

TITLE: Council Expense Policy

POLICY NO: POL-T-02-2022

SUPERCEDES NO: Alderman's Protocol Account
Approved Expenditures, as amended
Policy F-01-00 (dated January 1, 2000)

EFFECTIVE DATE: November 15, 2022

Policy Statement:

The Council Expense Policy establishes the guidelines for the reimbursement of expenses incurred by Members of Council while carrying out their respective roles and responsibilities.

1. Purpose:

This policy provides clarity to the Members of Council and the public by identifying:

- The resources that are provided by the Township to Members of Council
- The type of expenses that are eligible for reimbursement
- The process for submitting and approving expense reimbursements

This policy does not establish the amount of funds available to the Mayor and Members of Council for expenses. The annual approved budget determines the amount of funds available.

2. Scope:

This policy applies to all Members of Council and establishes the basis upon which the Members will be reimbursed or have payment coverage for Eligible Expenses incurred while undertaking activities related to Township Business while acting in their role as an elected official. This policy is in addition to the other applicable policies and legislation, including but not limited to the following:

- Travel and Corporate Expense Policy
- By-Law for paying remuneration and expense allowances to the Members of Council
- Code of Conduct for Members of Council and Local Boards
- Mobile Device Technology Policy
- Technology Use Policy
- Software Use Policy

3. General Requirements:

- a) Expenses must be incurred in relation to the individual's duties as a Member of Council.
- b) Eligible cost should be reasonable and reflect what the public expects of a Member of Council.
- c) Reimbursement of an expense should not result in a Member of Council receiving any product, service or asset for personal use, benefit or gain.
- d) Expenses must be claimed in the year the cost was incurred.
- e) No goods or services shall be purchased in excess of what the Member of Council requires to complete their term of office.
- f) Any assets purchased using Township funds, remain the property of the Township and must be returned to the Township in the event that the individual is no longer a Member of Council.
- g) Goods purchased that have a useful life beyond the term of Council shall become the property of the Township and returned to the Township at the end of the term.
- h) Funds cannot be transferred between Councillors.
- i) Unspent balances in the Member of Council's expense account cannot be carried over into a subsequent year.
- j) The Township Travel and Corporate Expense Policy is to be adhered to when submitting expense claims.

4. Election Year Restrictions:

In accordance with the Municipal Elections Act, Members of Council in a campaign period are not permitted to:

- a) Use equipment, supplies, services, staff or other resources of the municipality for any campaign or campaign related activities;
- b) Use Township funds to acquire any resources for any campaign or campaign related activities, including ordering of stationery and office supplies;
- c) Use Township funds to print or distribute any material that makes reference to, or contains the names or photographs, or identifies candidates or registered third parties.

5. Corporate Resources Provided to the Mayor:

- a) Office Space – a furnished office at the Township Administrative Building consistent with the standard furnishings used by the Township.

- b) Staffing – the Administrative services of the Executive Assistant (a shared resource with the CAO).

6. Advertising and Promotions:

- a) Design and Production costs for advertising related to Township business or that supplements Township promotion of programs and events is an eligible expense.
- b) The purchase of approved Township branded clothing for use by the Member at official functions or events is an eligible expense. The purchase will be coordinated through the Township, with costs charged to the appropriate expense/protocol account.
- c) Advertising or promotions for for-profit organizations, third parties, other levels of government or candidates in any election are deemed to be ineligible expenses.

7. Books and Subscriptions:

- a) Books, magazines, newspapers and periodicals that are related to the business of the Township in general, or support Members of Council in serving as elected officials is an eligible expense.

8. Civic Receptions, Public Functions, Meals and Hospitality:

- a) Eligible Expenses include the following:
 - Food and non-alcoholic beverages when attending a business meeting for discussing matters of official Township business.
 - A ticket for a Member to attend a charitable or fund-raising event organized by a charitable/non-profit organization where funds raised will support services provided to the residents of West Lincoln and/ or the Region of Niagara.
 - Meeting rooms to conduct official Township business.
 - The catering of light snacks and refreshments.
- b) Alcohol and expenditures related to a meeting of personal nature is not an eligible expense.
- c) Additional tickets other than those for the Member of Council are ineligible expenditures
- d) Raffle tickets, silent auctions and table prize tickets are ineligible expenditures

9. General Office Expenses:

- a) Members of Council will receive a quantity of business cards at the beginning of each term. The design and content will be in accordance with the Township's standards.
- b) All eligible reimbursable expenditures must be directly related to carrying out the duties as a Member of Council and include the following:
 - Stationary and Office Supplies

- Printing Supplies
 - Canada Post and courier delivery charges
 - Hardware, software and related peripherals beyond the corporate resources provided. Such items must comply with corporate standard and be approved in order to be connected to Corporate-issued hardware
 - Photocopying and reproduction costs
- c) Home office furniture is not an eligible expense. This would include items such as tables, desks, chairs and cabinets.

10. Information Technology Equipment & Services:

- a) At the commencement of each Term of Council, each Member of Council will receive the following:
- A standard Township tablet/mobile desktop with the appropriate Township supported software
 - Township email account
 - Mobile Phone
- b) The cost of the equipment replacement referred to above shall be charged to a separate account and is not considered as an expense to a Member of Council's individual expense/protocol account.
- c) Township staff does not provide support to computers, computer equipment or software that is not owned by the Township.
- d) Township equipment requiring replacement and/or services must be brought to the IT Manager.
- e) The technology equipment/software provided to Members of Council remains the property of The Township and shall be returned to the Township when it is replaced, or in the event that the Mayor or Councillor is no longer a Member of Council. In that case, the Mayor or Councillor who will not be returning may purchase from their own personal funds, the assets originally paid using Township funds, for an amount based on Net Book Value of the asset at the time of purchase.
- f) The use of this technology is in accordance with the Mobile Device Technology Policy, Technology Use Policy and Software Use Policy and any other pertinent policies that may be approved.
- g) Replacement computer hardware will only be reimbursed if it is lost or stolen, or no longer operates and cannot be repaired to its initial operating specifications. The old equipment must be returned, and /or written confirmation if the equipment has been lost or stolen.

11. Mobile Phones/ Telecommunication Services:

- a) As outlined under section 10.0, the Township will supply a mobile phone to Members of Council. The monthly service fees are paid by the Township and will be charged to the appropriate expense/protocol account. The initial purchase of

the mobile device will not be charged to the Member's expense/protocol account.

- b) Members of Council shall arrange with the IT Manager for an appropriate out of country mobile device plan in order to avoid excessive roaming charges if required for Township business.
- c) The Mobile Device Technology Policy is to be followed.
- d) The Member of Council agrees to have their Township issued mobile phone number advertised for public use.

The following pertains to the Use of a Personal Phone

- e) The additional costs associated with the initial capital cost of purchasing a mobile phone or costs associated with mobile phone replacements or upgrades are not eligible for reimbursement.
- f) If a Member of Council declines a Township mobile phone, reimbursement of a personal monthly cellular bill is an eligible expense; however, reimbursement will be a maximum of \$100/month. An expense report shall be completed and submitted in order to receive this reimbursement.
- g) The Member of Council is responsible for maintenance and support of the device through the plan or device provider. Township staff will only provide support with the installation of the Member's Township email account on the device.
- h) The mobile phone number for which the Member receives monthly reimbursement shall not be used for election campaign purposes.
- i) If, from the day of filing their nomination until Election Day, the Member wishes to use the mobile phone number, for which they receive monthly reimbursement, for campaign purposes, the Member shall notify the CAO and shall cease to receive reimbursement for that period.
- j) The Member of Council agrees to have their personal mobile phone number advertised for public use.
- k) Internet services including monthly charges and usage charges for Township related business are eligible costs. Penalty/late fees on such charges are considered ineligible expenses. The installation costs and any related hardware for such a service is an ineligible expense. Reimbursement will be a maximum of \$100/month. An expense report shall be completed and submitted in order to receive this reimbursement.

12.0 Parking and Transportation:

- a) Mileage and related parking for travelling to and from home to outside of the municipality on authorized Township business will be paid in accordance with the Travel & Corporate Expense Policy.
- b) Traffic and Parking tickets are considered an ineligible expense.

13. Training, Conferences and Conventions

- a) Attendance at training, conferences and conventions related to Township business will be reimbursed in accordance with the Travel & Corporate Expense Policy.
- b) Personal development programs such as degrees or diplomas are considered ineligible expenses.
- c) Training unrelated to the duty of a Member of Council is considered an ineligible expense.
- d) Members of Council are eligible to a per diem of \$60.00 for attendance at seminars, conferences and/or convention of more than one day in duration, to compensate for lost work time while on a conference or convention. This would be treated as a taxable benefit and would be coded to salaries/wages. It would not be charged to individual protocol accounts.

14. Procedures:

- a) All requests for reimbursement are to be submitted to the office of the CAO.
- b) The CAO, or his or her designate, will approve all requests for reimbursement.
- c) Members of Council requesting reimbursement of expenditures under this Policy must, within 30 days but no later than the end of the calendar year in which the expense was incurred, submit a request for reimbursement with the proper documentation using Township expense forms.
- d) All questions and concerns regarding this policy and procedure should be directed to the CAO for consideration and action as required.
- e) In the case of a dispute or extraordinary circumstance that may arise, regarding reimbursement payments, the CAO or his/her designate will meet with the Member of Council and make every reasonable effort to resolve the matter. Where a matter cannot be resolved, the CAO or his/her designate shall prepare a report to Council for its consideration.

15. Disclosure of Information:

- a) All expense information is public information and shall be made available, upon request, in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA) and all related legislation.
- b) Under Section 284(1) of the Municipal Act, 2001, the Treasurer must submit to Council an itemized statement of remuneration and expenses paid to each Member of Council in respect to his or her service as Member of Council or as a Member of a local board in the preceding year.