

Staff Report



To	Committee of the Whole
Service Area	Corporate Services
Date	Monday, November 6, 2023
Subject	Mayor and Council Expense and Education Policy Update

Recommendation

1. That Council approve the updated *Mayor and Council Expense and Education Policy*, attached as Attachment-2 to the report entitled "Mayor and Council Expense and Education Policy Update" dated November 6, 2023, and repeal the *Policy on Councillor Attendance at Municipal Events*.
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Executive Summary

Purpose of Report

This report serves to provide City Council with an overview and rationalization of the proposed updates to the current, and now outdated, *Policy on Councillor Attendance at Municipal Events*, which guides expenses for members of City Council and the Mayor.

Key Findings

The purpose of the current *Policy on Councillor Attendance at Municipal Government Events* is to ensure that there are established procedures in place with respect to City Councillor attendance at municipal government events, and to provide for the reimbursement of expenses incurred by those attending. A significant amount of time has passed since this Policy was last updated and it is important to ensure policies guiding City Council remain current and in line with public expectations and sector best practices.

In consultation with the Committee of the Whole Service Area Chairs, Mayor and Council Office staff, and staff from the City Clerk's Office, Finance and the Strategy, Innovation and Intergovernmental Services departments, the following key changes have been proposed for this Policy:

1. The addition of learning and development opportunities, such as continuing education programs, to the scope of the Policy.
2. Clarification of procedures related to exceeding individual budget allocations, and justification of the relationship of events to Council business; and
3. Alignment of the expense allowances and provisions with the current Staff Expense Policy.

The updated Policy incorporates the above changes to bring it in alignment with existing corporate policies and best practices. The updated Policy has also been

renamed to the *Mayor and Council Expense and Education Policy* to reflect the broader scope of the Policy.

Strategic Plan Alignment

The updated Policy presented in this report aligns with the City's Strategic Plan by supporting the corporate value of integrity by ensuring honest and ethical use of resources. It also supports the corporate value of Learning by ensuring that members of Council have timely access to relevant development and learning opportunities on aspects that impact the changing municipal sector.

Financial Implications

The updated Policy introduces several changes to the ways in which Councillors and the Mayor are permitted to use their financial allocations. However, as this Policy does not govern the total amount of funds allocated to the Mayor and Council, there are no budgetary implications associated with the updates to this Policy.

Report

The current *Policy on Councillor Attendance at Municipal Government Events* (see Attachment-1) outlines procedures for Councillors attending municipal government events, and establishes reimbursement provisions for the various expenses which may be incurred while attending such events. Since this Policy was established, there have been some changes to the types of municipal government events Councillors can be expected to attend, changes to the expenses that would reasonably be incurred related to the attendance of such events, and changes to other corporate policies governing individual expenses.

To bring this Policy up to date, several changes are proposed. The changes below have all been incorporated into the updated *Mayor and Council Expense and Education Policy* (see Attachment-2).

Provisions regarding educational programs:

One of the goals of the current *Policy on Councillor Attendance at Municipal Government Events* is to enable members of City Council to attend events which contribute to their professional development in the municipal government sector. While the current Policy covers events such as seminars and municipal conferences (such as Association of Municipalities of Ontario and Federation of Canadian Municipalities conferences), it does not include provisions for formal educational opportunities, such as continuing education programs.

To expand the scope of learning and development opportunities available for the Mayor and Councillors, the updated policy includes provisions concerning educational programs, and allows members of City Council to claim certain expenses associated with the attendance of educational programs relevant to their responsibilities.

Clarification of expense-related procedures:

An important goal of the current Policy is to ensure that the Mayor and Council budget is used appropriately and for learning and development which is relevant to the duties of members of Council. The updated Policy identifies procedures and the specific individuals whose approval is required to exceed individual budget allocations, and to justify the relationship of an event or program to municipal

business. To ensure transparency and collaboration, the updated Policy also identifies individuals who may be consulted by Councillors to determine whether an event or program is eligible for reimbursement.

Alignment with the Staff Expense Policy:

The updated *Policy on Councillor Attendance at Municipal Government Events* aligns all eligible and ineligible expenses with the existing corporate Expense Policy which applies to all City staff.

Additionally, the updated Policy removes all references to specific reimbursement limits, and instead refers to the Expense Policy to ensure that there is only one document which needs to be updated if reimbursement limits change in the future.

Financial Implications

The updated Policy introduces several changes to the ways in which Councillors and the Mayor are permitted to use their financial allocations. As this Policy does not govern the total amount of funds allocated to the Mayor and Council, there are no budgetary implications associated with the updates to this Policy.

Financial implications related to any changes in the total City Council funding allocation will be presented to Council through the 2024-2027 multi-year budget (MYB) process.

Consultations

The updated policy was developed in collaboration with staff from the Finance Department, City Clerk's Office, and the Office of Strategy, Innovation, and Intergovernmental Services, as well as with staff from the Mayor's Office. Discussions were also had with Committee of the Whole Service Area Chairs.

Attachments

Attachment-1 Policy on Councillor Attendance at Municipal Government Events

Attachment-2 Mayor and Council Expense and Education Policy

Departmental Approval

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