

REPORT

Office of the Chief Administrative Officer

To: Mayor Johnstone and Members of Council
Date: January 27, 2025

From: Lisa Spitale, Chief Administrative Officer
File:

Item #: 2025-37

Subject: Revised Council Travel and Expense Policy

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the updated Council Travel and Expense Policy, included as Attachment 2 to the report titled "Revised Council Travel and Expense Policy" from the Chief Administrative Officer, be approved.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is provide for Council's consideration and approval a revised Travel and Expense Policy (the "Policy") that outlines the process for payment of expenditures when the Council member is representing the City, engaging in City business and attending educational opportunities such as workshops, seminars, training programs, conferences and conventions. This report and Policy also responds to the motion that was passed at the July 8, 2024 Council meeting dealing with accountability for international travel, travel outside of the province, sponsored travel and reporting requirements to Council of the value of participation from attending the events by attendees.

BACKGROUND

The current Council Expense Policy was approved in 2007 with revisions made in 2011 and 2016. It provided for payment of Council expenses incurred when the Council member was representing the City or engaging in City business. Expense forms were submitted to the CAO for sign-off. The Finance Department processed the invoices.

The existing Council Expense Policy has a limit of attending one conference outside of the province in each calendar year. There are no provisions regarding international travel by members of Council to attend conferences, events and meetings on behalf of the City or third party sponsored participation by Councillors in these events.

Council at its July 8, 2024 meeting resolved that international travel by members of Council to attend conferences, events and meetings on behalf of the City be subject to Council approval. The request is to be made in an open meeting including: projected expenses to be charged to the City, the name of the attendee(s) and relevance to Council or Committee roles. A statement of expected value to be derived as a result from attending the function from the attendee(s) is also to be provided.

A further resolution directed that any participation by members of Council at conferences, events and meetings (aside from the Lower Mainland Government Association (LMGA), Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM), and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM)), which requires overnight accommodations or travel outside of the province, but otherwise falls within allowable Council expense limits, shall require a written summary to Council by the attendee(s) in an open meeting within 3 months of completing the travel which includes:

- a) a summary of actual expenses incurred; and
- b) a description of participation, learnings and the value from participation at the event.

It was also resolved that staff bring back to Council for consideration, revised travel policies consistent with the above resolutions, including changes to existing policies, expense limits or reporting requirements that recognizes Council participation in exchange and learning. It is also to include considerations for travel funded in part or wholly by the participant themselves or third parties.

REVISED COUNCIL TRAVEL POLICY

The Policy now includes the revised travel policies consistent with the above noted resolutions.

Purpose and Scope of Policy

The purpose and scope of the Policy is to provide for payment of Council expenses incurred when Council members are representing the City, engaging in City business, attending educational opportunities and conferences. This is subject to confirmation of the availability of approved budgets with the Finance Department. Definitions are provided for conferences, training, educational opportunities, City business and events sponsored by third party organizations.

Travel is to adhere to budgets and travel expense report forms are submitted to the Finance Department within 10 business days of the event for approval. If the amount of

travel expenses for Councillors exceeds the Mayor and Councillors budget allowance, the expenses will be subject to Council approval. The Mayor and Councillors are to pay for expenses incurred that are not eligible or beyond the scope of this Policy.

Travel Expenses

Eligible Travel Expenses are defined as including:

- a) Transportation, including economy airfare, mileage outside of the Lower Mainland and car rentals when required at a destination.
- b) Per Diem allowances for meals and incidentals as defined in Policy Schedule A – Attachment C.
- c) Accommodations at a discounted rate.
- d) Child care.

Attendance at Conferences and Events

The Mayor and Councillors may select the conferences and events they wish to attend subject to the Policy, including the relevance to the role and professional development of the Council member. The Mayor and each Councillor are authorized to attend the annual events of the FCM convention, UBCM convention and LMLGA annual general meeting. There is a limit of one conference per year outside of British Columbia but within Canada in each calendar year unless approved by Council.

Participation by members of Council at certain conferences, events and meetings which requires overnight travel outside of the province requires a written summary in an open Council meeting which includes travel expenses and a description of the participation, learnings and value from participating at the event. In addition to these reporting requirements, international travel by members of Council to attend conferences, events and meetings are subject to Council approval which requires a summary of the request in an open Council meeting including travel expenses related to the attendance.

Approval by Council is also required in the case of members of Council attending sponsored conferences, events and meetings aside from FCM, UBCM and LMLGA meetings.

The application requires a summary of the request in open Council, including the name of the sponsor, the value of the attendance and expenses to be paid for by the sponsor and any travel expenses to be paid for by the City.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The 2025 Mayor and Council annual budget is \$56,561, excluding wages and benefits. Mayor and Council expenses are to be recorded on the Council Expense Form (see Attachment C). Council expenses, including those related to travel for City business and

attending defined events, are also included in the annual Statement of Financial Information required to be posted under the Community Charter.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON

The Finance and Human Resources Departments, and the Corporate Officer have contributed to this Policy development.

OPTIONS

There are two options for Council's consideration:

1. THAT the updated Council Travel and Expense Policy, included as Attachment 2 to the report titled "Revised Council Travel and Expense Policy" from the Chief Administrative Officer, be approved.
2. That Council provide staff with alternative direction.

Staff recommend Option 1.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Council Resolution from July 8, 2024 Agenda Item: International Travel by Members of Council

Attachment 2 - Council Revised Travel and Expense Policy

Attachment 3 - Council Travel Expense Form

APPROVALS

This report was prepared by:
Craig MacFarlane, City Solicitor
Manager, Legal Services

This report was reviewed by:
Shehzad Somji, CFO, Director of Finance
Richard Fong, Director of Human Resources
Hanieh Berg, Corporate Officer

This report was approved by:
Lisa Spitale, Chief Administrative Officer