

Policy on Councillor Attendance at Municipal Government Events

CORPORATE POLICY AND PROCEDURE



POLICY No.

PAGE

EFFECTIVE DATE

REVISION

POLICY STATEMENT

There is great value to be gained from City Councillors attending events of interest to municipal government. These events 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 must be reasonable and necessarily incurred by those attending.

PURPOSE

City Councillors who attend municipal government events 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 to provide for the reimbursement of expenses incurred by those persons attending.

POLICY APPLICATION AND EXCLUSIONS

This policy applies to City Councillors who participate in municipal government events where the costs are funded from the approved Council budget.

The provisions of this policy with respect to limits and expenses apply to the Mayor's participation in municipal government events, or in events where the Mayor is representing the City as the head of Council, where such costs are funded from the approved budget for the Mayor's Office.

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 do not apply to the Mayor.

DEFINITIONS

- **Eligible Expenses** – Expenses that are eligible for reimbursement include:
 - transportation,
 - accommodation,
 - event registration fees,
 - meals and incidentals,
 - hospitality.
- **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.
- **Hospitality** – Includes reasonable costs which may be incurred by City Councillors in an economical, consistent, and appropriate way that will facilitate City business, or as a matter of courtesy, and consists of meals only.
- **Ineligible Expenses** – Expenses that are not eligible for reimbursement include:
 - alcohol
 - 1-900 premium-rate telephone calls,
 - claims for loss of personal effects,
 - companion registration fees and expenses,
 - entertainment,
 - gifts,
 - medical and hospital treatments in excess of City sponsored health care benefit limits
 - personal effects (luggage, clothing, magazines),
 - personal memberships,
 - personal messaging /download fees,
 - personal services (shoe shines, valet, spa treatments, hair styling, internet fees for access to for-fee sites),
 - 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 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 the Federation of Canadian Municipalities or the Association of Ontario Municipalities, and sub-groups of these associations.

ALLOCATION FOR ATTENDANCE AT MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT EVENTS

Each City Councillor will be allocated an equal share of the approved budget for attendance at municipal government events. Allocations are not transferrable, and if not used during the calendar year, cannot be accumulated and carried over into subsequent budget years. City Councillors will be permitted to exceed their allocation only with the prior approval of Guelph City Council.

HOSPITALITY

City Councillors attending municipal government events, may offer hospitality on behalf of the City where necessary and reasonable. Such hospitality is limited to meals, and the maximum daily meal expense limit will apply. Receipts are required for reimbursement.

MEALS AND INCIDENTALS

Meal expenses will be reimbursed at actual costs upon submission of appropriate receipts. Councillors will be reimbursed for meal expenses up to a maximum of \$70 per day, at the following rates:

\$15.00 - Breakfast
 \$20.00 - Lunch
\$35.00 - Dinner
\$70.00

Individual meal limits may be exceeded, as long as the \$70.00 daily total limit for meals is not exceeded.

A separate amount is available each day for incidental expenses in addition to the regular meal allowance. Such items would include parking meters, public transit, or Internet access connection and/or usage fees away from home, where Internet access is necessary for city business. The current rate is \$10.00 per day. Where possible, original receipts should be obtained and submitted for reimbursement.

The above limits are in Canadian dollars for expenses incurred in Canada or the equivalent foreign currency for travel outside of Canada. Tips and gratuities would be in addition to the above rates.

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 Director of 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 at the most cost and time effective rate; e.g. mileage will not be reimbursed if air travel is less expensive
- parking
- travel cancellation insurance
- incidental travel by taxi, subway, bus
- 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 incurred when using a personal vehicle for travel to functions located outside the City of Guelph will be reimbursed at the standard car allowance rate established for City staff, currently \$0.45 per km.
- 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.