



Report to: General Committee

Date Report Authored: June 10, 2012

SUBJECT: Council Business Expense and Conference Policy
PREPARED BY: Fred Rich, Senior Business & Risk Analysis
Alex Moore, Senior Manager Purchasing & Accounts Payable
Stephen Huycke, Public Services & Records Coordinator

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1) THAT report entitled “Council Business Expense and Conference Policy” be received;
- 2) AND THAT Council approve the Council Business Expense and Conference Policy (Attachment “A”);
- 3) AND THAT \$13,000 be incorporated into the 2014 Operating Budget for the Regional Councillor pages in Markham Life;
- 4) AND THAT Council Business Expense and Conference Policy (Attachment “A”) be updated to include the addition of Regional Councillor pages in Markham Life;
- 5) AND THAT Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to obtain approval of the Council Expense Policy (Attachment “A”) that provides direction to Council on allowable business and conference related expenses including the forms, documentation and approvals required for reimbursement.

BACKGROUND:

At the April 16, 2013 Council meeting Council approved changes to the policy affecting the allowable Council expenses. To better clarify the policy requirements for Members of Council, a separate policy dealing exclusively with Members of Council allowable business and conference related expenses has been prepared.

The following resolutions were incorporated into the new Council Business Expense and Conference Policy, as approved at the April 16 Council meeting:

1. That smart phone costs (voice and data) remain a corporate expense.
2. That Councillors with personal smart phone account/plans will be reimbursed in an amount equivalent to the corporate plan & additional costs will become a discretionary expense.
3. That Members of Council not be reimbursed for direct donations to individuals, political, charitable, religious and community organizations.
4. That the reimbursement of alcohol expenses be considered as an ineligible expense.

5. That the expenses related to Members of Council attending Association of Municipalities Ontario (AMO) and/or Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Conference(s) be considered as a non-discretionary expense. All other conferences will be considered as a discretionary expense unless otherwise pre-approved by Council.
6. That the current per diem practice for overnight stays be replaced with an expenditure reimbursement.
7. That business travel expenses for Members of Council align with the policy requirements for Staff.
8. That two newsletters per year per Ward Councillor remain as a corporate expense and all other newsletters be considered as a discretionary expense.

In addition Council approved the following changes that will be incorporated in the 2013 budget and/or ITS procedures:

1. That an additional \$1,500.00 discretionary expense be approved. (This has been incorporated into the 2013 operating budget)

For review purposes, changes from the current policy have been highlighted on the attached Council Business Expense and Conference Policy. (Appendix A)

Regional Councillors' Communication Options

During the April 3rd General Committee discussion on Council Expenses, Council discussed the communication options for the Regional Councillors. Currently the City provides printing and delivery services for two (2) newsletters annually for each Ward Councillor, whereas the Regional Councillors are not provided this benefit. A few communication options were discussed during the April 3 meeting and three options are discussed below. However, it should be noted that all Councillors receive space on the City's website to promote topics specific to their role as a City Councillors, including news items, events, Committee involvement, photo gallery and external links. The City does not contribute to Councillor's external website as under Section 70(4) of the Municipal Elections Act, a municipality is not eligible to contribute to an election campaign. Provision of a website to a Councillor seeking election would constitute a contribution under the Act and is therefore not permissible.

Markham Life

Currently the City produces quarterly issues of Markham Life that are distributed to all household and community centres in Markham. The proposal is to provide one page per Regional Councillor in each issue of Markham Life. This option would require each Regional Councillor to provide their print ready page to Corporate Communications and Community Engagement staff at designated times to ensure production deadlines are adhered to, Regional Councillors not meeting these deadlines will not be included in that issue of Markham Life. The estimated annual cost of this option is \$13,000 for all four Regional Councillors.

Communication Budget

Another option is to give each Regional Councillor the equivalent amount of funds that are allocated to each Ward Councillor, for the printing and delivery of the two (2) ward newsletters. These funds would be designated specifically for communication with constituents only and could not be used for any other purposes. The annual cost associated with this option is \$28,000 (\$7,000 per Regional Councillor), as the budgeted cost for the Ward Councillor newsletters is approximately \$ 56,000 (\$7,000 x 8 Ward Councillors).

Of the above two options, Staff recommend implementing the Markham Life option in 2014 as Markham Life is distributed to all Markham households and is a cost effective use of a current communication tool.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND TEMPLATE:

The \$1,500 increase in the discretionary budget for Member of Council represents an annual budget increase of \$18,000 (\$1,500 x 12 Members of Council). This increase has been incorporated into the 2013 operating budget.

Adding four additional pages to each issue of Markham Life to provide each Regional Councillor one page per issue represents an estimated annual budget increase of \$13,000. The 2014 cost will be incorporated into the 2014 operating budget for Markham Life.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Not Applicable

ACCESSIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS:

Not Applicable

BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

Not Applicable

RECOMMENDED BY:

14/06/2013

14/06/2013

X 

Joel Lustig
Treasurer

X 

Trinela Cane
Commissioner, Corporate Services

ATTACHMENTS:

[Appendix A, Council Business Expense and Conference Policy](#)