




CITY OF HAMILTON
CORPORATE SERVICES
Financial Planning, Administration and Policy Division

TO:	Mayor and Members General Issues Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	November 27, 2023
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Councillor Ward Office Budgets and Policy Guidelines for Eligible Expenses for Elected Officials (FCS18083(d)) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
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SUBMITTED BY: SIGNATURE:	Brian McMullan Director, Financial Planning, Administration and Policy Corporate Services Department 

RECOMMENDATION(S)

That Appendix "A" to Report FCS18083(d), Policy and Guidelines for Eligible Expenses for Elected Officials: Office of the Mayor, Legislative and Councillor Ward Office Budgets, be approved.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The update to the Policy and Guidelines for Eligible Expenses for Elected Officials addresses the following:

- Expanded guidance on election campaign expenses
- Ensuring the privacy of Elected Officials' staff with respect to employee leaves
- Introducing inflation factors to maximums set forth in the Policy
- Update and modernization of wording with respect to payments, digital tools and communication

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: N/A

Staffing: N/A

Legal: N/A

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

At its September 15, 2021 meeting, Council approved Appendix “A” to Report FCS18083(c) which updated the existing guidelines for Eligible Expenses for Elected Officials. The modifications encompassed not allowing sponsorships and donations during election periods, adherence to the City's Procurement By-Law for capital purchases, elimination of the obligation for Councillors to reimburse deficits in Ward Office Budgets resulting from employee leaves and clarification regarding meeting expenses.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

The Recommendations in Report FCS13082(d) are reflected in the Policy and Guidelines for Eligible Expenses for Elected Officials: Office of the Mayor, Legislative and Councillor Ward Office Budgets, as amended, attached as Appendix “A” to Report FCS18083(d).

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Staff in the Office of the City Clerk, Corporate Services Department and Human Resources, City Manager's Office were consulted on the amendments to the Policy and Guidelines.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

Expanded Guidance on Election Campaign Expenses

The preceding policy revision restricted sponsorships and donations during an election year. The revised guidance aims to prevent the inappropriate use of City funds for election campaign expenses while preserving the ability of Elected Officials to continue to support community groups through donations. Consequently, the updated policy maintains the prohibition of sponsorships that publicize the Elected Official's name but permits donations, provided there is no public acknowledgment or recognition of the Elected Official's contribution to the organization.

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Likewise, tickets for events can be purchased using the Elected Official's budgets during the election period, provided that no activities described as campaign activities take place while attending the event.

Ensuring the Privacy of Elected Officials' Staff with Respect to Employee Leaves

As there are a limited number of staff in Elected Official's Offices, the disclosure of expenses related to employee leaves can easily lead to the identification of the specific employee. As such, it is recommended that costs associated with employee leaves be recorded in the General Legislative or the City Clerk's office budget to maintain confidentiality and employee privacy.

Introducing Inflation Factors to Maximums Set Forth in the Policy

Introducing inflationary increases on the maximum limit for sponsorships and donations ensures that the real value of the financial threshold is maintained. It prevents the limit from becoming outdated and losing its effectiveness in covering the same scope of expenses. This also ensures that organizations supported by Elected Officials are not unintentionally penalized due to the erosion of the value of currency.

Update and Modernization of Wording with Respect to Payments, Digital Tools and Communication

This represents an administrative revision aimed at aligning the policy with contemporary norms regarding payments, digital tools and communication. The updated policy acknowledges the prevalent online purchase of event tickets and eliminates the need for Petty Cash. Additionally, the revision equates newsletters, literature, materials and traditional advertising forms with modern channels such as social media, search engine and video advertising, along with Short Message Service (SMS) marketing. The refinement of language in these sections is intended to improve overall clarity.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

N/A

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix "A" to Report FCS18083(d) – Policy and Guidelines for Eligible Expenses for Elected Officials: Office of the Mayor, Legislative and Councillor Ward Office Budgets

MW/dt