

Policy Subject / Title - COUNCIL AND STAFF EXPENSES

GENERAL PURPOSE OF POLICY

- 7.1 It shall be the policy of Region of Queens Municipality to have a standard travel policy for elected council members and staff that clearly sets out what travel costs are reimbursable and the designated amounts.

POLICY APPLICATION

- 7.2 This policy shall apply to all Members of Council, staff where there is not a collective agreement in place covering such items, and all members of the public appointed to committees by Council.

POLICY DETAILS

- 7.3 Council members and staff covered by this policy shall be eligible for reimbursement for travel costs incurred when such costs are authorized by Council or Chief Administrative Officer according to the criteria noted below.

TRAVEL

- 7.4 Council members and staff shall be reimbursed for expenses incurred according to this policy when travelling to attend the following as authorized by Council or Chief Administrative Officer:
- a. meetings of Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities and Association of Municipal Administrators, Nova Scotia
 - b. meetings of Committees, Boards or other Agencies for which the person is appointed by Council and authorized by the Chief Administrative Officer
 - c. attendance at conferences, workshops, or meetings where Council or the Chief Administrative Officer has approved such attendance in advance
 - d. attendance at any meeting or function where the Council member or staff member has been officially invited as part of their role as a member of council or administration and for which they will play a designated role during the meeting or function
 - e. meetings of Council
- 7.5 All council travel within one's electoral district is deemed to be incidental to the discharge of one's duties and is included in the elected officials' remuneration.
- 7.6 Notwithstanding Section 7.5, where a council member is required to travel more than 50 kilometres within their district on a single trip, reimbursement may be requested.
- 7.7 All Council members and staff shall be reimbursed for the use of one's private vehicle when on approved travel at a kilometre rate equal to the Province of Nova Scotia's current mileage rate.

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- 7.8 Council members and staff that choose to rent a vehicle for approved travel shall be reimbursed for the exact costs of the rental and gas purchase associated with the rental if supported by the original receipts.
- 7.9 Persons covered by this policy shall be reimbursed for the most economical travel method available considering the distance and location, including airfare, bus, taxi, parking, etc. if supported by original receipts.
- 7.10 All persons covered by this policy are encouraged to carpool whenever possible to reduce travel costs.

REGISTRATION FEES

- 7.11 Registration fees that are payable for approved training shall be reimbursed for all Council members and staff.

MEALS

- 7.12 Meals required to be obtained while travelling on approved municipal business which requires the elected official or staff member to be away from home shall be reimbursed at cost if supported by the original receipt and deemed to be reasonable based on the location of the meal and be approved by the Chief Administrative Officer. Should a member of Council disagree with a decision of the Chief Administrative Officer in this respect, a right of appeal to Council shall exist.
- 7.13 No reimbursement shall be made for meals which are provided as part of a conference or workshop where such registration fee includes specific meals.
- 7.14 Alcohol is not a reimbursable expense.

ACCOMMODATIONS

- 7.15 When travel on municipal business requires a person to be away from home for one or more nights, the person shall be entitled to reimbursement for the total cost of the hotel stay if supported by the original receipt. Such hotel shall be obtained seeking the best possible rate for reasonable accommodations.

INCIDENTALS

- 7.16 When away on approved municipal business, elected officials and staff shall be reimbursed for incidental charges upon submission of a receipt for items like phone calls, parking fees, etc. subject to approval of the Chief Administrative Officer.

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REIMBURSEMENT APPLICATION

- 7.17 All applications for travel reimbursement shall be submitted on the authorized municipal travel expense claim form and be signed by the Chief Administrative Officer when approved for payment. Such claims shall be made not less than monthly.

APPEAL PROCESS

- 7.18 When a Member of Council's expense claim, in whole or in part, has not been approved for reimbursement, and where the Member of Council believes that their expense claim complies with this policy, that Member of Council may submit an appeal in writing to Council within 30 days of the day of denial outlining the appropriate sections of this policy that apply and the rationale for the expense, including copies of any pre-approvals required under this policy.
- 7.19 Upon receipt of an appeal from a Member of Council, Council shall review the matter in public session at the next appropriate meeting and determine whether the appeal shall be granted or the original decision upheld. Both the Mayor and Chief Administrative Officer shall be present to explain the reason for their decision and the Mayor as a member of council is entitled to vote unless otherwise disqualified.

PUBLIC REPORTING

- 7.20 Approved expense claims for all members of Council and Chief Administrative Officer shall be publicly reported quarterly within 90 days of the end of each fiscal quarter.

REPEAL

- 7.21 Administrative Policy 7 Respecting Council and Staff Expenses adopted by the Council of Region of Queens Municipality on November 27, 2018, is hereby repealed.

Approved by Council: January 26, 2021

Effective Date: January 26, 2021