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**Municipality of Cumberland Policy 21-03  
Reimbursement Policy for Members of Council  
and Chief Administrative Officer**

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**Title**

1. This Policy is entitled the "Reimbursement Policy for Members of Council and Chief Administrative Officer".

**Policy Statement**

2. This Policy ensures the appropriate use of municipal funds through the establishment of uniform standards and procedures respecting reimbursement of expenses incurred by Council members and the CAO in relation to business of the Municipality.

**Definitions**

3. In this Policy, unless the context otherwise requires:
  - 1) "CAO" means the Chief Administrative Officer;
  - 2) "CAO designate" means an employee of the Municipality delegated any of the responsibilities or powers of the CAO pursuant to subsection 29(b) of the *Municipal Government Act*; and
  - 3) "Municipality" means the Municipality of the County of Cumberland.

**Signing Authority**

4. The following are the Signing Authorities for the positions referred to, and shall be responsible for administering the policy with respect to the individuals in those positions:

Position	Signing Authority
Mayor	CAO or designate
CAO/Member of Council	Mayor

5. A Signing Authority may designate a second signing authority. The designation of a secondary signing authority shall be in writing and shall state the name and position of the designate.
6. A Signing Authority is prohibited from authorizing expenses incurred on their own behalf.

## **Individual Responsibilities**

7. Everyone who incurs an expense in relation to municipal business is responsible for:
  - 1) Familiarizing themselves and complying with the provisions of this Policy;
  - 2) By April 1 each year signing an acknowledgement document certifying that they have reviewed this policy and sought all clarifications necessary for a complete understanding of its provisions and their responsibilities pursuant to it. Failure to sign this acknowledgement document annually will disqualify the individual from claiming expenses for reimbursement under this policy until the document has been signed for that year;
  - 3) Completing and submitting expense claims with necessary supporting documentation;
  - 4) Exercising reasonable diligence and care in incurring expenses prudently and responsibly; and
  - 5) With respect to travel, cancelling reservations as required, safeguarding travel advances and funds provided, and considering alternatives to travel such as teleconferencing and video conferencing.

## **Permitted Expenses**

8. Subject to and in accordance with this Policy, the following expenses incurred by a member of Council or the CAO are eligible for reimbursement:
  - 1) Authorized travel within Nova Scotia, including transportation, accommodation, and meal costs;
  - 2) Pre-approved out-of-province travel, including transportation, accommodation, and meal costs; and
  - 3) Pre-approved training or continuing education costs.

## **Authorized Travel**

9. Council members shall be reimbursed for the reasonable expenses incurred for attending:
  - 1) Meetings, conferences, or workshops at which the Council member's attendance is authorized or requested by Council;
  - 2) Any Council or Committee of Council meeting;
  - 3) A meeting of any Board, Commission or other organization to which the Council member has been appointed by Council, except that no reimbursement shall be provided by the Municipality if the Council member is entitled to reimbursement of expenses directly from the applicable organization;
  - 4) If the Mayor or Deputy Mayor are invited to attend a function, meeting or conference on behalf of the Municipality, and if reimbursable expenses are less than \$500, pre-approval by Council will not be required.
  - 5) If a Council member attends a function, meeting or conference on behalf of the Municipality, and if reimbursable expenses are less than \$500, pre-approval by Council will not be required if:
    - a) At the request of the Mayor or Deputy Mayor to attend on their behalf;
    - b) At the request of the Mayor or Deputy Mayor to attend as a Council member who has a special interest in, or connection with the subject of the meeting or conference or because of special knowledge and experience of the Council member relative to the subject of the meeting or conference; and

- 6) At a training or continuing education event in accordance with the provisions of this Policy concerning Council member training and education.
10. The CAO shall be reimbursed for the reasonable expenses pursuant to the CAO's employment agreement.

#### **Out-of-Province Travel Authorization**

11. All requests for out-of-province travel shall be made in writing and shall contain the following information:
  - 1) The purpose and duration of the trip;
  - 2) The location(s) to be visited;
  - 3) The dates and times of arrival and departure;
  - 4) Any pre-paid transportation, meals, and accommodation; and
  - 5) Any other anticipated expenses.
12. All requests for out-of-province travel by Council members shall be reviewed by the CAO and Mayor, who shall consider the necessity for travel based on information provided.
13. When two or more out-of-province travel requests are made by Council members for the same purpose, Council shall determine the appropriate number of persons necessary to represent the Municipality.
14. All requests for out-of-province travel by the CAO, other than that pursuant to the employment contract, shall be reviewed by the Mayor, who shall follow the same guidelines established for Council members.
15. If a request for out-of-province travel is approved, and the Claimant pays all or some of the expenses for travel, the Claimant will be eligible for reimbursement of those expenses after submitting an expense claim in accordance with this Policy.

#### **Training and Professional Development**

16. If the Municipality has established a training and education budget expense item, a member of Council or the CAO may apply to the applicable Signing Authority in advance for approval to incur expenses out of this budget for training or professional development, provided that:
  - 1) The request is made in writing, and includes an estimate of all costs that will be incurred, including the course or enrolment fee and all required transportation, accommodation, and meals;
  - 2) The training or education course, meeting or conference, is related to municipal government;
  - 3) The course, meeting or conference is completed prior to the next municipal election date;
  - 4) the budget for Council member and CAO training and education for the year has not been exhausted and would not be exceeded by authorizing the request; and
  - 5) the Council member and CAO shall reimburse the Municipality for the cost of all or, alternatively the pro-rated cost of a portion, of any enrollment fees in the event of failure to attend all, or alternatively some, of the event without reasonable justification;

### **Per Diem Meal Allowances**

17. For each day or part day that a Council member is travelling outside the Municipality for an authorized purpose, a Council member may claim a meal allowance for each meal for which a cost was incurred. Meals provided free of charge or included in registration fees paid directly by the Municipality are ineligible. The per diem meal allowance for Council members shall be the same as that for staff: \$20 for breakfast, \$20 for lunch, and \$35 for supper. This allowance includes gratuities and taxes. For purposes of this section, the Municipality will not pay breakfast allowance to Council members leaving home after 6:00 am or supper allowance to a Council member arriving home before 6:00 pm. Receipts are required for all meal expenses. Amounts reimbursed will be the lesser of the applicable meal allowance or cost shown on receipt.
18. If on any given day the Council member is attending more than one meeting within the Municipality, and the cost of paying kilometrage for the Council member to go home for a meal and return for a meeting being held later that same day is greater than the meal allowance, a Council member may claim a \$20.00 meal allowance. Receipts are required for all meal expenses.
19. Claimants whose religious beliefs or medical requirements prohibit them from consuming certain foods should be aware that appropriate meals can normally be obtained from caterers, provided that adequate notice of special requirement is given. Should these special dietary requirements negate the ability to participate in a meal that is provided free of cost, and as a result the Claimant must pay for a meal, the Claimant shall be paid a meal allowance for that meal.

### **Kilometrage**

20. The kilometrage allowance reimbursed for Council members using personal vehicles for travel shall be at the rate stipulated from time to time by the Province of Nova Scotia as the maximum. Where several Council members or the CAO attend the same meeting, conference or function, each shall make reasonable efforts to share a vehicle.

### **Vehicle Rentals**

21. The cost of rental of a vehicle shall be a reimbursable expense in instances where:
  - 1) Reasonable ground transportation services such as public transit, taxis, or hotel shuttles are unavailable; or
  - 2) Two or more Council members or the CAO are travelling together, and it is more economical than the combined costs of other reasonable ground transportation.
22. Compact, economical vehicles must be used unless three or more persons are travelling together, the bulk or weight of goods being transported necessitates a larger vehicle, physical limitations of one or more passengers require a larger vehicle, or a compact, economical vehicle is unavailable.

### **Limits on Reimbursable Expenses**

23. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Policy, the following limits shall apply to reimbursement of expenses:
- 1) A Claimant shall only be reimbursed for the costs that they have incurred;
  - 2) The expenses of a Council member for political activity associated with election or re-election is not reimbursable by the Municipality.
  - 3) Airplane travel shall be booked by municipal staff or shall only be reimbursed at the lowest rate which would have been available if municipal staff had booked the airfare;
  - 4) Hotel accommodations shall not exceed the cost of a standard room, double occupancy, except when hotel accommodation has been booked by municipal staff for out-of-province hotels. Hotel upgrades shall be at the personal expense of the Claimant unless there are ergonomic necessities attributable to physical requirements including, but not limited to, wheelchair accessibility;
  - 5) If a Council member chooses to take their personal vehicle in lieu of airplane travel, reimbursement will be based on the lesser of the lowest airfare rate which would have been available had the flight been booked by municipal staff or the kilometrage reimbursement pursuant to section 20;
  - 6) Reimbursement for meals shall not exceed the per diem meal amounts set out in this Policy, except in the case of out-of-province travel, in which event Council may authorize reimbursement of meal expenses to a comparable standard;
  - 7) Fees, deposits, interest, and surcharges incurred on a personal credit card shall not be reimbursed;
  - 8) When personal and municipal travel is combined, only documented expenses directly related to the Municipality's portion are reimbursable. Extended travel time and related expenses are the traveler's own expense;
  - 9) Reimbursement shall not be provided for loss of personal effects; for medical and hospital treatment; for purchase of luggage, clothing, and other personal equipment; or for personal services such as shoeshines, valet services, dry-cleaning, laundry, haircuts, and other personal services.
  - 10) Hotel accommodations shall be booked by municipal staff;
  - 11) Hotel services including room service and video rentals shall not be charged to the room;
  - 12) Reimbursement of one personal long-distance phone call, to a maximum of \$15 shall be permitted for each night of overnight travel;
  - 13) The cost of any alcoholic beverages shall not be reimbursed;
  - 14) A Council member shall not be reimbursed to travel to meetings within the Municipality with constituents, individual electors, and complainants. The expenses incurred in the discharge of these duties are deemed to be included in the Council member's remuneration.

## **Expense Claims**

24. Authorized expense claims must be submitted on the form provided by the Municipality and shall be signed by the Claimant.
25. Receipts or other satisfactory documentary proof must be submitted with the reimbursement claim for all expenses except:
  - 1) bridge and highway tolls; and
  - 2) claims for personal vehicle kilometrage.
26. Expenses incurred by a Council member or the CAO on behalf of another individual are not eligible for reimbursement.
27. No expense claim shall be paid unless the claim is first approved for payment by the Signing Authority who has authority to approve the claim. Before approving an expense claim, a Signing Authority must ensure that:
  - 1) The claim is consistent with this Policy;
  - 2) The expenses claimed were necessarily incurred in the performance of municipal business;
  - 3) Appropriate receipts are provided to support the claim, and the claim documentation is appropriately filed;
  - 4) All calculations are correct; and
28. In considering an expense claim for payment, a Signing Authority may request additional explanations, documentations, or justification from the Claimant, and may refuse to approve any claim or expense that the Signing Authority decides is unreasonable or not in compliance with this Policy.
29. The use of petty cash to pay an expense claim is prohibited.
30. If a form requires adjustments, the form will be returned to the Claimant and must be re-authorized prior to reimbursement.

## **Timeframe**

31. Expense claims shall be submitted at a minimum on monthly basis.
32. Expenses must be submitted and charged to the year in which they occurred. Expenses cannot be carried forward to future years.
33. Claimants who charge for goods and services in a fiscal year must have received the goods or services from the vendor in that fiscal year.

## **Fraud, Misuse, or Misappropriation of Municipal Funds**

34. Fraudulent irregularly, misuse, or misappropriation of municipal funds may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

35. Suspicious activity and potential misuse of funds must be reported as per this Policy.

### Municipal Reporting Requirements

36. Pursuant to section 65A of the *Municipal Government Act*, the CAO shall ensure that the Municipality does the following:



- 1) Within 90 days of the end of each fiscal quarter, prepares and posts an expense report on the Municipality's website for the Mayor, CAO (including an employee of the Municipality delegated any of the responsibilities or powers of the CAO pursuant to subsection 29(b) of the *Municipal Government Act*) and each member of Council on their expenses regarding the following:
  - a) Travel and travel related expenses, including transportation, accommodation, and incidentals;
  - b) Meals; and
  - c) Training and professional development.
- 2) By September 30<sup>th</sup> of each year, prepares and files with the Minister of Municipal Affairs an annual summary report that summarizes the expense reports for the preceding fiscal year, that is compliant with the requirements of the Department of Municipal Affairs and the requirements set out in the province's Financial Reporting and Accounting Manual.

### Review Requirements

37. The Audit Committee shall review the expense annual summary report by October 31<sup>st</sup> of each year.

38. By the January 31<sup>st</sup> immediately following a regular election held under the *Municipal Elections Act*, Council shall review this Policy and, following a motion by Council, either re-adopt the Policy or amend the Policy and adopt the Policy as amended.

39. This Policy is effective upon adoption and replaces any previous Reimbursement for Members of Council Policies.

<u>Annotation for Official Policy Book</u>	
Date of Notice of Intent: <u>April 21, 2021</u>	
Date of Adoption by Council: <u>May 5, 2021</u>	
Date of Notice of Intent to Amend: <u>December 15, 2021</u>	
Date of Adoption of Amended Policy, by Council: <u>December 22, 2021</u>	
I certify this Policy was adopted by Council and published as indicated above.	
 Municipal Clerk	 Date