIPAL ELECTION CANDIDATES – INTRODUCTORY LETTER

Dear Potential Candidate:

Welcome to the 2026 Municipal Election.

Running for elected office is a significant decision, but it can be deeply rewarding. In the constantly evolving world of municipal government, elected officials play a vital role—you have the opportunity to make a meaningful impact in your community by getting involved.

This package has been prepared for the purpose of supplying information which may be of assistance to you as you contemplate running for elected office.

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH)

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing publishes guides for candidates, voters and third-party advertisers to provide information about municipal and school board elections. The guides outline rules as described in the Municipal Elections Act and other legislation and regulations. The three guides for candidates, voters and third party advertisers are now available online at www.ontario.ca/municipalelections and in French at www.ontario.ca/electionsmunicipales

Municipal Elections Act

A copy of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 and its regulations can be viewed at <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/96m32>. The Act outlines all of the rules regarding the election.

Municipal Act

The Municipal Act, 2001 establishes the authority for municipal government to exist and details the spheres of jurisdiction in which it must operate. As such, it is important to investigate whether or not your interests/goals in municipal government are possible given the various restrictions in municipal powers within the Act.

The Act also dictates the role of Council (the collective whole), the Head of Council (Mayor), the Municipal Administration, the Chief Administrative Officer, the Clerk and the Treasurer. A copy of the Municipal Act, 2001 can be viewed at <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/01m25>.



SMITHS FALLS

RISE AT THE FALLS

It is important to note that Council as a whole establishes policy and once approved by the majority of its members, is implemented by staff. No individual member of Council has the unilateral authority/power to approve any policy.

Policies and Procedures

As a member of Council, in addition to legislation, you will be required to understand and abide by a number of policies and procedures. To view the applicable documents, either click on the Policy link below or visit the Town's website at: <https://www.smithsfalls.ca/council-administration/by-laws-enforcement/> . The following is a non-exhaustive list:

- Accountability and Transparency Policy
- Council/Staff Relations Policy (part of the Employment Bylaw)
- Code of Conduct for Council Members & Local Boards
- Pregnancy and Parental Leave for Members of Council Policy
- Procedural Bylaw

There are also a number of online and printed resources available to you. I encourage you to research these sources for a greater understanding of the role of a municipal elected official, the jurisdiction of municipal government, the relationships between levels of government and current municipal issues.

Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)
Municipal World
Government of Ontario
Ontario Statutes and Regulations

www.amo.on.ca
www.municipalworld.com
www.gov.on.ca
www.e-laws.gov.on.ca

The Town of Smiths Falls website www.smithsfalls.ca will also provide a wealth of information about the community. Fellow candidates, current and past elected officials in this and other municipalities may also offer some insight and guidance.

School Board

Candidates for school board offices are encouraged to contact the Director of Education of the respective school board or the Clerk responsible for the election of these positions. Contact information is available in the Clerk's Office.

Voting Process

Smiths Falls will be utilizing internet and telephone voting for the 2026 Municipal Election. Information on the specifics of the Town's voting process is provided in a comprehensive



SMITHS FALLS

RISE AT THE FALLS

policy and procedure manual (available from Clerk) aimed at making the election process consistent, compliant, reliable and transparent.

Nomination Papers

Filing your Nomination Paper is the first step toward a seat at the Council table. The Returning Officer will be accepting Nomination Papers for the following offices:

Mayor	1 to be elected
Councillors	6 to be elected

Nomination papers, along with Endorsement of Nomination forms (25 signatures), must be filed, either in person or by your agent, with the Returning Officer during normal office hours between May 1st, 2026 and August 20th, 2026 and on August 21st, 2026 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. (Nomination Day).

You must contact the Clerk to make an appointment to file your Nomination Papers.

The required filing fee for a Councillor position is \$100.00 (cash, certified cheque, debit or money order made payable to Town of Smiths Falls) must accompany the signed form. The filing fee for the Head of Council (Mayor) position is \$200.00.

At the time of filing, you must also submit the following forms:

- Consent to Release of Personal Information
- Declaration of Qualifications – Council

In addition, at the time of filing you will be required to provide proof of identity and residence.

All three (3) forms must be signed by you in front of the Returning Officer at the time of filing, or you may choose to have the Declaration signed elsewhere in front of a Commissioner of Oaths and filed by someone you have appointed in writing to be your agent. The agent will be responsible for providing proof of agency, all three (3) documents listed above, the fee and the candidate's identification.

Key Dates

The attached list of key dates for the 2026 Municipal Election provides helpful information about the election process. This is not a complete list and the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 should be referred to. The calendar does not claim to be perfect, and all items should be verified independently by the legislation/regulations or among peers.



SMITHS FALLS

RISE AT THE FALLS

Campaign Finances

You may only accept contributions or incur campaign expenses during your campaign period. Your campaign period begins on the day you file your nomination papers with the Returning Officer and in most cases, your campaign will end on December 31, 2026.

Campaign expenses shall not exceed the maximum established by the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 and are calculated as follows:

- Mayor: \$7,500 plus \$.85 per elector (6940 electors as of September 15, 2022)
- Councillor \$5,000 plus \$.85 per elector (6940 electors as of September 15, 2022)

Contributions to your own campaign shall not exceed the maximum established by the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 and are calculated as follows:

- Mayor: \$7,500 plus \$.20 per elector (6940 electors as of September 15, 2022)
- Councillor: \$5,000 plus \$.20 per elector (6940 electors as of September 15, 2022)

Upon filing, the Clerk shall give the person, or the agent filing the nomination for the person, the Estimated Maximum Campaign Expenses, using the above calculation. These amounts shall be confirmed by the Returning Officer, on or before September 30, 2026, and a Certificate of Maximum Campaign Expenses will be provided to each candidate.

Candidates must open a bank account before incurring any expenses or accepting any contributions of money (including a contribution from themselves or their spouse). A candidate who does not spend any money or accept any contributions does not have to open a campaign bank account. The campaign bank account must be used exclusively for campaign purposes.

A detailed record of all revenues and expenditures must be kept by the candidate throughout the campaign period. To aid in your understanding of the financial reporting requirements of all candidates, we have posted on our website (a blank Financial Statement (required of candidates whose expenses total \$10,000 or less). Candidates whose campaign expenses exceed \$10,000 are required to file a Financial Statement and an auditor's report. Please also refer to the MMAH Candidate's Guide which very clearly outlines all of the requirements. **Detailed records, including receipts, are to be kept by the candidate regardless of your success in the election.** Candidates are required to keep all campaign financial records until November 15, 2030 when the next council takes office.



SMITHS FALLS

RISE AT THE FALLS

Campaign Advertising

Like campaign expenditures and revenues, advertising shall not commence until after the filing of nomination forms. The Town has an Election Signage Policy (posted to our website) that informs candidates of when and where they can post campaign advertising and to ensure public safety on municipal roads and highways during an election period. Campaign advertising that will be installed or affixed to poles belonging to Hydro One Network, Bell Canada or other public utilities will require the permission of these respective approving authorities.

Returning Officer

Throughout the election process you will hear and see reference for the position of Returning Officer. The Municipal Elections Act, 1996 directs the Clerk of the municipality to assume the position of Returning Officer for the municipal election. The titles are often used interchangeably; however, the roles and responsibilities are very different.

In closing, I express my appreciation for your interest in municipal government. We will be working on your behalf and on behalf of all eligible voters in the Town toward a smooth and equitable process for the 2026 Municipal Election.

This letter is provided to you for information purposes. Any necessary changes will be posted to the Town's website, referred to as "Revised" and dated accordingly. Also, reference should always be made to the relevant legislation and regulations.

Once registered as a candidate I will be in contact with you throughout the election period. In the meantime, please visit the Town's website for up-to-date municipal election information. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at (613) 283-4124 ext. 1102 or kcostello@smithsfalls.ca.

Sincerely,

Kerry Costello,
Clerk/Returning Officer



SMITHS FALLS

RISE AT THE FALLS

INFORMATION FOR CANDIATES – 2026 KEY DATES –

Date	Information
May 1 to August 20	Nominations accepted Between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday
Nomination Day August 21	Nominations and Withdrawal of Nomination will be accepted between 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.
August 24	Certification/Rejection of Nomiation Papers By 4:00 p.m. Acclamation after 4:00 p.m.
No Later than August 28	Official List of Candidates Posted
Prior to September 30	Final Calculation of Maximum Campaign Expenses will be provided to Candidates
October 19 to October 26	Voting Period Until 8:00 p.m. October 26
October 27	Declaration of Official Election Results
November 15, 2026 to November 14, 2030	Term of Office
December 31, 2026	Must notify Returning Officer if intending to extend campaign
January 4, 2027	Earliest the Financial Statements can be filed
March 30, 2027	Deadline to file Financial Statements 2:00 p.m.