

Corporate Policy and Procedure



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Policy Statement

There is great value to be gained from City Councillors attending events of interest to municipal government and educational programs related to the requirements of their roles. These events and programs contribute to continuous learning and development, and better equip City Councillors to deal with the wide range and depth of governance issues facing municipalities. They also provide a forum to exchange ideas, best practices, and expertise on municipal government related issues. Expenses associated with attendance at such events and participation in such programs must be reasonable, related to the role and necessarily incurred by those attending.

Purpose

City Councillors who attend municipal government events and educational programs benefit from learning about new approaches and the experiences of other municipalities that have had success in dealing with issues. By building on the success of other municipalities, it is possible to avoid a lengthy process involved in attempting to solve a problem in isolation, which may take longer and produce less effective results. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that there are established procedures in place with respect to City Councillor attendance at municipal government events and educational programs, and to provide for the reimbursement of expenses incurred by those persons attending.

Policy Application and Exclusions

This policy applies to the Mayor and City Councillors who participate in municipal government events, educational programs for municipal elected officials, or in events where the Mayor is representing the City as the head of Council, where the costs are funded from the approved Mayor and Council budgets.

The annual allocation provisions of this Policy do not apply to City Councillors who serve on the board of either the Association of Municipalities of Ontario or the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, where such service and associated travel expenses have been pre-authorized by Guelph City Council. All other provisions with respect to limits and expenses do apply to members who serve on these boards.

The provisions of this Policy with respect to the allocation of an equal share of the approved Council budget for attendance at municipal government events and educational programs do not apply to the Mayor.

Definitions

Eligible Expenses – Expenses that are eligible for reimbursement include:

- transportation,
- accommodation,
- event registration fees,
- meals and incidentals.

Event – Includes an organized annual general meeting, conference, congress, convention, exposition, forum, program, session, summit, or workshop targeted to a municipal audience. In situations where it is not clear as to the municipal relationship to the event, it is the responsibility of the City Councillor to clearly establish this relationship to the Mayor. Councillors may consult with appropriate City staff, including the CAO and/or City Clerk in making their determination.

Educational Program – An educational program offered through a university,

college, municipal government organization, municipal association, or other third party which offers a certificate or other proof of completion, and covers topics targeted to a municipal government audience. It is the responsibility of the City Councillor to clearly establish the relationship between the learning and their duties as Council members. Councillors may consult with appropriate City staff, including the CAO and/or City Clerk in making their determination.

Ineligible Expenses – Expenses that are not eligible for reimbursement include:

- alcohol purchased for/during meetings only involving City staff,
- claims for loss of personal effects,
- companion registration fees and expenses,
- entertainment,
- gifts and hospitality,
- medical and hospital treatments in excess of City sponsored health care benefit limits,
- personal effects (luggage, clothing, magazines),
- personal memberships,
- personal services (shoe shines, valet, spa treatments, hair styling),
- personal vehicle costs (maintenance, repair costs, towing fees, car washes),
- movie or cable/satellite television fees charged by hotels or airlines,
- sporting events,
- side trips including stopover charges and additional accommodation costs for personal or other business reasons,
- sightseeing tours,
- traffic and parking fines.

Municipal Government Organization – Includes but is not limited to such entities as the Canadian Urban Institute, the Institute on Governance, Municipal Government Institute, ICLEI-Municipal Governments for Sustainability, Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing, Community Heritage Ontario, etc.

Municipal Association – Includes but is not limited to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Association of Ontario Municipalities, the Ontario Good Roads Association, and sub-groups of these associations.

Allocation for Attendance at Municipal Government Events and Educational Programs

Each City Councillor will be allocated an equal share of the approved budget for attendance at municipal government events and towards educational programs. Allocations are not transferrable, and if not used during the calendar year, cannot be accumulated and carried over into subsequent budget years. The allocations are intended to cover the attendance of 2-3 major Municipal Government Events per Councillor including the Association of Municipalities Ontario (AMO) and Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM). Councillors will only be permitted to exceed their allocation with the prior approval of the Mayor, and in communication with City

Council.

Meals and Incidentals

Meal expenses be reimbursed at actual costs upon submission of appropriate receipts. Councillors will be reimbursed for meal expenses up to a daily maximum as outlined in Appendix G of the Expense Policy. If the amounts outlined in the Staff Expense Policy are out of date, the Canadian Revenue Agency (CRA) reasonable meal allowance rate will apply instead.

It is understood that as part of their position, Councillors may be required to attend municipal government events customarily involving the consumption of alcohol, such as cultural events and meetings with non-City staff. Purchases of alcohol for personal consumption may be eligible for reimbursement provided that they are reasonable and appropriate for conducting City business. Councillors should use discretion when determining whether alcohol purchases constitute a necessary expense.

Reasonable incidental expenses incurred during travel for municipal government events, such as internet access fees or public transit, will be reimbursed upon submission of appropriate receipts.

Receipts are to be submitted within 30 days of return from the function for reimbursement. Claims for expenses must include receipts, and be submitted within 30 days of return from the event. Claims for expenses incurred in one year, but not submitted until the next budget year will only be paid upon the approval of the General Manager, Finance.

Overnight Accommodation

If an overnight stay is required, accommodation will be reimbursed at a rate in accordance with the single room rates charged for the function, or the hotel's rate for a standard single room, whichever is less. Reimbursement of accommodation expenses for additional days may be approved. The reason for the approval (i.e. lower air fare, time change) must be documented on the expense claim form.

Transportation

Transportation costs include:

- air, rail, bus fare or automobile – Councillors are encouraged to select the most cost and time effective method of transportation;
 - automobile mileage will be reimbursed up to the cost of the least expensive air/rail fare to the destination, at the rate established in Appendix G of the Expense Policy
- parking
- travel cancellation insurance

- incidental travel by taxi or public transit
- departure taxes from transportation terminals
- travel to and from public transportation terminals, provided such transportation is actually used by the traveller
- toll highway charges
- expenses associated with the use of a rented automobile for travel to and from the function, provided the expense does not exceed the cost of taxi fares for the same purpose (use of the automobile for personal business is not an allowable expense)
- Long-term parking for air travel exceeding 24 hours.