



## **Region of Queens Municipality Remuneration Committee**

**January 23, 2026**

**Council Chamber**

### **Minutes**

Present:

Pamela Brennan

Tara Druzina, Vice Chair

Kerry Morash

Christopher Clark, Chair

Velta Vikmanis

Holly McConnell, Staff Representative

Alex Wilson, Staff Representative

Kate Wong, Recording Secretary

### **1. Call to Order**

The meeting of the Remuneration Committee was called to order at 3:05 p.m.

### **2. Procedural Matters**

Staff reviewed housekeeping and procedural requirements in recognition of the Committee's limited timeframe and the importance of respectful, efficient, and collaborative discussion. Members were reminded that:

- The Committee must appoint a Chair.

- Only the Chair may speak on behalf of the Committee if approached by the media.
- Committee members may not discuss deliberations with the Mayor, Council, or staff outside of the formal meeting process.
- Meetings are open to the public.
- Committee decisions are advisory in nature, with final decisions resting with Council.

### **3. Election of Chair and Vice Chair**

#### **Election of Chair**

**Moved by Kerry Morash, seconded by Velta Vikmanis;**

**THAT** the Remuneration Committee for the Region of Queens Municipality appoint Christopher Clarke as Chair.

**MOTION CARRIED, unanimously.**

#### **Election of Vice Chair**

**Moved by Velta Vikmanis, seconded by Pamela Brennan;**

**THAT** the Remuneration Committee for the Region of Queens Municipality appoint Tara Druzina as Vice Chair.

**MOTION CARRIED, unanimously.**

### **4. Mandate, Governance Framework, and Policy Context**

Staff reviewed the Committee's mandate and confirmed that all members had received and reviewed the Terms of Reference and background materials. Members acknowledged their understanding of the Committee's scope, objectives, and reporting obligations.

Staff outlined expectations for the final report to Council, noting that the report will present multiple options rather than a single recommendation. The Committee's preferred option will be clearly identified, with alternatives provided for Council consideration. The final report is due to Council by February

28, 2026, and Committee members are encouraged to attend the Council meeting at which the report is presented.

The Committee discussed Policy 27 - Council Remuneration, particularly sections A–E governing remuneration adjustments. While current practices align with this policy, there was general consensus that the existing framework may no longer adequately reflect the realities of modern Council roles.

The Chair noted that during his previous tenure as Mayor, the role functioned as approximately four days per week - roughly 80% of a full-time equivalent - despite being formally classified as part-time.

## **5. Council Roles, Workload, and Accountability**

The Committee discussed the evolving nature of Council roles since municipal amalgamation. Members noted that Council positions are formally part-time but carry full-time accountability, with no standardized job description outlining minimum expectations, duties, or time commitments. Workloads vary significantly across districts due to differences in geography, population density, and constituent needs, making direct comparisons difficult.

Members acknowledged that many Council responsibilities, such as constituent engagement, community presence, and public expectations, are largely qualitative and not easily measured.

The Committee further noted the absence of written guidance defining minimum expectations for Councillors and the Mayor, including:

- The Municipal Government Act (MGA) provides baseline statutory accountability but does not define detailed role expectations.
- Council lacked a formal orientation process.
- A 2024 Candidates Guide is available on the municipal website.
- Provincial orientation materials used in other governance contexts may provide useful comparators.

Staff will review available municipal and provincial documentation to identify any existing guidance, orientation materials, or role descriptions relevant to Council duties.

## **6. Current Compensation and Community Context**

The Committee reviewed current remuneration arrangements, noting that the existing compensation structure came into effect in November 2024. Benefits for Mayor and Council are limited to CPP and EI, with optional access to medical and dental coverage available through the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM). The Committee discussed whether alternative forms of compensation, including benefits, could be considered alongside salary.

Members also considered the broader community context. It was noted that Queens County faces economic challenges and that anticipated increases in water rates and other costs heighten public sensitivity to remuneration changes. At the same time, the Committee acknowledged that inadequate compensation may limit Council participation to individuals able to absorb income loss, potentially affecting accessibility and representation. It was further noted that, historically, many Mayors had alternative income sources, with the current Mayor being an exception.

## **7. Financial Impacts and Comparative Analysis**

Members emphasized the importance of understanding the financial and tax implications of any proposed remuneration changes. Key considerations include the cent value of tax rate changes, the overall impact on residents, and the Municipality's comparative fiscal capacity.

Staff will request additional information from the Director of Finance regarding the financial implications of various compensation scenarios. This will include analysis of potential tax rate impacts and an estimate of the approximate cost associated with each one dollar increase in Mayor and Council remuneration.

The Committee also requested comparative information to inform deliberations, including operating (non-capital) budgets, service levels, liabilities, and governance responsibilities for the following municipalities:

- West Hants
- District of Annapolis
- District of Kings
- East Hants
- District of Lunenburg
- Town of Bridgewater

Members further requested clarification on whether provincial standards or best practices exist for municipal remuneration reviews or reporting.

## **8. Priorities for Next Meeting**

The Committee identified the following priority areas for discussion at the next meeting:

- Living wage considerations for Mayor and Council
- Tax rate and community impacts of potential remuneration adjustments
- Cost and structure of benefit packages
- Exploration of tiered or non-uniform compensation models
- Comparative budget, service, and governance data
- Provincial standards or best practices, if applicable

## **9. Next Meeting and Communication**

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, January 30, 2026, beginning at 2:00 p.m.

Members agreed that email addresses may be shared within the Committee and that staff may circulate non-confidential materials in advance. Requested information should be distributed by the end of the preceding Thursday to allow adequate time for review.

## **10. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:26 p.m.