City of Pitt Meadows
THE Natural PLACE

COUNCIL POLICY C068

Council Expenses

Effective Date:	July 7, 2015
Last Revised:	June 23, 2026

1. Policy Statement

The participation by Members of Council at conferences, seminars and meetings dealing with municipal issues is beneficial to the City since they provide information to improve Members of Council's expertise; provide an opportunity to make valuable contacts with Councils from other organizations; and provide a venue to conduct municipal business. Therefore, attendance is encouraged to ensure the City maintains or acquires skills and knowledge in emerging issues and trends in the marketplace.

As well, the Council Expense Policy provides guidance to Members of Council on expenditures that support them in fulfilling their statutory duties as elected officials and assists in the administration and accountability of Council expenses by providing clear and understandable definitions and procedures.

2. Purpose

2.1. The policy is intended to:

a) provide Members of Council with the flexibility to allocate resources in the most efficient way to meet their own requirements;

b) clarify the processes that Members of Council and staff use to administer Council's budgets by providing clear and understandable definitions and procedures; and

c) recognize Members of Council are accountable for managing City resources allocated to them.

d) ensure expenses incurred by Members of Council have a direct relationship to municipal concerns or support municipal interests.

2.2. The expenses charged to the Council budget are intended to provide Members of Council with the resources to:

a) administer the Mayor's office;

b) conduct meetings and communicate with constituents and other stakeholders;

c) support and promote activities or community groups in the community at large;

d) represent the City at functions, events or conferences; and

e) provide education and training opportunities to successfully perform their civic responsibilities.

3. Scope & Principles

This policy applies to Members of Council. The following principles guided its development:

3.1. Cost Benefit Analysis

The following criteria should be used to evaluate participation in training and networking opportunities:

- Does the work performed by the body support Council's Strategic Plan?
- Does the body make decisions that could impact Pitt Meadows?
- Does the organization provide financial or other support to Pitt Meadows?
- Does participation help Council Members fulfill their responsibilities?
- Does participation provide valuable networking opportunities?

3.2. Integrity of Council

The integrity of Council as a whole and each Member of Council must be protected, and the interest of Council as a whole takes precedence over the personal interests of individual Members of Council.

3.3. Accountability

a) Members of Council are accountable for compliance with this policy. They are the stewards of City resources and are ultimately accountable to the public for the type and level of expenses they incur.

b) Since Members of Council use public funds when they perform their duties, the public expects public funds to be used solely for the fulfillment of their public duties.

c) Expenses incurred by Members of Council should be reasonable and reflect what the public expects of an elected official.

d) It is expected that Members of Council keep business expenses and personal expenses separate.

3.4. Transparency

The public has a right to know how public funds allocated to Members of Council are spent; and Council expense information must be balanced against the need to protect privacy and personal information as well as allow time for proper accounting and reconciliation of expenses.

3.5. Flexibility and Limits

It is recognized that Members of Council need flexibility to perform their roles and pursue public interests, that they engage different stakeholders differently, while all accounting, audit, budget availability and Income Tax Act principles and rules must be followed.

4. Exclusions

The following expenses are not eligible for reimbursement:

a) Purchase of goods or services from a family member or related party
b) Expenses reimbursed by another organization (e.g. Metro Vancouver Board or Committee expenses which are covered by a Metro Vancouver stipend)
c) Alcohol, cannabis
d) Expenses incurred by third parties
e) Contributions to individuals, businesses, or City funded services
f) Overnight accommodation, transportation, mileage, and incidental costs within Pitt Meadows
g) Traffic fines or parking tickets
h) Vehicle repair and towing costs
i) Childcare, house-minding, or security costs
j) Lost wages, income, or opportunity costs
k) Spousal or partner travel costs
l) Any expense claim which the Chief Administrative Officer or Chief Financial Officer determines to be more than expense policy limits or standards, to be lacking adequate documentation, or to be beyond the scope, spirit, or intent of this policy.

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5. Definitions

In this policy,

(a) *Conferences and Conventions* means learning and networking opportunities available to Members of Council from their attendance at formal assemblies of elected officials, delegates and management from other organizations, for discussion of and for action on matters of common concern.

This includes but is not limited to:

- The Canadian Federation of Municipalities (FCM) Convention
- The Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) Convention
- The Lower Mainland Local Government Association (LMLGA) Convention

(b) *Eligible Expenses* means reasonable and necessary expenses incurred by a Member of Council while carrying out Municipal Business in accordance with this policy, provided that the expenses are not personal in nature, are not otherwise excluded under this policy, and are not reimbursed by another organization.

(c) *External Committee Work* means activities, meetings, training, networking, and related business expenses arising from a formal appointment by Council of a Member of Council to an external board, committee, commission, association, liaison role, or similar body. This includes, but is not limited to, appointments or designations to Metro Vancouver, FCM, UBCM, and other external organizations where the Member of Council has been formally appointed by Council to represent the City.

(d) *Member of Council* means the Mayor or a Councillor.

(e) *Municipal Business* means activities undertaken by a Member of Council in their official capacity to fulfill statutory, governance, representative, ceremonial, intergovernmental, advocacy, or Council-authorized responsibilities on behalf of the City, including Conferences and Conventions, External Committee Work, and Self-Directed Training, where permitted under this policy.

(f) *Self-Directed Training:* Refers to training, workshops, conferences or similar professional development activities that individual Members of Council may wish to attend in order to support the performance of their role, and that are not included in Conferences and Conventions or External Committee Work under this policy.

6. Pre-Authorized Expenses – Annual Expense Limit Budget

(a) Members of Council are pre-authorized to incur Eligible Expenses in accordance with this policy up to the maximum annual amounts, per Member of Council, as set out below:

Council Member	Annual Expense Limit
Mayor	$ 3,750
Councillor	$ 1,500

(b) The Annual Expense Limit budget is intended to cover routine Eligible Expenses incurred by a Member of Council in the performance of Municipal Business under this policy, including constituent relations, local meetings and events, business travel, and Self-Directed Training.

**Expenses related to Conferences, Conventions and External Committee Work are covered under a separate budget; see section 7.*

(c) Exceeding the Annual Expense Limits should receive pre-approval by Council resolution where practicable. Where timelines do not reasonably permit pre-approval, the variance will be reported to Council as soon as possible with a recommended budget amendment. A summary of the expenditure, including a description of the type of expenses, the estimated cost, and the reason for the expense, will accompany the report.

7. Conferences, Conventions and External Committee Work

(a) All reasonable Eligible Expenses approved in accordance with this policy for:

(i) attendance at Conferences and Conventions; and

(ii) participation in External Committee Work,

are funded through a separate budget established annually by Council through the budget approval process. These expenses are not included in, and do not count toward, the Annual Expense Limits set out in section 6.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

a) Administration of this policy is delegated to the Chief Administrative Officer and/or the Chief Financial Officer.

b) Each Member of Council must ensure their expense claims are compliant with this policy.
c) The Executive Assistant to Mayor and Chief Administrative Officer will prepare the expense claim on behalf of a Member of Council and will ensure:
   i. The claim is signed and dated by the Member of Council;
   ii. Any necessary approvals and estimates are attached;
   iii. Original receipts are attached;
   iv. Receipts agree with the amounts claimed;
   v. The claim reflects any advances or prepayments; and
   vi. The expense is coded correctly.

d) The Finance Department will ensure the expense claim has been fully completed, signed and dated by either the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Chief Administrative Officer, or Chief Financial Officer and will provide reimbursement within fifteen working days of receiving fully completed documentation.

9. Prohibitions

The consumption of alcohol, cannabis or non-prescribed mood-altering substances is prohibited while operating any vehicle under this policy. In the event of an accident any loss of insurance coverage and other related expenses is at the expense of the Member of Council.

10. Procedures and Guidelines

10.1. Approval of Expense Claims

Expense claims must be:

a) Submitted on the appropriate expense claim form with original receipts and a copy of any necessary written approvals or cost estimates;
b) Signed and dated by the Member of Council and submitted for approval within fifteen working days of travel;
c) Signed and dated by the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Chief Administrative Officer or Chief Financial Officer within five working days following the expense claim submission date.

10.2. Budget Allocation

The budget to which an expense is charged will be determined by the purpose of the activity for which the expense was incurred.

a) Eligible Expenses incurred for Self-Directed Training or other Municipal Business subject to section 6 will be charged to the Annual Expense Limit budget.
b) Eligible Expenses incurred for Conferences, Conventions or External Committee Work subject to section 7 will be charged to the separate budget established annually by Council through the budget approval process.

10.3. Accommodation & Other Reimbursable Expenses

a) **Cleaning Expenses.** Costs incurred for cleaning clothing during extended trips exceeding one week in duration may be claimed.

b) **Hotel.** Whenever possible, accommodation cost should not exceed the cost of a standard room, double occupancy.

c) **Hotel upgrade requests.** Hotel upgrade requests shall be at the personal expense of a Member of Council unless there are ergonomic necessities attributable to physical requirements including wheelchair accessibility.

   The City will reimburse the cost when there is a requirement to upgrade the hotel room or rent a separate meeting room provided that:
   (i) it is to conduct City business that cannot wait until the Member of Council returns to the City;
   (ii) the meeting space will be made available to other attendees at conference events; and
   (iii) a rationale for the upgrade is provided with the hotel receipt.

   Members of Council should book reputable accommodation close to the business or conference location at the lowest rate available to the City.

d) **Private Accommodations.** An allowance of $50 per night may be claimed for private accommodations. This rate has been established to encourage this option which may prove to be more versatile and cost effective. (Appendix 1).

e) **Registration Fees.** Conferences, training and course registration fees may be claimed.

f) **Telephone Calls, Miscellaneous Business Services and Supplies.** Provided that the expense cannot be avoided until the Member of Council has returned to the City, the following expenses can be claimed:
   (i) Business telephone calls provided the party called has been identified.
   (ii) Office services and supplies required to complete City business (including fax, courier, postage, and photocopier).

10.4. Meals and Incidental Expenses

a) **Attendance at Events Five Hours or Less.** No per diem allowance is permitted to be claimed.

b) **Attendance at One Day Events Exceeding Five Hours.** For attendance at events exceeding five hours and not requiring overnight travel, meal expenses claimed will be paid by the City in accordance with the prorated per diem allowance limit (Appendix 1).

   The prorated per diem allowance for incidental expenses is not permitted.

c) **Attendance at an Event for More than One Day.** For attendance at an event exceeding one day or for attendance at a one-day event requiring overnight travel, expenses claimed will be paid by the City in accordance with the prorated per diem allowance limit (Appendix 1), including incidental expenses.

d) For international travel, per diem rates will be at the per diem rates in Appendix 1. If these rates are not sufficient for the destination country, Members of Council may submit actual receipts for reimbursement. Actual receipts should be reasonable and appropriate in the circumstance.

e) **Guest Meals.** When guests' meals are included in a business meal expense claim, the guests must be identified and a brief rationale to claim the amount must be included. The same limits and restrictions apply to guests' meal costs, but receipts may be averaged to determine a cost per person.

f) **Meals Included in the Event Registration Fee.** If meals are included in the event registration fees, then the cost of those meals should be deducted from the per diem rate (if the Member of Council participates in those meals) in accordance with the prorated per diem rate in Appendix 1.

Special dietary requirements may negate the ability to participate in meals provided at an event. Where dietary requirements cannot be met by the event, the cost of the meal, with a receipt, can be claimed without deducting the amount of the meal included in the event.

g) **Per Diem Allowance.** Expenses covered by the Per Diem Allowance:

I. Meals, beverages, gratuities, and taxes
II. Taxi (other than to/from transportation terminals, or conferences and business centres)
III. Parking (other than to/from transportation terminals, or conferences and business centres, or accommodation site)
IV. Telephone (other than City business calls)
    a. Incidental expenditures for which a receipt would not normally be obtained.

10.5. Travel Expenses

a) **Cancellation Insurance.** If air travel has been arranged based on a special faire, such as a 'seat sale' fare, the Member of Council may claim the cost of cancellation insurance.

b) **Combining Business Travel with Personal Travel.** Members of Council wishing to combine a business trip with personal travel may do so at their own expense. The Member of Council will be required to pay any additional living and accommodation expenses that are not associated with the business travel.

The City's portion of the air fare shall be the lower of:

I. the actual combined fare; or
II. the cost of a direct, return flight to/from the business destination based on the lowest excursion or economy fare available on the date of booking.

c) **Medical Insurance and Vaccinations.** For any travel outside of Canada, the Member of Council may claim the cost of additional medical insurance and the cost of vaccinations for business related travel.

d) **Passports.** For any travel outside of North America, the Member of Council may claim the cost of obtaining a passport, provided the passport was not also needed for personal reasons.

e) **Rental Vehicles.** In larger geographical area, where robust public transit, taxis and hotel shuttles are generally available, the rental of the vehicle should not be required unless:

   I. There is business to conduct beyond the scope of the event being attended; or
   II. The destination airport and event location are greater than 25 kilometers apart; or
   III. Two or more Members of Council are travelling together, and it is more economical than the combined cost of other reasonable ground transportation (public transit, taxi, hotel shuttle). This will include the cost of hotel parking, if applicable.

   Compact, economical vehicles must be used unless 3 or more persons are travelling together, in which case a mid-size vehicle is permitted.

   Vehicle rental insurance must be purchased for all drivers renting the vehicle. The applicable deductible must be the lowest available. Members of Council are advised to contact their personal vehicle insurance agent for advice if required. The City will reimburse the rental of the vehicle and the insurance premium cost. In the event of an accident where the Member of Council is responsible for the loss or damage to the rental vehicle, the City will reimburse the Member of Council for the applicable deductible, provided the insurer determines fault at less than 50% on the part of the Member of Council.

f) **Request for Travel Advance.** Requests for travel advances must be approved by the Chief Administrative Officer or Chief Financial Officer. All travel advances are personally due from the Member of Council receiving the advance until such time as the advance is supported by a final accounting for the event attended through a properly approved and coded expense claim form. Advances will only be issued as part of a regular cheque run and will be in Canadian dollars.

g) **Spousal or Partner Travel.** Spousal or partner travel will not be paid by the City, unless the Member of Council is sight or physically handicapped and requires personal assistance to travel on City business. Prior resolution of Council is required. The spouse or travel partner will be entitled to claim for the same expenses as the Member of Council.

The City may prepay a registration fee or some other expense on behalf of a spouse or travel partner, provided the City is reimbursed for this expense within ten days of return from travel. The spouse or travel partner must also reimburse the City for any non-attendance by the spouse or travel partner. If the spouse or travel partner fails to reimburse the City, the Member of Council is responsible to reimburse the City for expense outlined herein.

h) **Taxi, Airporter and Parking.** Fares to and from the airport or transportation terminal may be claimed. Members of Council wishing to drive a personal vehicle to the transportation terminal and park their vehicle for the duration of the trip may claim the cost of mileage and parking.

i) **Transportation.** Members of Council may choose their means of transportation however all costs must be reasonable in relation to the distance travelled and the most economical means of travel. Receipts are required for reimbursement (except for kilometers driven when travel is by automobile).

j) **Travel Alternatives.** Members of Council who elect to travel by a form(s) of transportation other than aircraft or vehicle to their destination point, the expense reimbursement shall not exceed the cost of travel by air or vehicle, whichever is lower, as defined in this policy.

k) **Travel by Air.** Where possible, travel arrangements will be made through the City's designated travel agent by the Executive Assistant to the Mayor and Chief Administrative Officer. The airfare costs will be at the lowest available airfare at the time of booking on a regular scheduled flight at a reasonable and convenient time for travel. Where possible, Members of Council are expected to book their business travel far enough ahead to take advantage of discounted rates. If an excursion fare requires a Member of Council to extend the trip, additional per diem and hotel expenses can be claimed, provided the additional cost is less than the fare savings.

l) **Travel by Own Vehicle.** Members of Council may claim the City of Pitt Meadows per kilometer vehicle reimbursement rate, which is based on the Canada Revenue income tax regulations. Mileage for travel within the City of Pitt Meadows is not eligible for reimbursement. Road and bridge tolls, parking costs and ferry fares may also be claimed.

m) **Travel Cancellation.** A Member of Council who does not attend an event for which they have registered is responsible for all costs associated with the event should insufficient notice be given for cancellation and full refund of any monies paid out on their behalf or on behalf of their spouse or travel partner. Sufficient notice is defined as within one month of the event. If a member of Council experiences extenuating circumstances such as illness, accident, death in immediate family or other similar circumstances they may apply to the Chief Administrative Officer or Chief Financial Officer for forgiveness of the travel cancellation cost liability. In the event a member of Council wishes to appeal a decision made by the Chief Administrative Officer or Chief Financial Officer, the appeal will be reviewed by the Mayor or Deputy Mayor for the final decision.

n) **Travelling as a Group by Vehicle.** If two or more people travel together in the same vehicle, only the Member of Council who incurs the vehicle operating expenses may claim the vehicle costs or the mileage allowance.

o) **Vehicle Insurance.** All Members of Council who drive a personal vehicle to conduct City business shall ensure that they are properly licensed and that any personal vehicle used for City business is properly registered and insured. The applicable deductible must be the lowest available given the coverage described above.

If the Member of Council is involved in a vehicle accident while travelling in their personal vehicle and conducting City business, the City will reimburse the Member of Council for the applicable deductible, provided the insurer determines fault at less than 50% on the part of the Member of Council.

ICBC policy requires drivers to obtain business use insurance when they drive for City business on a regular basis (more than six days per month). If Members of Council use their vehicles more than six days per month for City business, this policy rule applies and accordingly, the City will reimburse the difference in insurance premiums between the rate for 'pleasure plus travel to and from work' and 'business use', provided that:

I. the Member of Council's personal vehicle does not already have 'business insurance' for purposes unrelated to City business; and
II. proof of business insurance from ICBC is provided to the City.

Members of Council are encouraged to consult with their auto agent to ensure they are correctly rated and properly insured.

10.6. Community Relations

a) On occasion when it becomes necessary for the Mayor or Member of Council, on behalf of the community, to host other senior elected officials or to recognize dignitaries relating to the advancement of the affairs of the City, such as hosting or entertaining shall be considered part of the overall Community Relations budget. This budget will include civic celebrations, award and recognition events and community forums and the supply of Pitt Meadows based souvenirs, plaques and general presentation materials.

b) The Community Relations budget is separate and distinct from all other budgets related to this policy and is set by Council annually through the business and budget planning process.

10.7. Reporting

a) **Annually**. In compliance with Section 98 of the Community Charter, by June 30 of each year, the Finance Department must prepare a report separately listing the following:

   I. The total amount of remuneration paid to each Member of Council for the discharge of duties; and

   II. The total amount of expense claims payments made to each Member of Council as reimbursement for expenses incurred by the Council Member.

The report is available to the public for inspection at the Municipal Hall during regular office hours until June 30th of the following year and on the City website.

b) **Quarterly**. The Finance Department will provide Council with quarterly expense reports through a Regular Council meeting on the consent agenda. Council members are encouraged to monitor anticipated expenditures using a tracking template as provided by the Finance Department. Reporting frequency may be adjusted by the CAO or CFO where meeting schedules or operational constraints require.

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Appendix 1

Private Accommodation Per Diem Allowance (receipts not required)

Within Canada	Within USA	Other Countries
$50.00 CA	$50.00 US (*)	$50.00 US (*)

Full Day Per Diem Allowance for Overnight Travel (receipts not required)

Within Canada	Within USA	Other Countries
$81.00 CA	$81.00 US (*)	$81.00 US (*)

Partial Day Per Diem Allowance (receipts not required). Proration to be determined using the following breakdown:

Item	Rate
Breakfast	$17.00
Lunch	22.00
Dinner	29.00
Incidentals	13.00
Total	$81.00

(*) – All funds are converted to and paid in Canadian dollars at a rate determined by the Finance Department.